

DONAT JOSEF

THE FREEDOM
OF SCIENCE

Josef Donat

The Freedom of Science

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Author's Preface To The English Edition

The present work has already secured many friends in German Europe. An invitation has now been extended for its reception among the English-speaking countries, with the object that there, too, it may seek readers and friends, and communicate to them its thoughts – the ideas it has to convey and to interpret. While wishing it heartfelt success and good fortune on its journey, the Author desires it to convey his greetings to its new readers.

This book has issued from the throes of dissension and strife, seeing the light at a time when, in Austria and Germany, the bitter forces of opposition, that range themselves about the shibboleth *Freedom of Science*, were seen engaging in a combat of fiercer intensity than ever. Yet, notwithstanding, this Child of Strife has learned the language of Peace only. It speaks the language of an impartial objectivity which endeavours, in a spirit of unimpassioned, though earnest, calm, to range itself over the burning questions of the day – over those great *Weltanschauung* questions, that stand in such close relation with the compendious motto: *Freedom of Science*. Yes, *Freedom* and *Science* serve, in our age and on both sides of the Atlantic, as trumpet-calls, to summon together – often indeed to pit in deadly combat – the rival forces of opposition. They are catch-words that tend to hold at fever-pitch the intellectual life of modern civilization – agents as they are of such mighty and far-reaching influences. On the one hand, Science, whence the moving and leading ideas of the time take shape and form to go forth in turn and subject to their sway the intellect of man; on the other, Freedom – that Freedom of sovereign emancipation, that Christian Freedom of well-ordered self-development, which determine the actions, the strivings of the human spirit, even as they control imperceptibly the march of Science. While the present volume is connected with this chain of profound problems, it becomes, of itself, a representation of the intellectual life of our day, with its far-reaching philosophical questions, its forces of struggle and opposition, its dangers, and deep-seated evils.

The Author has a lively recollection of an expression which he heard a few years ago, in a conversation with an American professor, then journeying in Europe. “Here, they talk of tolerance,” he observed, “while in America we put it into practice.” The catch-word *Freedom of Science* will not, therefore, in every quarter of the world, serve as a call to arms, causing the opposing columns to engage in mutual conflict, as is the case in many portions of Europe. But certain it is that everywhere alike – in the new world of America, as well as in the old world of Europe – the human spirit has its attention engaged with the same identical questions – those topics of nerve-straining interest that sway and surge about this same catch-word like so many opposing forces. Everywhere we shall have those tense oppositions between sovereign Humanity and Christianity, between Knowledge and Faith, between Law and Freedom; everywhere those questions on the Rights and Obligations of Science, on Catholic Thought, and on Catholic Doctrinal Beliefs and Duties.

May it fall to the lot of this book to be able to communicate to many a reader, interested in such topics, words of enlightenment and explanation – to some for the strengthening of their convictions, to others for the correction, perhaps, of their erroneous views. At home, while winning the sympathy of many readers, it has not failed to encounter also antagonism. This was to be expected. The resolute championing of the principles of the Christian view of the world, as well as many a candid expression of views touching the intellectual impoverishment and the ever-shifting position of unshackled Freethinking, must necessarily arouse such antagonism. May the present volume meet on the other side of the Atlantic with a large share of that tolerance which is put into actual practice

there, and is there not merely an empty phrase on the lips of men! May it contribute something to the better and fuller understanding of the saying of that great English scientist, William Thomson: “Do not be afraid of being free-thinkers! If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion.”

Finally, I may be allowed to express my sincere thanks to the publisher for undertaking the work of this translation.

May it accomplish much good.

J. Donat.

University Innsbruck,

Christmas, 1913.

Translator's Note

The German original is replete with references to works especially in the German language, the author having with great care quoted title and page whenever referring to an author. Since many of these references are of value only to those familiar with the German, they have been abbreviated or omitted in this English version, whenever they would seem to needlessly encumber its pages.

Those desirous of verifying quotations will be enabled to do so in all instances by a reference to the German original.

First Section. The Freedom of Science and its Philosophical Basis

Chapter I. Science And Freedom

If a question is destined to agitate and divide for considerable length of time the minds of men, it must undoubtedly have its root deep in the entire intellectual life of the times; it must be anchored in profound philosophical thought, in theories of life. From this source it derives its power of captivating the minds. All this applies to the question of the Freedom of Science. If, then, we desire a thorough understanding of this question, we must first of all seek and examine its deeper lying philosophical basis; we must trace the threads which so closely unite it to the intellectual life and effort of the times.

But before we begin our study, let us remember a rule of the great orator and philosopher of ancient Rome; a rule only too often forgotten in our times: "Every philosophical discussion, of anything whatsoever, should begin with a definition, in order to make clear what the discussion is about" (*Cicero, De Officiis, I, 2*). If we would form a judgment as to the demand of science for freedom, as to the justification of this demand, as to its compatibility or incompatibility with the duty of faith, the first question that naturally arises is: What is the purport of this demand, what does it mean? Only after we have clearly circumscribed this demand can we approach its philosophical presumptions and test its basis.

What, then, do we understand by Science, and what freedom may be granted to it?

Science

When a man of Northern or Central Europe hears of science, his thoughts generally turn to the universities and their teachers. To him the university is the home of science, there its numerous branches dwell in good fellowship, there hundreds of men have consecrated themselves to its service. In those parts of Europe it is customary for men of science to be university professors. Of what university is he? is asked. Celebrated scientists, like *Helmholtz, Liebig, Hertz, Kirchhoff*; philosophers, like *Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Herbart*; great philologists, historians, and so on, were university professors.

For all that, *science* and *university* are not necessarily inseparable things. The university needs science, but science does not absolutely need the university. Science was in the world before the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the time when France and Italy built their first universities; and also since then science has been enriched by the achievements of many a genius who never occupied a university chair. *Pythagoras, Aristotle, St. Augustine* belonged to no universities; *Copernicus, Newton, and Kepler* never taught in the higher schools. In the countries of Western Europe and America the man of science and the university professor are to this day not so much identical in person. Therefore, if the freedom of science applies *principally* to the higher schools and their teachers, this is not its exclusive application. Science and university are not identical terms.

What, then, is science?

At the sound of this magic word there arises in the minds of many the image of a superhuman being: open on his lap lies the book of wisdom in which all mysteries are solved; in his hand is the flaming torch which enlightens the path down into the lowest depths of research, dispelling all darkness. This, in the minds of many, is what science means. The mere appeal to this infallible being suffices to settle all problems, to silence every contradiction; woe to him who dares open his profane mouth to utter an If or a But!

Were this science, there would be no dispute. We should have to admit that there could be no limit set to the freedom of this being; he must share the privileges of divine Intelligence, for no command to keep silent can be imposed on Infallible Truth; there can be no amendment. But, alas! in the world of reality this personified Science is nowhere to be found, it exists solely in the realm of rhetoric and poetry. Science, as it exists among men, has its seat, after all, nowhere else than in the human mind. It is, indeed, nothing else but *the well-ordered summary of knowledge and of the research for the causes of things*. Natural science is the summary of knowledge and research in the realm of natural phenomena, arranged in an orderly way, as a text-book will give it; that is, an investigation of phenomena and their causes. A mere description of natural phenomena, without any explanation, or reference of them to the laws of nature, would indeed be teaching about nature, but not natural science. Similarly, the science of history is the well-ordered summary of knowledge and research in the domain of human events, derived from their sources, with the statement of facts according to cause and effect.

And not all this knowledge is certain, and free from doubt. The modern conception of science, as we now have it – the ancients had a much narrower conception – includes certain as well as uncertain knowledge, results and hypotheses, and even the activity of research, together with its methods. Astronomy was thus in *Ptolemy's* time the summary of what was then known with more or less certainty about the stars; included in this, as is well known, was the opinion that the sun circles around the earth. And the philosophy of *Aristotle* embraced his philosophical ideas about God, the world and man; hence many errors. Further, when speaking of science in general, we mean the whole number of the individual sciences. It is the freedom of science in this sense that we have to investigate here. The individual sciences are distinguished one from another principally by the subjects of which they treat. Astronomy is distinguished from palæontology and philosophy by the fact that it treats of the stars, not of fossils, or of the fundamental truths of reason.

From this brief analysis of concepts it is clear that science and scientific research are not superhuman beings, but an activity or condition of the human mind, distinguished from the ordinary thought of the individual only by system and method, and, commonly, by greater thoroughness and by the united effort of many. *It is subject to all the limitations of the human mind.*

What follows from this? Two things. Let us at once make a brief reference to both of them, because in our discussion they are of the greatest importance.

Since, then, science is an activity of the human mind, it must, like it, always and everywhere be *subject to the Truth* and *subject to God*. Subject to the Truth: whenever science comes in contact with it, it must reverently bow to the truth. And subject to God: if God is the Creator of man and of his spiritual and bodily activity, He is also the master of his whole being, and man is subject to Him in all his activity and development, therefore in his intellectual life, and in his artistic and scientific pursuits. Everything is and remains the activity of the *creature*. As gravitation rules the entire planet and its material activity, attracts it towards the sun and makes it circle around it, so does the law of dependence on God rule the whole life of the creature. Man cannot therefore, even in his scientific research, ignore his Creator, cannot emancipate himself from His authority; and if God has given a revelation and demands faith, the man of science, too, must believe. There cannot be an emancipated, free, science in this sense.

Another consequence is this: since science is an activity of the human mind, it shares all its *imperfections and weaknesses*. It is truly flesh of its flesh. The fruit cannot be more perfect than the tree that produces it, nor the flower better than the plant on which it blossomed. Now, as the human mind is throughout limited in its nature, so is it also in its research. It is not given to man to soar aloft on eagle wings to the heights of knowledge, thence to gaze upon truth with unerring intuition; the ascent must be slow, with constant dangers of stumbling, even of falling headlong. To these dangers must be added his latent likes and dislikes, which imperceptibly guide his thought, especially in forming opinions on questions of the world and of life, which the human heart cannot

view with indifference: they influence his thought. Hence ignorance, darkness, and error, everywhere accompany the investigator individually, and science as a whole, all the more the loftier the questions that present themselves.

Already the philosopher of the dim past gave expression to the complaint, that our reason is no more capable of knowing the divine than the eyes of the owl are of seeing in broad daylight. It is *Aristotle* who so complains. And the great *Newton*, in the evening of his life, thus estimates the worth of his knowledge: "What the world may think about my labour, I do not know; I feel like a child that plays on the strand of the sea: now and then I may perhaps find a pebble or shell more beautiful than those of my playmates, while the boundless ocean lies ever before me with its undiscovered treasures" (apud *O. Zoekler*, *Gottes Zeugen im Reich der Natur* (1906), 173). The same sorrowful plaint is heard from all serious investigators, especially those in the domain of the natural sciences, who should have more reason than others to be proud of their achievements. "However great the amount of human knowledge may seem to the multitude," writes the well-known chemist *Schoenbein*, "the most experienced scientist feels the incompleteness and patchwork of it, and realizes that man so far has been able to learn but infinitely little of what nature is, and of what can be known." "The more exact the investigation," says the geologist *Quenstedt*, "so much the more obscure is its beginning. Indeed, the deeper we think to have understood the single parts, the further the original plan of the Creator seems to escape us" (cf. *Kneller*, *Das Christentum und die Vertreter der neueren Naturwissenschaften* (1904), 208, 281). "Although science," so we are assured by another modern savant, "has brought to light many a treasure, still, compared with what we do not yet know, it is as a drop to the ocean. In all our knowledge there will always be the danger of error." We are probably not very far in advance of the time of *Albrecht von Haller*, who said: "We, all of us, err, only each errs in a different way. Every passage that has been illuminated by science is surrounded by dense darkness; beyond the visible lies the invisible." And Prof. *J. Reinke* continues: "As early as the day of *Socrates*, the beginning of philosophy was to know that we know nothing; the end of philosophy, to know that we must believe: such is the inevitable fate of human wisdom" (*Naturwissenschaft und Religion*, in *Natur und Kultur IV* (1907), 418, 425. Printed also separately). Some years ago Sir *W. Ramsay*, a noted scientist, concluded a discourse on his scientific labour with the words: "When a man has reached the middle of his life, he begins to believe that the longer he lives the less he knows! This is my excuse for having molested you for an hour with my ignorance" (*Einige Betrachtungen ueber das periodische Gesetz der Elemente. Vortrag auf der 75. Versammlung Deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte zu Cassel* (1903)).

If science, then, can only with difficulty lift from visible nature the veils that hide the truth – and even this is often beyond its power – no wonder it is confronted with still greater obstacles when it approaches the truths that are beyond visible nature. Moreover, it is an old truth that here it is led not by reason only, but also, and even more energetically, by self-interest. "Most men," says *Cicero*, "are swayed in their judgments by either love or hatred, likes or dislikes" (*De Oratore*, II, 42).

If this is the nature of human science, its adepts would be badly deceiving themselves, if, in the pride of learning, they would reject every correction, even proudly pushing aside the hand of God that reaches down into the darkness of man's intellectual life to offer its guidance. He who realizes that he

is in danger of losing his way in the dark, will not reject a reliable guide; and he who fears to stumble will not refuse a helping hand. Self-knowledge is the sister of wisdom, and the mother of modesty.

Freedom

Such, then, is science: not the goddess that emanated from the head of immortal Jove, but the offspring of the puny mind of man, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. And this science cries for freedom. It would be free and act freely; it urges its claim in the name of truth, which must not be slighted; in the name of the progress of civilization, which must not be hindered.

Freedom clearly means nothing less than to be untrammelled and free from restraint, from fetter and check, in action, thought, and desire. The prisoner is free when his chains drop off, a people is free when it has cast off the yoke of serfdom, the eagle is free and can spread out its wings in lofty flight when not bound down to the earth. Science, therefore, should be free in its activity from bond, fetter, and restraint. Does this mean it must be free from *all* restraint and law? Should the historian be given the right to make *Solon* a member of the French Academy, or of the heroes of Troy mediæval knights? Should the scientist be given the right to break every rule of logic, to ignore all progress, and perhaps in his capriciousness return to the four elements of *Aristotle*, or the astronomical chart of primitive ages? Nobody demands this. No, science must be bound by the *truth*. Freedom indeed should not mean lawlessness. Science remains bound by the general laws of logic, and by positive facts. Truth is the irremovable barrier set in restraint of the freedom of everything, even of scientific thought. The freedom of science therefore can only be freedom from *unreasonable* restraint and fetters; from such that hinder it unreasonably in its inquiry after the truth, and in the communication of the results of its investigation. *It should be free, not from the internal bondage of truth, but from the restraint by external authority*, the restraint which would hinder it, in an *improper way*, from approaching those questions, and using those methods, that lead to the discovery of truth, and from acknowledging the results it has found to be true; or which would unlawfully keep it from making known, for the benefit of others, the results of its investigation. It should be free from any unjust restriction, imposed by state or Church, by popular opinion, by party spirit, by hampering protectorate, or servility of any kind.

From any *unjust* restriction, we said. For this is clear: if under certain circumstances there might be warrant for a *just* restriction by external authority, such a restriction could not be refused in the name of freedom. So long, then, as we understand by freedom a *lawful* freedom, there cannot be included in this the freedom from *every* external authority, but only from *unlawful* interference. There is, then, the question whether there may be a legitimate restraint, imposed by external authority, which man must not evade, and what the nature of such restraint may be.

We must, moreover, take into consideration two elements, which are distinguished in the above definitions, both belonging to the modern idea of scientific freedom. We will call them *freedom of research*, and *freedom of teaching*. The investigator and the scientist claim the one; the teacher, the other. Searching after truth, and communicating the truth found, are, as is known, the principal occupations of science. The scientist should first of all be an investigator. He should not be content to appropriate to himself the knowledge of others, he should also make his own additions to knowledge. He is also commonly a teacher, by word of mouth, as at the university, or by his writing, in his literary activity. Research, as such, imparts directly a certain knowledge only to the investigator; it is of a private nature and as such does not reach beyond him. But by teaching, his ideas are communicated to others, and then begin to influence their thought, will, and action, often very strongly. Teaching is a social factor; with it are bound up the weal and woe of others. Suppose a man of influence conceives in his study the idea that monogamy is an infringement upon the universal rights of man; should he be given without any ado the right of disseminating, by teaching, the imagined results of his investigation, to the confusion of men, and with serious danger to the peace of society?

We shall therefore have to distinguish between freedom of research and freedom of teaching. The neglect of this distinction causes not a little confusion; thus, if one complains of his convictions being trammelled or his liberty of conscience being violated, when he is hindered from immediately proclaiming whatever he calls his convictions. Private opinion, and the public propaganda of this opinion, are evidently very different things. It may be that an opinion seems to me the right one, but, in spite of that, public dissemination of it may, always or under certain circumstances, mean danger to my fellow-men. If I am for this reason prevented from publishing it, I am not thereby hindered from giving it my own private assent. It is, moreover, quite clear that the state – we disregard here religious authority – cannot at all directly restrict research, which is something personal. It can only impose restrictions on the communication of one's ideas by teaching them to others, which is a social function.

From these few remarks will be followed the impropriety of the following, or similar, observations: “The fostering of science and its teaching are not separate functions ... to insinuate a twofold function of freedom, viz., that of the savant and that of the teacher, would be to dissolve the unity of the moral personality” (*W. Kahl, Bekenntnissgebundenheit und Lehrfreiheit* (1897), 22). It is not at all double-dealing if some one does not publicly proclaim one's private knowledge. Is it double-dealing, is it a violation of “the unity of the moral personality,” if one is, and must be, silent about official secrets? And if one does not tell, and is not allowed to tell, official secrets, if one prevents an anarchist from spreading his revolutionary ideas, is this a violation of the unity of the moral personality? It is true that “to deny one's convictions is a violation of one of the most indubitable principles of moral conduct” (*K. v. Amira, Die Stellung des akademischen Lehrers zur Freiheit in Forschung und Lehre. Beilage der Muenchener Neuesten Nachrichten. 9. Juli, 1908*). But it is logically incorrect to conclude therefrom that the freedom of teaching should not be restricted. To keep silence is not denying one's convictions. Later on, when speaking of freedom in teaching, we shall return to this thought and deal with it more thoroughly.

So far there can be no serious diversity of opinion. Freedom from unjust restraint is demanded, and rightly demanded, for science. The very object of science requires it. In scientific research man's power of discernment should freely develop; his inclination towards truth should exert itself; and by communication of acquired knowledge mankind should advance in mental and material culture.

The bud bursts forth and freely unfolds its splendour; the butterfly grows unhindered in beauty; the tree, too, wants freedom, in order to develop its boughs and branches according to its nature, and if you try to bind and tie it, it resists as much as it can. Just so is freedom needful for the development of the noblest aspirations of human nature, for its progress in knowledge. Every friend of humanity, every one who loves his own kind, must be in sympathy with its progress. Who will not rejoice to see the mind of man happily trace the laws of nature, laid down by the Spirit of God in the stillness of eternity when as yet there was no creature to heed, the laws He then placed in nature in order that the reasonable creature might discern the marks of his Creator? Who would not rejoice to see man, diligently following the facts of history and studying the works of literature and art, find therein the ideas of God reflected, as the rays of the sun in the trembling drop of dew, and, finally, trying to solve the difficult problems of life? To this end has the Creator enkindled in the mind of man a spark of His own intelligence; to this end has He put in him a desire to inquire and learn, a desire which has exerted itself most in the noblest of men. Man is destined to find his ultimate gratification in beholding the Eternal Truth and Beauty, a vision which will be the completion of human science and culture, the highest perfection of created life. Thus man's noble desire for knowledge and truth must develop, it must be able to produce leaves and blossoms. For this he needs freedom, free air, and free light.

If science is to attain its high purpose, it must have freedom also to impart the knowledge acquired. It should indeed further the progress of mankind. By its discovery it should enhance the beauty of human life, should enrich the treasure of human knowledge, should promote education and morality, to the honour of the Creator. For this end, too, freedom is necessary: freedom to impart newly acquired knowledge, else there would be no pleasure in work, stagnation rather than progress.

Chapter II. Two Views Of The World And Their Freedom

There can, then, be no difference of opinion on this matter among sober-minded men: science must be free from all unjust hindrances and restraint. But we have not yet finished. We have not even proceeded very far on our way. The further question at once presents itself: Which are those unjust hindrances and restraints that scientific research and teaching may reject? May there not perhaps be such which it must respect? There is little meaning in the cry: Freedom! Freedom! This attractive word, which always finds an enthusiastic echo in man, may easily prove a misleading catchword, and become a dangerous weapon of the thoughtless and the unscrupulous.

The question is not, whether our science, or, to speak more generally, our intellectual life, must be free – of that there can be no doubt. No life can spring up and thrive without due freedom. The question is: *What sort of freedom?* how can it be more precisely defined? We all, indeed, demand freedom for the citizen; but what kind of freedom? He should be free from the fetters of tyranny and despotism. Do we also demand that he be free from the laws of the state? By no means! On the contrary, he must be subject to these, for the very reason that he is a citizen and not the inhabitant of an uncivilized world. We demand freedom for the artist; he should not be bound by the tyranny of fashion. Do we also demand that he be exempt from the laws of beauty and art? Not at all. He must subject himself to these if he means to be an artist and not a quack. That would not be true freedom, but lawlessness and license, the privilege of barbarism. Freedom therefore is a very ambiguous word.

There are *two kinds of freedom, lawful and unlawful*: the latter is freedom from just laws, the former from unjust laws.

We ask again, what is that lawful freedom which man may claim for his scientific activity? In other words, what are the restraints which he may reject as unjust, and as enslaving the mind? – Here the ways part. Here, too, our question goes deeper, and touches something which moves men's minds very powerfully. Two different views of the world, two opposite conceptions of man and his thought, come here in collision.

The Christian View of the World and its Freedom

On the one hand there is the Christian view of the world: it is essentially also the one which appears self-evident to every unbiassed mind. In this view man is a *creature, limited in every way, therefore in many ways dependent upon* external rules, forces, and authorities. To God alone is it reserved to be infinite, and, therefore, to possess in Himself all perfection, goodness, and truth; for which reason there is nothing above Him on which He could be dependent. This is not the case with man. As a creature man is subject to his Creator. The latter is master over man's life and therefore at the same time its ultimate aim. For this reason religion is of obligation to man, that is, he must honour God as He demands it; if God requires faith in a revelation, if He established a Church and duly authorized it to guide us, we must submit to it. In the same way the intellect of man is bound by the laws of objective truth, which is not of his making, but presents itself to him as a norm: he must always be subject to it whether he wishes or not. Man is, finally, a factor in social life; he lives in the family, state, and Church, in the great society of mankind; upon them he is dependent for his education and development. And society requires that man be subject to a ruling authority, that in many things his own interests be subordinated to the welfare of the community.

This is the order that God has established and wishes observed. Hence all human authority is a participation in God's supreme government. Thus it comes about that limits may be set to the scientist's free expression of his views, if the interest of the community require it.

Man is, nevertheless, free. But his freedom does not mean complete independence; nor freedom from all restraint, but only from those external restraints which are opposed to his nature and position,

which hinder his legitimate development and activity. He possesses freedom, but only such a freedom as is his due, by which he can unfold and develop his physical and mental powers. To keep his place of subordination to, and dependence on, these higher authorities and powers of truth and order, tends not to injure but to improve his being, not to dwarf but to develop his personality; for they are sources of life to him, they impart to his existence order and harmony, they raise him above himself and his own littleness, they free him from the prison of his own narrowness and selfishness, from the chains of his unruly desires. If a man emancipates himself from these bonds, which he ought to bear, he has freedom of course, but an unnatural freedom, which will be harmful and perhaps ruinous to him.

Take the tree, for instance. It should have freedom for its natural growth. If you force it to creep along the ground instead of growing upward, if you deny it air and light, you infringe on the freedom it should have. Still it cannot have absolute freedom, for it is dependent on the ground from which it derives its nourishment, dependent on the laws of light and atmosphere and gravitation, on the laws of season; it must adapt itself to climate and soil. It may not say to the light: Away with you! – a stunted growth and deformity would be the result of such emancipation. It may not say to the ground: Away with you! – a sad but quick death would be its fate. It has its freedom, and in this freedom it grows and thrives. If it desires greater freedom, it would be an unnatural one, and it would tend, not to its development, but to its destruction.

Such is the Christian view of man and his thought. Here, then, there is but one question to solve: Are the external restraints imposed on me in my investigation and teaching against my nature; against the right of my mind to truth; against my position in human society? If so, then I reject them, because they mean serfdom, not duty; unjust bonds, not natural restraint. But if not, then I do not refuse them my submission. Freedom I want, but only the freedom of man.

Here we pause. Suffice it at present to have formulated the question; we shall return to this topic later and discuss it at greater length.

The Modern Idea of Freedom

The Christian view of man and his freedom, which to past ages appeared self-evident, has grown obscure to many minds, and given place to another, a more modern view.¹

For the modern man, freedom, especially freedom of intellectual life, means *independence from external ties, from all authority*, or, to express it positively, absolute right of self-determination, *autonomy*. He does not recognize any law or rule which he has not imposed upon himself. In civil life, of course, it is a principle that man must submit to external, legal restraint in many things that do not directly concern his own person, but only so far as is necessary in order that others, too, may enjoy the same freedom; but also here every citizen must be able to share in the legislation, according to the rules of constitutional or republican government. But he must be free from every external restraint in whatever touches the core of his personality, his feeling, desire, thought, and the expression of his thought.

It should now be clear, from what has been said, what is meant by *freedom of science*. It means independence from every external authority and restraint in research and teaching, the unhindered development and assertion of one's own intellectual personality. Man must let himself be directed only by his own judgment and his instinct for the truth, or his personal need, without heeding dogmas, Church laws, tradition, or any other external norm whatsoever. This is particularly true in the *domain of philosophy and religion*, in questions regarding the world and life, and in fundamental social questions. This is principally, and almost exclusively, the field in which an authoritative influence of

¹ Whenever we use here the word “modern,” we do not take it in the sense of “present,” – the Christian view of the world is also a present one, and is still of the utmost importance, – but in the sense of “new” in contrast to the time-honoured and inherited.

the Church, or state, or society in general, is to be feared. Hence the importance of the question of the freedom of science in this field.

This is also the manner in which the advocates of modern freedom of science unanimously describe it.

For the academic teacher, says *G. Kaufmann*, there are “strictly speaking only the barriers drawn by his own instinct for the truth. It is in this sense that we demand freedom of science to-day for the university teacher. The freedom of the scientist and of the academic teacher must not be limited by patented truth, nor by faint-hearted consideration” (*Die Lehrfreiheit an den deutschen Universitaeten im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1898), 36). The first resolution proposed at the *Second Conference of German University Teachers*, at Jena, in September, 1908, was this: “The purpose of scientific research, and the communication of its results, demand that it be independent of every consideration foreign to scientific method itself.” Of this resolution we have from another source the following explanation: “Therefore, it should be independent especially of tradition and the prejudices of the masses, independent of authority and social bodies, independent of party interest.” (This was the addition to the thesis as originally formulated by Prof. *von Amira*. *Beilage der Muenchener Neuesten Nachrichten*, July 9, 1908.) And Prof. *F. Paulsen* writes: “No thought can be commanded or forbidden the academic teacher or his audience” (*Die deutschen Universitaeten und das Universitaets-studium*, 1902, 288).

A. Harnack likewise teaches that “In regard to research and knowledge there must be unlimited freedom,” especially in matters of religion. Here “man must fully understand his own innermost being; the soul must recognize its own needs and the indicated way to their satisfaction. This it can do only when it is entirely free.” “The fear that thereby the door to serious error is thrown open should not in the least deter it, for the most serious error of all is the opinion that man should not enjoy perfect freedom in the determination of his state” (*Neue Freie Presse*, 7 Juni, 1908).

The same demands are made by free-thinkers, who are always and everywhere in favor of free science. The *International Congress of Free-thinkers*, held at Rome in June, 1904, thus defines free-thought: “Since free-thought cannot concede to any authority whatever the right to oppose human reason, or even to supersede it, it demands that its advocates reject directly not only any compulsory belief, but also every authority that tries to enforce its dogmas, even though such an authority be based on revelation, or though it command obedience to dogmas or a-priori principles of philosophy, or to the decisions of public authority or the vote of a majority.” – We shall have frequent occasion to speak of this freedom in these pages.

Hence it is easily seen that this view differs from the one we considered before. Freedom from *all* external restraint has superseded freedom from *unjust* restraint. The presumption has found acceptance that every interference by authority is unjust, a violation of the natural rights of man and his thought. On what is this presumption based? In other words: What are the philosophical premises of modern freedom of science? We shall be occupied with this question now for some time. For only after we have attentively considered it, can we gain an intelligent idea of the nature of this freedom, of its methods, and of the justice of its claims. Advocates of this view not infrequently think they have exhausted its meaning when they have protested against ecclesiastical encroachments, when they have held forth against Syllabus and Index. Of the deeper thoughts it contains they have scarcely any idea.

The Humanitarian View of the World

We may distinguish a twofold basis for this view, a general and a particular one. The latter, which is connected with the former, is subjectivism in thought. The former, the more *general*, at the same time the *real basis of the modern freedom of science*, is that particular view of man and his position in the world, which we may call the theory of humanitarianism. We are familiar with this word – it has its history. The word of itself conveys a good meaning: it means human nature and dignity, thought and desire worthy of man, nobility of culture. During the Renaissance the so-called “humanists” identified culture with knowledge of the ancient classical literature. Many of them, however, added to the admiration of classical literature also preference for pagan tastes, to the contempt of the Christian spirit. Since that time the word *humanitarian* has never lost its unchristian sense; it has ever been made the motto of men who emancipated themselves from God and Christianity. Hence it is extensively the motto of our times.

It has changed the position of man. It has forgotten that man is a created, limited, even a fallen being, withal destined for eternal existence. To it man is everything; man left to himself and to his life in this world, severed from God and his eternal destiny, an *absolute, purely worldly being*. No longer does he look up to Heaven, no longer does he get from above his laws, his hope for help, and strength, and eternal life. He is his own and only end: he and his earthly happiness and advancement. In himself alone he sees the source of his strength, in himself he finds his law, to himself alone is he responsible, the inherited corruption of his nature he has forgotten. What God once was to our fathers – the end and rule of their life – that now is Man to their sons. The anthropocentric has succeeded the theocentric view of the world. *Diis extinctis successit humanitas* (Man has succeeded the fallen gods). “Out of the corrupted nations and decaying religions let there arise a more beautiful humanity!” is the radical cry of this humanitarian religion.

When in 1892 the battle for a new school law was raging in Prussia, *Caprivi*, the Chancellor of the Empire, said: “It is here question of a contrast between Christianity and atheism. Essential to man is his relation to God.” Scarcely had these words been uttered when a champion of modern thought, Prof. *Fr. Jodl*, took up his pen and wrote: “No sharper contrast with the convictions of the modern world is imaginable than that expressed by the words of the imperial Chancellor, ‘essential to man is his relation to God.’ To this sentence, which might be expected in a speech of Cromwell, or in a papal encyclical, rather than from a statesman of modern Germany, liberalism must with all possible emphasis oppose this other sentence: What determines the real worth of a man, is, first and last, his relation to humanity” (*Moral, Religion und Schule*, 1892, 14f.). *Diis extinctis successit humanitas*. We shall not deny that the modern spirit is a complicated structure: but neither can any one deny that its chief characteristic is the humanitarian view, with its emancipation from God, its decided emphasis of the things of this world, and its boundless overestimation of man.

An attentive observer of these days, should he chance to come from an old, Catholic town, and saunter with observant eye through one of our great modern cities, particularly a Protestant one, would behold a vivid realization of this modern view of the world. The most prominent feature of the Catholic town of old was the House of God. It towered high above the city, its spires reached heavenward; the houses of the faithful clung around the House of God like chicks about the mother hen. The mere sight told the beholder that here dwelt a people whose thoughts were directed towards the other world; over their lives ruled the sacred peace of eternity.

But here all is different. Here the most prominent feature is no longer the House of God; worldly edifices have usurped its place; railroad depots, barracks, city-hall and court-house dominate the city. The state house bears no longer on its front the Christian motto, *Nisi Dominus custodierit* (“Unless the Lord keep the city he watcheth in vain that keepeth it”). It would be considered a degradation should the state base its existence upon religion. Should, then, the observer enter the legislature he would

learn the modern principles of state wisdom. The state as such has no relation to religion; the principle is the separation of state and Church. In the public squares he beholds mighty monuments, erected, not to religious heroes and leaders, as perhaps of old, but to great men of the world, champions of national progress. At their feet lie wreaths of homage. They have brought modern humanity to its full stature, maturity, and self-consciousness. Here it is Man who is standing everywhere in the foreground. “It is I,” says he, “that lives here. Here I have pitched my tent, from this earth come all my joys, and this sun is shining upon my sorrows.”

Our observer, wandering about, finds everywhere magnificent state-schools, scientific institutes, splendid colleges and universities. In years gone by a cross or a word of divine wisdom was probably found here somewhere. It is seen no more. Often it would seem that we can almost hear the words: “We will not have this One rule over us.” Here a new race is being reared, which no longer follows blindly the “old tradition,” it believes in its own self and its own reason: culture and science take the place of the old religion. He finds but few churches; and where found they are mostly overshadowed by great palaces, and – mostly empty. The modern man passes them by. He has no longer any understanding for the truths of the Christian religion. It fails to satisfy him because it does not appeal to modern ways of thinking and feeling, because it does not symbolize the humanitarian creed. His desire is no longer for Heaven; his aspirations are earthward. “The life beyond concerns me little: my joys come from this world.” Contemplating modern civilization he exclaims, with the king of Babylon: “Is not this the great Babylon, which I have built to be the seat of the kingdom, by the strength of my power, and in the glory of my excellence?” (Dan. iv. 27). The doctrine of a nature corrupted by original sin, of a darkened intellect that needs divine revelation, of a weakened will that needs strength from above, of sin that demands atonement, – all this has become meaningless to him, it offends his higher sentiments, his human dignity. He has no longer any understanding for a Saviour of the world, in whom alone salvation is to be sought, much less for a Cross. This sign of redemption, as a certain herald of modern thought remarked, weighs like a mountain upon the mind of our day. He has no longer any understanding for the saving institution of the Church, by whom he should be led: she is to him an institution of intellectual serfdom. He makes his own religion, free from dogma, just as his individuality desires, just as he “lives” it.

Should our observer, while visiting the Protestant city, make a final visit to its university, he will find there the thoughts, which hitherto he had but vaguely felt, clothed in scientific language. There they meet his gaze, defined sharply on the pedestal of Research as the Modern Philosophy, protected, often exclusively privileged, by the state license of teaching. It is the modern scientific view of the world, the only one that men of modern times may hold. From here it is to find its way to wider circles.

“Man,” we are told by a pupil of *Feuerbach*, in accord with his master's teaching, “man is man's god. And only by the enthronement of this human god can the super-human and ultra-human God be made superfluous. What Christianity was and claimed to be in times gone by, that now is claimed by humanity.” “The being which man in religion and theology reveres,” continues *Jodl* with *Feuerbach*, “is his own being, the essence of his own desires and ideals. If you eliminate from this conception all that is mere fancy and contrary to the laws of nature, what is left is a cultural ideal of civilization, a refined humanity, which will become a reality by its own independent strength and labour” (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, 1904, 111 f., 194). “The greatest achievement of modern times,” says another panegyrist of emancipated humanity, “is the deliverance from the traditional bondage of a direct revelation... Neither revelation nor redemption approach man from without; he is bound rather to struggle for his perfection by his own strength. What he knows about God, nature, and his own self, is of his own doing. He is in reality ‘the measure of all things, of those that are, and why they are; of those that are not, and why they are not.’ Of his

dignity as an image of God, he has therefore not lost anything; on the contrary, he has come nearer to his resemblance to God, his highest end, by his consciousness of being self-existent and of having the destiny to produce everything of himself; from a receptive being he has become a spontaneous one; he has at last come to a clear knowledge of his own real importance and destiny” (*Spicker, Der Kampf zweier Weltanschauungen, 1898, 134*).

Hence “not to make man religious,” to quote again the above-mentioned exponent of modern wisdom of life, “but to educate, to promote culture among all classes and professions, this is the task of the present time.” “Religion cannot therefore be the watchword of a progressive humanity; neither the religion of the past nor the religion that is to be looked for in the future, but ethics” (*Jodl, ibid., 108, 112*). Ethics, to be sure, the fundamental principles of which are not the commandments of God, by the keeping of which we are to reach our eternal happiness, but human laws, which are observed for the sake of man. “Morality and religion,” we are told, “shall no longer give us a narrow ladder on which we, each one for himself, climb to the heights of the other world; we are vaulting a majestic dome above this earth under which the generations come and go, succeeding each other in continuous procession. . . . The day will come when the rays of thought which are now dawning upon the highest and freest mountain-tops will bring the light of noonday down to mankind.” Woe to us, if from these high mountain-tops, where the bare rocks no longer take life and fecundity from the heavens, the sad desert of estrangement from God should extend into the fresh green of the valleys!

The central ideas of the humanitarian view of the world appear again, though under different form, among Freemasons and free-thinkers, agitators for free religion and free schools. It is well known that Freemasonry has emblazoned “humanity” upon its standard. “One word of the highest meaning,” so wrote an official authority some years ago, “contains in itself the principle, the purpose, and the whole tenor of Freemasonry, this word is humanity. Humanity is indeed everything to us.” “What is humanity? It is all, and only that, which is human” (*Freiburger Ritual, 24. Pachtler, Der Goetze der Humanitaet, 1875, 249 f.*). “That which is essentially human is the sublime, divine, and the only Christian ideal,” adds another authority, addressing the aspirant to Freemasonry. “Leave behind you in the world your different church-formulas when you enter our temple, but let there always be with you the sense for what is holy in man, the religion which alone makes us happy” (*Latomia, 1868, p. 167, Pachtler, 248*). As early as 1823 the “*Zeitschrift fuer Freimauerei*” wrote: “We should be accused of idolatry should we personify the idea of humanity in the way in which the Divinity is usually personified. This is indeed our reason for withholding from the eyes of profane persons the humanitarian cult, till the time has come when, from east to west, from noon to midnight, its high ideal will be pondered and its cult propagated everywhere” (*Pachtler, 255*).

The time has already come when “the rays of thought that dawned upon the mountain-tops” are descending into the valley. The Twenty-second Convention of German Free-religionists, at Goerlitz, at the end of May, 1907, passed this resolution: “The Convention sees one of its chief tasks in the alliance of all anti-clericals and free-thinkers, and tries by united effort to obtain this common end and interest by promoting culture, liberty of mind, and humanitarianism.” There was, moreover, taken up for discussion the thesis: “Free-religionists reject the teaching that declares man lost by original sin, unable to raise himself of his own strength and reason, that directs him to revelation, redemption, and grace from above.”

This view of the world finds its most characteristic expression in *pantheism*, which, though expressed in various and often fantastic forms, is eminently the religion of modern man. From this gloomy depth of autotheism the apotheosis of man and his earthly life, the modern consciousness of freedom, draws its strength and determination.

To find this modern view of man expressed in the language of consistent radicalism, let us hear *Fr. Nietzsche*, the most modern of all philosophers. His ideal is the transcendental man, who knows that God is dead, that now there is no bar to stepping forth in unrestricted freedom to superhuman greatness and independence. To this “masterman,” who deems himself superior to others, everything is licit that serves his egotism and will, everything that will promote his interest to the disadvantage of the rabble; probity is cowardice! “But now this god is dead. Ye superior men, this god was your greatest danger.” Thus spoke Zarathustra. “Only since this god is buried do you begin to rise. Now at length the great Noon is in its zenith. Now the superior man becomes master. Onward and upward, then, ye superior men! At last the mountain of man's future is in travail. God is dead; let the superior man arise and live.” (Also sprach Zarathustra, W. W. VI, 418.) And, in the consciousness that the Christian religion condemns this self-exaltation, he breaks out in this blasphemous charge: “I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great internal corruption... I call it the one immortal, disgraceful, blot on mankind” (Antichrist, W. W. VIII, 313). This is independent humanity in the cloak of fanaticism. *Nietzsche* has carried the modern view of the world to its final consequences; the autonomous man has developed into the god-like superman who carries into effect the behest: Ye shall be as gods; his code of ethics is that of the autocrat who is above the notions of good and bad.

And “let no one deceive himself,” writes an intelligent observer of the times, “the spirit of our time is attuned to *Nietzsche's* idea.” Consciously or unconsciously this sentiment dominates more minds than many a man learned in the wisdom of the schools may dream of. Did *Nietzsche* create this spirit? Certainly not: he grew out of it, he has only given it a philosophical setting. *Nietzsche* would never have caused that tremendous sensation, never have gathered around him his enthusiastic followers, had not the soil been prepared. As it was, he appeared to “his” men as the Messiah “in the fulness of time.” He, too, in his own way “loosened the tongue of the dumb and opened the eyes of the blind.” The veiled anti-Christian spirit, the unconscious religious and ethical nihilism, which no one before dared profess openly, though it was hatching in the minds, now had found its “master,” its “scientific system” (*Von Grotthuss*, Tuermer, VII, 1905, 79). It is, asserts *Wundt*, “the new ideal of free personality, dependent on precarious moods and chance influences, that has found in *Nietzsche's* philosophy a fantastic expression” (Ethik, ed. 3. 1905, p. 522).

The Autonomous Man

Now we have a clearer idea of modern freedom. It is known as autonomism. The individual wants to be a law to himself, his own court of last appeal; he wants to develop his personality, feeling, desires, and thought, independently of all authority. Too long, it is said, have man's aspirations been directed upward, away from things, of this world, to a supernatural world. Religion and Church seek to determine his thought and desire, to subject him to dogma. Too long has he clung like a child to the apron-strings of authority. Man has at last awoken to self-consciousness and to a sense of his own dignity, after a period of estrangement, so to say, from himself; he has become himself again, as the poet sang when the century of the “illuminati” was closing:

“How beautiful, with palm of victory,
O man, thou standest at the century's close,
The mightiest son thy Time has given birth,
By reason free, by law and precept strong,
Alike in meekness great and treasure rich,

So long unknown concealed within thy breast.”

Yes, man has discovered the treasure that long lay hidden in his breast, the seed and bud that longed to burst forth into life and blossom. Now the motto is: Independent self-development; no more restraint, but living out one's personality. The eagle is not given wings to be bound down upon the earth; nor does the bud come forth never to unfold. Full freedom, therefore, too, for everything human! And modern man leaps to the fatal conclusion: therefore all interference of external authority is unjust, is force, constraint upon my being; the same error that boys fall into when life begins to tingle with its fulness of strength. Being ignorant of their nature, they feel any kind of dependence a chain; only themselves, their judgments and desires, are law. Just so modern man, in his deplorable want of self-knowledge, fails to see how he is cutting himself off from the source and support of life; how he is pulling himself out by the roots from the soil whence he derives his strength; how, left to his own littleness, he withers away; how, abandoned to his own diseased nature, he condemns himself to intellectual decay.

Autonomism, individualism, independent personality – these have become the ideals that permeate the man of this age, and influence the thought of thousands without their knowing it.

The well-known, Protestant, theologian, *A. Sabatier*, writes: “It is not difficult to find the common principle to which all the expressions and tendencies of the spirit of modern times can be reduced in any field whatever. One word expresses it – the word, ‘autonomy.’ By autonomy I understand the firm confidence, which the mind of man has attained in his present stage of development, that he contains in himself his own rule of life and norm of thought, and that he harbours the ardent desire of realizing himself by obeying his own law” (*La Religion de la Culture moderne*, 10).

“Modern times,” writes *R. Eucken*, “have changed the position of the human subject ... it has become to them the centre of his life and the ultimate end of his endeavours” (*Zeitschrift fuer Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 112 (1898), 165 s.). Still clearer are the following words of *G. Spicker*: “Man depended formerly either on nature or on revelation, or on both at once; now it is just the opposite: man is in every way, theoretically as well as practically, an autonomist. If anything can denote clearly the characteristic difference between the modern and the old scholastic view, it is this absolute, subjective, standpoint.” “As we in principle do not intend to depend on any objectivity or authority, there is nothing left but the autonomy of the subject” (*Der Kampf zweier Weltanschauungen* (1898), 143, 145).

A noted apostle of modern freedom exclaims enthusiastically:

“This after all is freedom: an unconditional appreciation of human greatness, no matter how it asserts itself. This greatest happiness, as *Goethe* called it, the humanists have restored to us. Henceforth we must with all our strength retain it. Whoever wants to rob us of it, even should he descend from heaven, is our deadliest enemy.” (*H. St. Chamberlain*.)

It is true, of course, that man should strive for perfection of self in every respect; for the harmonious development of all the faculties and good inclinations of his own being, and, in this sense, for a nobler humanity; he should also develop and assert his own peculiar disposition and originality, so far as they are in order, and thus promote a healthy individualism. But all this he should do within the moral bonds of his created and limited nature, being convinced that only by keeping within the right limits of his being can he develop his ability and personality harmoniously; he dare not reach out, in reckless venture after independence, to free himself from God and his eternal end, and from the yoke of truth; he dare not transform the divine sovereignty into the distorted image of created autotheism.

He who professes a Christian view of the world, can see in such a view of man and his freedom only an utter misunderstanding of human nature and an overthrow of the right order of things. This overthrow, again, can only produce calamity, interior and exterior disorder. Woe to the planet that feels its orbit a tyrannical restraint, and leaves it to move in sovereign freedom through the universe! It will move along free, and free will it go to ruin. Woe to the speeding train that leaves its track; it will speed on free, but invariably dash itself to pieces! A nature that abandons the prescribed safeguards can only degenerate into a wild sprout. We shall see how these principles have actually become in modern intellectual life the principles of negation and intellectual degeneration.

St. Augustine states the history of mankind in the following, thoughtful words: “A twofold love divides mankind into the City of the World and the City of God. Man's self-love and his self-exaltation pushed to the contempt of God constitute the City of the World; but the love of God pushed to contempt of self is the foundation of the City of God.” (*Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, coelestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui.* De civ. Dei XIV, 28.) Thus *St. Augustine*, while contemplating the time when the war between heathenism and Christianity was raging. The same spectacle is presented to our own eyes to-day, probably more thoroughly than ever before in history.

The Period of Man's Emancipation

The modern view of man and his freedom has shaped itself gradually in recent times; the present is ever the child of the past. The most important factor in this development was undoubtedly the *Reformation*. It emancipated man in the most important affair, religious life, from the authority of the Church, and made him independent. “All have the right to try and to judge what is right and wrong in belief,” so *Luther* told the Christian nobility of the German nation; “everybody shall according to his believing mind interpret the Scriptures, it is the duty of every believing Christian to espouse the faith, to understand and defend it, and to condemn all errors.” Protestantism means even to the modern man “the thinking mind's break with authority, a protest against being fettered by anything positive, the mind's return to itself from self-alienation” (*Schwegler, Geschichte der Philosophie* (1887), 167): “it puts out of joint the Christian Church organization, and overturns its supernatural foundation, quite against its will, but with an actual, and ever more plainly visible, effect” (*E. Troeltsch, Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus fuer die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (1906), 29).

The first step towards full autonomy was taken with energy; the emancipation from external authority then progressed rapidly in the domain of politics, sociology, economy, and especially of religion, to the very elimination of everything supernatural. There came the English individualism of the seventeenth century. The liberty of “individual conviction,” termed also “tolerance,” in the sense of rejecting every authoritative interference in the sanctuary of man's thought and feeling, was extolled; of course at first only as the privilege of those who were intellectually superior. Soon the Deism of a *Herbert of Cherbury* and *Locke* was reached; it was the religion of natural reason, with belief in God and the obligation to moral action. Whatever is added by positive religions, and therefore by the Christian religion, is superfluous; hence not dogma, but freedom! *Locke*, indeed, denied to atheists state toleration; but *J. Toland* already advised full freedom of thought, even to the tolerance of atheism. In the year 1717 *Freemasonry* came into existence in England. *Adam Smith* originated the idea of a liberal political economy which frees the individual from all bond, even in the economic field. The views prevailing in England then exert great influence in France. *Rousseau* and *Voltaire* appear.

In France and Germany the enlightenment of the eighteenth century makes rapid strides in the direction of emancipation. “The enlightenment of the eighteenth century,” writes *H. Heltner*, “not only resumes the prematurely interrupted work of the sixteenth century, the Reformation, but carries it on independently, and in its own way. The thoughts and demands of the ‘enlightened’ are bolder and

more aggressive, more unscrupulous and daring... With *Luther* the idea of revelation remained intact; the new method of thought rejects the idea of a divine revelation, and bases all religious knowledge on merely human thought and sentiment... It is only the free, entirely independent thought that decides in truth and justice, moral and political rights and duties. Reason has regained its self-glory; man comes to his senses again” (*Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts II* (1894), 553). *Kant* gave it a philosophical setting.

Then the *French Revolution* breaks into fierce blaze, writing on the skies of Europe with flaming letters the ideas of emancipated humanity; the adherents to the old religion are sent to the guillotine. On August 27, 1789, the proclamation of the “rights of man” is made. “The principles of 1789,” as they are now called, henceforth dominate the nineteenth century. The system which adopted these principles called itself, and still calls itself, *Liberalism*.

Liberalism as a principle – we are speaking of the principles of liberalism, not of its adherents, who for the most part do not carry out these principles in their consequences, and occasionally do not even grasp them completely – tried to accomplish man's utter emancipation from all external and superior authority. It sought to accomplish this in the political field, by instituting constitutional, and, wherever possible, a republican form of government; in the field of economy, by granting freedom to labour and possession, to capital and commerce; but especially in the field of morals and religion, by emancipating thought and science, and the entire life of man, – school, marriage, state, – from every religious influence and direction, and in this sense it aimed at humanizing the whole life of man. This is its purpose. To achieve this, it aims at establishing itself in the state, by gaining political power through the aid of compulsory laws, of course against all principles of freedom; it tries to attain this by compulsory state-education, by obligatory civil marriage, and so on. At first there appeared only a moderate liberalism, which gradually gave place to a more radical tendency, striving more directly and openly toward the enfeeblement and, if possible, the destruction of the Christian view of the world and its chief representative, the Church. In 1848 the well-known materialist *K. Vogt* said at the national assembly in Frankfurt: “Every church is opposed to a free development of mankind, in that it demands faith above all. Every church is an obstacle in the way of man's free intellectual development, and since I am for such intellectual development of man, I am against every church” (cf. *Rothenbuecher, Trennung von Staat und Kirche* (1908), 106).

In the field of economics, every one can see how liberalism has failed. In some countries people were ashamed to retain its name any longer. It suddenly disappeared from public life, and gave place to its translation, – free thought. This shows that nobody cares to boast of its success. All barriers of safety had been removed in a night; crises, confusion, and the serious danger of the social question were the consequence. In the field of actual economics it became clear that the principle of unlimited freedom could not be carried out, because it was utterly ruinous, and it really means a complete misunderstanding of human nature. Therefore liberalism has disappeared from this field, leaving to others to solve the problem it created, and to heal the wounds it inflicted. It is otherwise in the field of theoretical economics. Here it still strives to dominate, often more thoroughly than before, no matter what name it may assume. The consequences do not appear so gross to the eyes as they would in the tangible sphere of sociology. Especially science it wants to hold in subjection to its principles of freedom in undiminished severity.

That freedom which is identified with absolute independence from all authority, especially in the intellectual sphere, we shall here know as Liberal freedom, in contradistinction to Christian freedom, which is satisfied with independence from unjust restraint.

In the foregoing discussion it has been shown how deeply the liberal idea of freedom is imbedded in the unchristian philosophical view of the world. The inevitable result is a freedom of science which considers every authoritative interference in research and teaching as an encroachment upon the rights of free development in man's personality, especially in the sphere of philosophy and religion. Moreover, the humanitarian view of the world, insisting on the independence of man and

his earthly life, naturally demands the exclusion of God and the other world, it orders the rejection of “dualism” as unscientific, and the adoption of the monistic view in its stead; an autonomous science can hardly be reconciled with a superior, restricting authority. Later on we shall demonstrate that the main law of modern science is that the supernatural is inadmissible. Furthermore, since science is not a superhuman being, but has its seat in the intellect of man, subject to the psychology of man, every one who knows the heart of man will suspect from the outset that man cannot stop at merely ignoring, but will often proceed to combat and explain away faith, the Church, and all authority that might be considered an oppressor of the truth. This undue love of liberty will of itself become a struggle for freedom against the oppressor. How far this is actually the case we shall have occasion to discuss later on.

We have heard *Nietzsche's* haughty and proud boast. Shortly after the philosopher had penned these words he was stricken (1889) with permanent, incurable insanity, with which he was afflicted till his death in 1900. The “transcendental man” was dethroned. The strength of the Titan was shattered. He that said with *Prometheus*, I am not a god, still I am in strength the equal of any of them, received the ironical answer, “Behold he has become as one of us” (Gen. iii. 22). He that cursed Christian charity towards the poor and suffering, was now cast helpless upon charity. His grave at Roecken, the place also of his birth, is a sign of warning to the modern world.

To the believing Christian a different grave opens on Easter day. From it comes the risen God-man; in His hand the banner of immortal victory. It points the way to true human greatness, to a superior humanity according to the will of God. Man longs for perfection; he longs to go beyond the narrow limits of his present condition. But modern man wants to rise to greatness by his own strength, without help from above; he would rise with giant bounds, without law. In his weakness he falls; error and scepticism and the loss of morality are the bitter fruit. Another way is pointed out by the great Friend of Man. Humanity is to be led on the way of progress by the hand of God, by faith in God, supported by His grace; thus man shall participate in God's nature, shall one day attain his highest perfection in eternal life, far beyond the limits of his present condition. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Chapter III. Subjectivism And Its Freedom

The tendency of the modern intellect to independence in its own peculiar sphere of thinking and knowing, cannot fail to work itself out energetically. In this sphere it leads naturally to that view of human reasoning called subjectivism: the thinking or reasoning subject is its own law, the autonomous creator and guide of its thought. Herein lies the *essential presumption*, the very core, of the liberal freedom of science. Wherever we turn we meet subjectivism with its autonomous rejection of all authority, its arbitrary separation of knowledge from faith, its agnosticism, its relativity to truth as the moving factor of, and the ostensible warrant for, this freedom, especially in the sphere which it considers peculiarly its own, philosophy and religion. Only when we look closer into its philosophical premises will it be possible to form a judgment of the “scientific method” it employs in this, its peculiar sphere, and of the justice of its claim to be the sole administrator of man's ideal possessions, and to be altogether “independent of every view not conforming to this scientific method.” Before considering subjectivism let us by way of preface set down a few considerations on the nature of human, intellectual perception.

Objectivism and Subjectivism

It always has been, and still is, the firm conviction of unbiassed men, – a conviction which irresistibly forces itself upon us, – that in our intellectual perception and thought we grasp an *objective, exterior order of things, an existence distinct from our thought*; of this objective reality we reproduce an image in our minds, and thus grasp it intellectually. *Cognitio est similitudo rei*, says the old school; that is, Knowledge is the reproduction of an objective reality, which thus becomes the criterion of cognition. The reproduction is a counterpart of the original. In this perfect resemblance of our cognition to the objective reality there has ever been recognized the *truth* of knowledge.

When the thinking mind has arrived at the mathematical truth that the circumference of a circle is the product of the diameter multiplied by *Ludolph's* number, it knows – unless indeed it has lost its natural candour – that it has not of itself produced this result of reasoning, but that it has recognized in it an objective reality of truth, distinct from its own thought, and has reproduced that truth in itself. And because this reproduction corresponds to the reality, it is called true cognition. Similarly, when the intellect expresses the general law of causality, namely, everything that happens has a cause, the intellect is again convinced that it has not of itself produced this result of reasoning, but has only reproduced it by assimilating to itself an objective truth which is necessarily so and cannot be otherwise, and which the mind must assimilate if it wants to think aright. This is true not only when the mind is dealing with concrete things, but also when it would give expression to general principles, as in the present instance; these, too, are not subjective projections, but are independent of the thinking subject, and are eternal laws.

This view of the nature of human cognition and thought has gradually undergone an essential change, not indeed with those outside the influence of philosophical speculation, but with the representatives of modern philosophy, and those subject to its influence. Objectivism has been superseded by subjectivism. Its principle is this: cognition, imagination, and thought are not the intellectual apprehension of an objective world existing independent of us, of which we reproduce in ourselves a counterpart. No, *the mind creates its own results of reason and cognition*; the objects before us are the creatures of the imagining subject. At the utmost, we can but say that our reasoning is the manner in which a hidden exterior world appears to us. This manner must necessarily conform to the peculiarity of the subject, to his faculties and stage of development; but the exterior world as it is in itself we can never apprehend. *Descartes*, starting with the premise that consciousness is the beginning of all certainty, was the first modern philosopher to enter upon the way of subjectivism. He

was followed by *Locke*, *Berkeley*, and *Kant*. It is due to them that in the modern theory of cognition the fundamental principle of idealistic subjectivism, no matter how difficult and unreasonable it may appear to an ordinary thinker, has obtained so many advocates who, nevertheless, cannot adhere to it, but contradict it at every step.

“The world,” *Schopenhauer* is convinced, “is the projection of my idea... No truth is more certain, more independent of all others, less in need of proof, than this, that all there is to be known, hence the whole world, is an object only in relation to a subject, a vision of the beholder; in a word, the projection of my own idea. Hence the subject is the bearer of the world” (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, I, §§ 1-2). “It is evidently true that knowledge cannot go beyond our consciousness, and hence the existence of things outside of our sphere of consciousness must, to say the least, remain problematical” (*Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, 1892, p. 2). In like manner *O. Liebmann* says: “We can never go beyond our individual sphere of ideas (projection of our ideas), even though we apprehend what is independent of us, still the absolute reality of it is known to us only as our own idea” (*Zur Analysis der Wirklichkeit*, 1900, p. 28). Therefore “the contrast between ‘I’ and the world,” says *E. Mach*, “between feeling or apprehension and the reality, falls away” (*Die Analysis der Empfindungen*, 2d ed., 1900, p. 9). And a disciple of *Mach* says: “It is important to hold fast to the idea that a self-existent, divine Truth, independent of the subject, objectively binding, enthroned, so to say, above men and gods, is meaningless... Such a Truth is nonsense” (*H. Kleinpeter*, *Kantstudien*, VIII, 1903, p. 314).

None of these representatives of worldly wisdom are able to fulfil the first duty of the wise man: “Live according to what you teach.” Even the sceptic *Hume* has to admit that in the common affairs of life he feels himself compelled of necessity to talk and act like other people.

Subjectivism is really nothing but *scepticism*, for it eliminates the knowableness of objective truth. But it is a masked – if you will, a reformed – scepticism. Cognition is given another purpose; its task is not at all, so it is said, to reproduce or assimilate a world distinct from itself, but to create its own contents. The very nature of cognition is reversed.

The Autonomy of Reason

It was *Kant*, the herald of a new era in philosophy, who gave to this gradually maturing subjectivism its scientific form and basis. At the same time he gave prominence to that element of subjectivism which seems to give justification to freedom of thought, to wit, autonomism, the creative power of the intellect which makes its own laws. Independence of reason and free thought have become catchwords since *Kant's* time. They are a precious ingredient of the autonomy of modern man.

When the flaming blaze of the French Revolution was reddening the skies of Europe, and inaugurating the restoration of the rights of man, *Kant* was sitting in his study at Königsberg, his heart beating strongly in sympathy with the Revolution, for he saw in it a hopeful turn of the times. An old man of nearly seventy, he followed the events with most passionate interest. *Varnhagen* records in his Memoirs, based on the stories of *Staegemann*, that, when the proclamation of the Republic was announced in the newspapers, *Kant*, with tears in his eyes, said to some friends: “Now can I say with Simeon, ‘Now dost Thou, O Lord, dismiss Thy servant in peace, because mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation’ ” (*H. Hettner*, *Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrh.* III, 4th ed., 3, 2, 1894, p. 38). While on the other side of the Rhine the Jacobins were doing their bloody work of political liberation, the German philosopher, the herald of a new era and an ardent admirer of *Rousseau*, sat in his study labouring for man's intellectual liberation. To give man the right of autonomous self-determination in

action and thought was the work of his life. Autonomy was indeed to him “‘the source’ of all dignity of man and of every rational nature” (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, II). And hence it was that his ardent followers beheld in him “the first perfect model of a really free German, one who had purged himself from every trace of Roman absolutism, dogmatism, and anti-individualism” (*H. St. Chamberlain, Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrh.*, 8th ed., 1907, II, 1127).

In his “*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*” (The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Ethics) and “*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*” (Critique of Practical Reason) *Kant* sought to establish *autonomy in moral life* and action. Man himself, his practical reason, is the ultimate foundation of all moral obligation; did man lead a good life out of obedience to God it would be a heteronomy unworthy of the name of “moral.” “The autonomy of the will,” he teaches, “is the sole principle of all moral laws and the duties allied to them; all arbitrary heteronomy, on the contrary, far from having any binding force, is contrary to the principle of morality of the will” (*Kritik der prakt. Vern.*, *Elementarlehre*, I, 1, 4. *Lehrsatz*). Or, as amplified by a faithful interpreter of the master: “In the moral world the individual should be not only a member but also a ruler; he is a member of the moral order when he obeys its law; he is its ruler when he enacts the law... The distinction between autonomy and heteronomy separates true from false ethics, the system of *Kant* from all other systems. All moral systems, except that of *Kant*, are based on the principles of heteronomy; they can have no other. And critical philosophy was the first to grasp the principle of autonomy” (*Kuno Fischer, Geschichte der neuen Philosophie*, IV, 2d ed., 1869, p. 114 *seq.*). *Kant's* just man no longer prays “Thy will be done”; he identifies the law with himself. *Nietzsche's* transcendental man is seen in the background.

Autonomy of thought is the result of the “Critique of Pure Reason,” and in spite of its inconsistency of expression, its involved sentences, its extremely tiresome style, it is and will long continue to be the text-book of modern philosophy. According to *Kant* our cognition consists in our fashioning the substance of our perceptions and reasoning after innate, purely subjective, views and conceptions. Time and place, and especially the abstract notions of existence and non-existence, necessity, causality, substance, have no truth independent of our thought; they are but forms and patterns according to which we are forced to picture the world. Their first matter is supplied by sense experience, such as sound, colour, feeling; but these, too, according to *Kant*, are not objective. Nothing then remains to our cognition that is not purely subjective, having existence in ourselves alone. Our cognition is no longer a reproduction, but a creation of its object; our thought is no longer subject to an external truth that may be forced upon it. “Hitherto,” says *Kant*, “it has been generally supposed that our cognition must be governed by objects... Let us see if we cannot make better headway in the province of metaphysics by supposing that objects must be governed by our cognition” (*Kritik der Reinen Vernunft, Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe*).

This is, indeed, nothing but a complete falsification of human cognition. It is evident to an unbiassed mind that there must be a reason for everything, not because I so think, but I think so because such is the fact; that the multiplication table is right, not because I think so, but I must multiply according to it simply because it is right. My thought is subject to objective truth. But *Kant's* autonomy means emancipation from objective truth, and hence, though *Kant* himself held fast to the unchangeable laws of thinking and acting, he energetically opened the way for subjectivism with all its consequences. This was *Kant's* doing, and history credits him with it. It was one of those events which have made men famous: the giving to the ideas and sentiments of a period their scientific formula, and thereby also their apparent justification.

Schiller wrote in 1805 to *W. von Humboldt*: “The profound fundamental ideas of ideal philosophy remain an enduring treasure, and for this reason alone one should think himself fortunate for having lived at the present time... Finally, we are both idealists, and should be ashamed to have it said of us that things made us and not we the things.” *Fr. Paulsen* gives expression to the opinion of many when he says: “*Kant* gives to the intellect the self-determination that is essential to it, and the

position in the world which it deserves. He has raised the intellect's creative power to a position of honour: the essence of the intellect is freedom" (Immanuel Kant, 1898, p. 386). "The autonomy of reason . . . we cannot give up" (*Kant, Der Philosoph des Protestantismus*, in *Philosophia militans*, 2d ed., 1901, p. 51). "It is indeed the offspring of Protestantism." "To me it is beyond doubt," *Paulsen* continues, "that the fundamental tendency of primitive Protestantism has here been carried out in all clearness" (Ibid. 43). *Luther*, too, found in the heart of the individual the unfailing source of truth. For that reason *Kant* has been called the philosopher of Protestantism.

Hence the well-known historian, *J. Scherr*, may not be wrong when he calls the philosophy of *Kant* "the foundation of granite whereon is built the freedom of the German intellect."

Now, indeed, we easily understand the demand for freedom of thought. It is unintelligible how an external authority, a divine revelation or infallible Church, could have ever approached man, assured him of the truth of its teaching, and laid upon him in consequence of this testimony the obligation of accepting it as true. "An external authority," we are assured, "be it ever so great, will never succeed in arousing in us a sense of obligation; its laws, be they ever so lofty and earnest, will be deemed arbitrary, simply because they come from without" (*Sabatier, La Religion et la Culture moderne*, apud *Fonsegrive, Die Stellung der Katholiken gegenueber der Wissenschaft*, Deutsch von *Schieser* (1903), 10). Man accepts only what he himself has produced, what is congenial to his individuality, what is in harmony with his personal intellectual life. In the place of truth steps "personal conviction," the shaping of one's views and ideals; in the place of unselfish submission to the truth steps the "development of one's intellectual individuality," the "evolution of one's intellectual personality"; in a word, free-thought. Exterior authority can no longer impose an obligation. "Is there on earth," asks *Paulsen*, "an instance where authority can decide for us in matters of belief and thought?" And he answers: "There is none; there cannot be on this earth an infallible teaching authority." And why not? "Philosophy and science must refuse to recognize such an authority . . . If I could believe all that the Church or the Pope teaches, this one thing I could never believe, that they are infallible; it would include a resolution, once for all, to renounce my own judgment regarding whatever they declare true or false, good or bad; it would be the utter renunciation of the use of my reason and conscience." (Ibid. 51-53. We shall often cite the testimony of *Paulsen* for the purpose of illustrating modern thought, partly because he is no longer living, partly because he is quite an outspoken representative of the modern view of the world, though generally regarded as moderate. Moreover, he is without doubt one of the most widely read of the modern German philosophers.)

The demonstration of all this is quite unique. Here it is in brief: Were there an infallible authority, one which necessarily taught the truth, then thought and science would be irrevocably subjected to this authority: that will not do; therefore there is no such authority. Or thus: Were there an infallible teaching, then we should have to accept it without contradiction: that is impossible; therefore there is no infallibility. Hence it is clear, the protest against an infallible authority, even though divine, – for the argument holds good also in regard to such an authority, – is not based on the impossibility of teaching the truth, for the authority is supposed to be infallible, but on man's refusal to be taught. And this refusal is made in accordance with that sovereign freedom of thought which is the natural offspring of subjectivism; the principal renunciation is based on its denial of objective truth. *It is the rejection of the truth.*

"In advanced progress," *Paulsen* continues, "the individual is also separating himself from the intellectual mass of the people in order to enjoy a separate mental existence . . . The individual is beginning to have his own ideas about things; he is no longer satisfied with the common opinions and notions about the world and life

which have been dealt out to him by religion and mythology: all philosophy begins with freeing the individual from common notions.” “If the individual ideals of a personality, gifted with extraordinary power of mind and will, happen to come in conflict with the objective morality of the time, then there results one of those struggles which cause the dramatic crises of history. They who thus struggled were the real heroes of mankind. They rose against the conventional and indifferent ideals which had grown obsolete, against untrue appearances, against the salt that had lost its savour; they preached a new truth, pointed out new aspirations and ideals which breathed a new strength into life and raised it to a higher plane” (System der Ethik, 8th ed., 1906, I, 372 f.).

Truly encouraging words for the modern agitator and reformer. To summon the courage to rise above the level of the masses, to feel within himself the centre of gravity, and to fashion his thoughts regardless of the whole world, this is nothing less than the beginning of philosophy and wisdom. And should he feel himself strong-minded he may simply change all moral and religious values which do not square with his individual judgments. “To remain faithful to one's own self,” we are told again, “that is the essence of this ideal bravery. No one can possess this virtue who does not feel within himself the centre about which life gravitates; whoever pursues exterior things as his ultimate end cannot penetrate to interior freedom. *Spinoza*, by life and teaching, is a great preacher of this freedom” (Ibid. II, p. 27). Self-consciousness as arrogant as that of a pantheist like *Spinoza*, who indeed did not pursue “exterior things as the ultimate end,” nor God either; the self-consciousness in which man feels himself the centre about which world and life revolve; the will which now directs thought on its way, – these are the life-nerves of autonomous free-thought.

In fact, inclination and will, not objective truth, are the measure and norm of free-thought. This *Paulsen* again expresses with astonishing candour. According to him, intelligence is after all nothing else than a transformation of the will, this doctrine is rooted in the more modern voluntaristic monism, and is akin to subjectivism. If our cognition itself forms its object, then the real concept of cognition has been lost to us, and in its place we have the will determining the action even of the intellect. *Paulsen* says emphatically, “Intelligence is an instrument of the will in the service of preservation of life... Perhaps it can be said that even the elementary formations of thought, the logical and metaphysical forms of reality, are already codetermined by the will. If the forms of abstract thought are at all the result of biological evolution, then this must be accepted: they are formations and conceptions of reality, which have proved effective and life-preserving, and have therefore attained their object. The principle of identity is in reality not a mere statement, not an indicative, but an imperative: A is A; that is, what I have put down as A shall be A and remain A... If this be so, if thought and cognition be determined fundamentally by the will, then it is altogether unintelligible how it might finally turn against the will, and force upon it a view against its will” (*Kant's Verhaeltniss zur Metaphysik*, 1900, p. 31 f.).

We have to do here with a confusion of ideas possible only when correct reasoning has sunk to a surprisingly low level. To think with the will, to draw conclusions with intention, is degenerate thinking. But now we understand better what is meant by autonomy of thought. It gives man license to disregard by shallow reasoning everything that clashes with his own will. “What I have put down as A shall be A and remain A!”

It is now clear that subjectivism and autonomism in thinking are rooted in the positive disregard of objective truth, in the refusal of an unconditional subjection to it; they mean *emancipation from*

the truth. Here we have the most striking and *deepest difference* between modern subjectivistic and Christian objective thought. The latter adheres to the old conviction that our thoughts do not make the truth, but are subject to an objective order of things as a norm. For this reason autonomous freedom and subjective caprice, a manner of reasoning that would approach truth as a lawgiver, and even change it according to time and circumstance, are unintelligible in the Christian objective thought. This thought submits unselfishly to truth wherever met, be it without a divine revelation or with it, if the revelation be but vouched for. And the reward of this unselfishness is the preservation of the truth.

But subjectivism, with its freedom, leads inevitably to the loss of the truth; it is scepticism in principle, in fact, if my thoughts are not a counterpart of an objective world, but only a subjectively produced image; not knowledge of an external reality, but only a figment of the imagination, a projection, then I can have no assurance that they are more than an empty dream.

The Modern Separation of Knowledge and Faith

Of course it would be too much to expect that subjectivism in modern thought and scientific work should go to the very limit, viz., to disregard all reasoning, to advance at will any theory whatever, to silence disagreeable critics by merely referring to one's autonomy in thinking, and denying that any one can attain to absolute truth. Errors in empirical speculation never prosper as others do; the power of natural evidence asserts itself at every step, and tears down the artificial cobwebs of apparently scientific scepticism. It asserts itself less strongly where the opposing power of natural evidence is weaker, than is the case in matters of actual sense-experience. Here indeed one sees the objective reality before him, which he cannot fashion according to his caprice. The astronomer has no thought of creating his own starry sky, nor does the archæologist wish to create out of his own mind the history of ancient nations. They both desire to know and to reveal the reality. But in the *suprasensible sphere*, in dealing with questions of the whence and whither of human life, where there is question of religion and morals, there autonomy and scepticism assert themselves as though they were in their own country, there the free-thinker steps in, boasting of his independence and taking for his motto the axiom of ancient sophistry: the measure of all things is man.

Here at the same time the natural product of subjectivism, sceptic agnosticism, has full sway. In such matters, we are told, there is no certain truth; nothing can be proved, nothing refuted: they are all matters of *faith*— not faith, of course, in the Catholic sense. The latter is the acceptance by reason of recognized divine testimony, hence an act of the intellect. The modern so-called faith, on the contrary, is not an act of the intellect, but is supposed to be a vague *feeling*, a want, a longing and striving after the divine in one's innermost soul, which divine is then to be grasped by the soul in some mysterious way as something immediately present in it. This feeling is said to emerge from the subconsciousness of the soul, and to raise in the mind those images and symbols which we encounter in the doctrines of the various religions, varying according to times and men. They are only the symbols for that unutterable experience of the divine, which can be as little expressed by definitions and tenets as sounds can by colour. It is a conviction of the ideal and divine, but different from the conviction of reason; it is an inner, actual experience. Hence there can no longer be absolute religious truth, no unchangeable dogmas, which would have to be adhered to forever. In religion, in views of the world and life, the free feeling of the human subject holds sway, a feeling that experiences and weaves together those thoughts and ideals that are in accord with his individuality. This is the modern doctrine.

The dark mysticism of the ancient East and the agnosticism of modern times here join hands. This modern method of separating knowledge and faith is, as we all know, a prominent feature of modern thought. Knowledge, that is, cognition by reason, is said to exist only in the domain of the natural sciences and history. Of what may be beyond these we can have no true knowledge. Here, too, *Kant* has led the way; for the important result of his criticism is his incessant injunction: we can have

true knowledge only of empiric objects, never of things lying beyond the experience of the senses; our ideas are merely subjective constructions of the reason which obtain weight and meaning only by applying them to objects of sense experiment. Hence God, immortality, freedom, and the like, remain forever outside the field of our theoretical or cognitive reason. Nevertheless *Kant* did not like to drop these truths. Hence he constructed for himself a conviction of another kind. The “practical reason” is to guide man's action in accomplishing the task in which her more timid sister, theoretical reason, failed. And it does it, too. It simply “postulates” these truths; they are its “*postulates*,” since without them moral life and moral order, which it is bound to recognize, would be impossible. No one knows, of course, whether this be truth, but it ought to be truth. *Stat pro ratione voluntas*. The Gordian knot is cut. “It is so,” the will now cries from the depths of the soul, “I believe it”; while the intellect stands hesitatingly by protesting “I don't know whether it is so or not.” Doubt and conviction embrace each other; Yes and No meet peacefully. “I had to suspend knowledge,” *Kant* suggests, “in order to make room for faith” (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 2. Vorrede). “It is an exigency of pure practical reason based on duty,” he further comments on his postulate, “to make something the highest good, the object of my will, in order to further it with all my power. Herein, however, I have to assume its possibility, and therefore its conditions, viz., God, freedom, and immortality, because I cannot prove them by speculative reason, nor yet disprove them.” Thus “the just man may say I wish that there be a God; I insist upon it, I will not have my faith taken from me” (*Kritik der prakt. Vernunft*, 1. Teil, 2. Buch, 2 VIII).

Others have followed the lead of *Kant*. For philosophers, Protestant theologians, and modernists, he has become the pilot in whom they trust.

“*Kant's* critical philosophy,” says *Paulsen*, “gives to knowledge what belongs to it – the entire world of phenomena, for the freest investigation; on the other hand, it gives to faith its eternal right, viz., the interpretation of life and the world according to their value” (Immanuel Kant, 1898, 6). “Faith does not simply rest upon proofs, but upon practical necessity”; “it does not come from the intellect, but from the heart and will” (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 10th ed., 1903, 271, 269). “Religion is not a science, hence it cannot be proved nor disproved.” “Therefore man's view of the world does not depend on the intellect, but solely on his will... The ultimate and highest truths, truths by which man lives and for which he dies, have not their source in scientific knowledge, but come from the heart and from the individual will.” In a similar strain *R. Falkenberg* writes: “The views of the world growing out of the chronology of the human race, as the blossoms of a general process of civilization, are not so much thoughts as rhythms of thinking, not theories but views, saturated with appreciations... Not only optimism and pessimism, determinism and doctrine of freedom, but also pantheism and individualism, idealism and materialism, even rationalism and sensualism, have their roots ultimately in the affections, and even while working with the tools of reason remain for the most part matters of faith, sentiment, and resolve” (*Geschichte der neuen Philosophie*, 5th ed., 1905, p. 3).

You may look up any books or magazines of modern philosophy or Protestant theology, and you will find in all of them “that faith is a kind of conviction for which there is no need of proof” (*H. Luedemann*, Prot. Monatshefte IX, 1903, 367). This emotional faith has been introduced into Protestant theology especially by *Schleiermacher*. It is also this view of the more recent philosophy that the modernists have adopted. They themselves confess: “The *modernists* in accord with modern psychology distinguish clearly between knowledge and faith. The intellectual processes which lead to them appear to the modernists altogether foreign to and independent of one another. This is one of our fundamental principles” (*Programma dei Modernisti* (1908), 121).

Religious instruction for children will then have to become altogether different. The demand is already made for “a recast of thought from the sphere of the intellect into the sphere of affection.” Away, so they clamour, away with the dogmas of creation, of Christ as the Son of God, of His miracles, as taught in the old schools! For all these are religious ideas. Pupils of the higher grades should be told “the plain truth about the degree of historicity in elementary religious principles... The fundamental idea of religion can neither be created nor destroyed by teaching, it has its seat in sentiment, like – excuse the term – an insane idea” (*Fr. Niebergall, Christliche Welt, 1909, p. 43*).

This dualism of “faith” and knowledge is as untenable as it is common. It is a psychological *impossibility* as well as a sad *degradation of religion*.

How can I seriously believe, and seriously hold for true, a view of the world of which I do not know whether it be really true, when the intellect unceasingly whispers in my ear: it is all imagination! As long as faith is a conviction so long must it be an activity of the intellect. With my feeling and will I may indeed wish that something be true; but to wish simply that there be a God is not to be convinced that there actually is a God. By merely longing and desiring I can be as little convinced as I can make progress in virtue by the use of my feet, or repent of sins by a toothache. It is μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος. A dualism of this kind, between head and heart, doubt and belief, between the No of the mind and the Yes of the heart, is a process incompatible with logic and psychology. How could such a dualism be maintained for any length of time? It may perhaps last longer in one in whom a vivid imagination has dimmed the clearness of intellect; but where the intellectual life is clear, reason will very soon emancipate itself from a deceptive imagination. One may go on dreaming of ideal images, but as soon as the intellect awakens they vanish. Hallucinations are taken for real while the mind is affected, but they pass away the moment it sees clearly.

Kant himself, the father of modern agnostic mysticism, has made it quite clear that his postulates of faith concerning the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, have never taken in him the place of earnest conviction. Thus in the first place *Kant* holds that there are no duties towards God, since He is merely a creature of our mind. “Since this idea proceeds entirely from ourselves, and is a product of ours, we have here before us a postulated being towards whom we cannot have an obligation; for its reality would have to be proved first by experience (or revealed)”; but “to have religion is a duty man owes to himself.” Again, he dislikes an oath, he asks whether an oath be possible and binding, since we swear only on condition that there is a God (without, however, stipulating it, as did *Protagoras*). And he thinks that “in fact all oaths taken honestly and discreetly have been taken in no other sense” (*Metaphysik der Sitten, II, § 18, Beschluss*).

Prayer he dislikes still more. “Prayer,” he says, “as an internal form of cult, and therefore considered as a means of grace, is a superstitious delusion (feticism) ... A hearty wish to please God in all our actions, that is, a disposition present in all our actions to perform them as if in the service of God, is a spirit of prayer that can and ought to be our perpetual guide.” “By this desire, the spirit of prayer, man seeks to influence only himself; by prayer, since man expresses himself in words, hence outwardly, he seeks to influence God. In the former sense a prayer can be made with all sincerity, though man does not pretend to assert the existence of God fully established; in the latter form, as an address, he assumes this highest Being as personally present, or at least pretends that he is convinced of its presence, in the belief that even if it should not be so it can do him no harm, on the contrary it may win him favour; hence in the latter form of actual prayer we shall not find

the sincerity as perfect as in the former. The truth of this last remark any one will find confirmed when he imagines to himself a pious and well-meaning man, but rather backward in regard to such advanced religious ideas, surprised by another man while, I will not say praying aloud, but only in an attitude of prayer; any one will expect, without my saying so, that that man will be confused, as if he were in a condition of which he ought to be ashamed. But why this? A man caught talking aloud to himself raises at once the suspicion that his mind is slightly deranged; and not altogether wrongly, because one would seem out of mind if found all alone making gestures as though he had somebody else before him; that, however, is the case in the example given” (Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, 4. Stueck, 2, § 4, Allgemeine Anmerkung). Thus it happens that in his opinion those who have advanced in perfection cease to pray.

Nor does it seem that *Kant* is serious about his postulate of the *immortality* of the soul. Asked by *Lacharpe* what he thought of the soul, he did not answer at first, but remarked, when the question was repeated: “We must not make too much boast of it” (*H. Hettner*, Literat. Gesch. des 18. Jahrh., III, 4. ed., 3, p. 26. From *Varnhausen's Denkwuerdigkeiten*).

Thousands have with *Kant* destroyed their religious conviction by a boastful scepticism, and, like him, finally given it up to replace its lack by artificial autosuggestions.

And is not the religious life of man thereby made completely valueless? The highest truths on which the mind of man lives, and which from the first stage of his existence not only interested but deeply stirred him, become fiction, pictures of the fancy, suggestions of an effeminate mind, that cannot make a lasting impression on stronger minds. And how can the products of autosuggestion give comfort and strength in hours of need and trial? It is true they do not impose any obligations. Every one is free to form his own notions of life; they are not to be taken seriously anyway, whether they be this or that; they are all equally true and equally false. Buddhism is just as true as Christianity, Materialism as true as Spiritualism, Mohammedanism as true as Quakerism, the wisdom of the Saints as true as the philosophy of the worldly. “The most beautiful flower is growing on the same soil (that of the emotions) with the rankest weed” (*Hegel*). The decision rests with sentiments which admit of no arguing. Thus all is made over to scepticism, to that constant doubting which degrades and unnerves the higher life of modern times, to that *modern agnosticism* which, though bearing the distinction of aristocratic reserve, is in reality dulness and poverty of intellect; not a perfection of the human intellect, but a hideous disease, all the more dangerous because difficult to cure. It is the neurasthenia of the intellect of which the physical neurasthenia of our generation is the counterpart.

The distinguishing mark between man and the lower animals has ever been held to be that the former could knowingly step beyond the sphere of the senses, into that world of which his intellect is a part. The conviction has always prevailed that man by means of his own valid laws of thought, for instance, the principle of causality, could safely ascend from the visible world to an invisible one. Thus also the physician concludes the interior cause of the disease from the exterior symptoms, the physicist thus comes to the knowledge of the existence of atoms and ions which he has never seen, and the astronomer calculates with *Leverrier* the existence and location of stars which no eye has yet detected.

One thing has certainly been established: a *free sentiment* can now assert itself with sovereignty in the most important spheres of intellectual life, without any barriers of stationary truths and immovable Christian dogmas; one is now free to fashion his religion and ideals to suit the *individuum ineffabile*. The latter asks no longer what religion demands of him, but rather how religion can serve his purposes. “For the gods,” it is said, “which we now acknowledge, are those we need, which we can use, whose demands confirm and strengthen our own personal demands and those of our fellow-

men... We apply thereby only the principle of elimination of everything unsuitable to man, and of the survival of the fittest, to our own religious convictions"; "we turn to that religion which best suits our own individuality" (*W. James*). Arrogant doubt can now undermine all fundamental truths of Christian faith until they crumble to pieces; beside it rises the free genius of the new religion, on whose emblem the name of God is no longer emblazoned, but the glittering seal of an independent humanity.

Relative Truth

Freedom of thought appears still more justified when we take a further step which brings us to the *consequence of subjectivism*; *i. e.*, when we advance so far as to assert that there are no unchangeable and in this sense no absolute truths, but only temporary, changeable, relative truths. And modern thought does profess this: there is no absolute truth, no *religio et philosophia perennis*; different principles and views are justified and even necessary for different times and even classes. This removes another barrier to freedom of thought, *viz.*, allegiance to generally accepted truths and to the convictions of bygone ages.

The logicalness of this further step can hardly be denied. If the human intellect, independent of the laws of objective truth, fashions its own object and truth, especially in things above the senses, why can it not form for itself, at different periods and in different stages of life, a different religion and another view of the world? Cannot the human subject pass through different phases? He indeed changes his costume and style of architecture; why not also his thoughts? Every product of thought would then be the right one for the time, but would be untenable for a further stage of his intellectual genesis and growth, and would have to be replaced by a new one. The nature of subjectivistic thought is no longer an obstacle to this. Besides, we have the modern idea of *evolution*, already predominant in all fields: the world, the species of plants and animals, man himself with his whole life, his language, right, family, all of them the products of a perpetual evolution, everything constantly changing. Why not also his religion, morality, and view of the world? They are only reflexes of a temporary state of civilization. Hence also here motion and change, evolution into new shapes!

Therefore, so it is said, we have now broken definitely with the "dogmatic method of reasoning" of the belief in revelation, and of scholastic philosophy which adhered to absolute truth. They are replaced by the historical-genetical reasoning of the *saeculum historicum* which "has discarded absolute truth: there are only relative, no eternal truths" (*Paulsen*, Immanuel Kant, 1898, 389). We are further assured that "this treatment of the history of thought prevails in the scientific world; the Catholic Church alone has not adopted it. She still clings to dogmatic reasoning, and that is natural to her; she is sure that she is in possession of the absolute truth" (*Idem*, *Philosophia militans*, 2d ed., 1901, 5). Outside of this Church every period of time is free to construct its own theories, which will eventually go with it as they came with it.

We meet this relative truth, and all the indefinable hazy notions identified with it, *in all spheres*.

The modern history of philosophy and religion concedes to every system and religion the right to their historic position: they are necessary phases of evolution. The notion of immutable problems and truths by which any system of thought would have to be measured has been lost. "The appearance and rejection of a system," says *J. E. Erdmann*, "is a necessity of world-history. The former was demanded by the character of the time which the system reflected, the latter again is demanded by the fact that the time has changed" (*Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 3rd, I, 1878, 4). And Professor *Euckens* says: "Despite all its advantages, such a view and construction of life is not a definite truth, it remains an attempt, a problem that always causes new discord among minds" (*Grundlinien einer neuen Lebensanschauung*, 1907, 2). "Thus, if according to *Hegel* the coming

into being constitutes the truth of being, the ideals and aims also must share in the mobility, and truth becomes a child of the times (*veritas temporis filia*). That apparently subjects life to a full-blown relativism, but such a relativism has lost all its terror by the deterioration of the older method of reasoning. For agreement with existing truth is no longer its chief object.” (Geistige Stroemungen der Gegenwart, 1904, p. 197). The new theory of knowledge assures us quite generally: “It is a vain attempt to single out certain lasting primitive forms of consciousness, acknowledged constant elements of the mind, to retain them. Every ‘a-priori’ principle which is thus maintained as an unalienable dowry of thought, as a necessary result of its psychological and physiological ‘disposition,’ will prove an obstacle of which the progress of science will steer clear sooner or later” (*E. Cassirer, Das Erkenntnissproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, 1906, 6).

That this relativism is also laying hand, more and more firmly, upon modern ethics is well known. One often gets the conviction that, as *E. Westermarck* teaches, “there is no absolute standard of morality,” that “there are no general truths,” “that all moral values,” as Prof. *R. Broda* writes, “are relative and varying with every people, every civilization, every society, every free person” (*Dokumente des Fortschritts*, 1908, 362).

Thus modern subjectivism has lost all sense for definite rules of thought; in its frantic rush for freedom and in its confused excitement it seeks to upset all barriers. Now, of course, we may disregard convictions thousands of years old, by simply observing that they suited former ages but not the present; that they perhaps suit the uneducated but not the educated. Henceforth one may also reject the dogmas of *Christianity* by merely pointing out that they were at one time of importance, but are not suited to the modern man. That is an idea readily grasped, one which has already become quite general with those who are mentally tired of Christianity. What is demanded is a further evolution also of the Christian religion, a continuous cultivation of freer, higher forms, an undogmatic Christianity without duty to believe, without a Church: nothing else, in the end, but a veiled humanitarian religion.

“It will be difficult for coming generations to understand,” says *Paulsen*, in the same sense, “how our time could cling in religious instruction with such peace of mind to a system which, having originated several centuries ago under entirely different conditions of intellectual life, stands in striking contrast to facts and ideas accepted by our time everywhere outside the schools.” Hence a revision of the fundamental truths of Christianity is needed. Away with everything supernatural and miraculous, obedience to faith, original sin, redemption: all this sounds strange to the modern man. “So there remains but one way: to adapt the doctrine of the Church to the theories and views of our times” (*System der Ethik*, 8th ed., 1906, II, pp. 247, 250). And *Eucken* says similarly: “We can adopt the doctrinal system of the Church only by retiring from the present back to the past” (*Zeitschr. fuer Philosophie u. Phil. Kritik* 112, 1898, 165). Therefore we demand evolution of the Christian religion! “Let us not blindly follow antiquated doctrines disposed of by science,” we are exhorted. “Let there be no fear lest our belief in God and true piety suffer by it! Let us remember that everything earthly is in continual motion, carried along by the rushing river of life.” Onward, therefore, to advancement! ... cheerfully avowing the watchword: “evolution of religion” (*Fr. Delitzsch, Zweiter Vortrag ueber Babel u. Bibel*, 45. thousand, 1904, 42).

Modern Protestant theology has achieved a great deal in this direction; its evolution has progressed to a complete disintegration of Christianity, by adapting

it to modern ideas so thoroughly that there is not a single thought left which this Christianity, reduced to meaningless words, might not accept.

This is the relativism of the present subjectivistic reasoning and its consequences.

Now, it is true that there is room for a certain relativity and evolution in the field of thought and truth. There is a relative truth in the sense that our knowledge of it is never exhaustive. Even the eternal truths of the Christian religion we always know only imperfectly, and we ought to perfect our knowledge continually; established facts of history can also be known, if studied, in greater detail. Thus there is progress and evolution. But from this we may not conclude that there can be no fixed truths at all. In the astronomy of to-day one can surely have the conviction that the fundamental truths of *Copernicus's* System of the Universe must remain an unchangeable truth, and that the time will never come when we shall go back to the obsolete doctrines of old *Ptolemy*, who made the sun revolve around the earth. Is astronomy therefore excluded from progress and evolution? It is moreover true that the individual as well as the community pass through an intellectual evolution in the sense that they gradually increase their knowledge and correct their errors, that literature and the schools gradually enhance the energy and wealth of our ideas and thoughts.

But a progressive change of the laws of thought, to the effect that we must now hold to a proposition which at another time we should naturally reject as untenable, can be maintained only upon the supposition that the thought of evolution has driven all others out of the intellect. It would be absurd to hold that the same view could be true at one time and false at another, that the same views about the world and life could be right to-day and wrong to-morrow, to be accepted to-day and rejected to-morrow. A view is either true or false. If true, it is always true and warranted. Or was old *Thales* right when he declared the world to consist of water; were *Plato* and *Aristotle* right in maintaining that it consisted of ideas, or forms, with real existences; was *Fichte* and his time right with his Ego, and are finally *Schopenhauer*, *Wundt*, and *Paulsen* right in claiming the world to be the work of the will? Were our heroic ancestors right, as the theories of evolution claim, in holding that trees are inhabited by ghosts; were then the Greeks right with their idea of a host of gods dwelling in the Olympus; and later on, was the civilized world right in holding that there is but one God, a personal one; and, after that, are many others of to-day right when they tell us that the world, and nature itself, is god? These are conclusions that threaten confusion to the human brain. And yet they are the logical consequences of "relative truth," and any one reluctant to accept these consequences would prove thereby that he has never realized what absurdities are marketed as relative truth.

Or shall we give it up, as entirely impossible, to judge of the truth or falseness of doctrines and views? Are we to value them only so far as they are adapted to a period, and as moulding and benefiting that period? This opinion indeed is held. "The values of science and philosophy," says *Paulsen*, "of our arts and poetry, consist in what they give us; whether a distant future will still use them is very questionable. Scholastic philosophy has passed away; we use it no longer; that is, however, no proof against its value; if it has made the generations living in the latter half of the Middle Ages more intelligent and wise ... then it has done all that could rightfully be expected of it: having served its purpose, it may be laid with the dead: there is no philosophy of enduring value." "Whatever new ideas a people produces from its own inner nature will be beneficial to it. Nature may be confidently expected to produce here and everywhere at the right time what is proper and necessary" (*System der Ethik*, 8th ed., 1906, I, 339, *seq.*, II, 241).

We have here a very deplorable misconception of the real value of truth, degrading it to suit passing interests and to promote them. This also is in conformity with subjectivism. But what could be answered to the straight question: suppose the opinions which some prefer to call "false" are more useful and valuable than "truth"? None but *Nietzsche* had the courage to say that "the falsity of a judgment is not yet a sufficient prejudice against it; here our new speech will perhaps sound strangest. The question is: How far is that judgment life-promoting, life-sustaining, preservative, even creative of species, and we are inclined, on principle, to say that the falsest judgments are to us the most

indispensable” (Jenseits von Gut und Boese, I, 4, W. W. VII, 12.) The view that doctrines and opinions become especially or exclusively true and valuable by their usefulness for practical life, has become in our times the principle of pragmatism.

What others thought out only half way, *Nietzsche* reasons out to the end.

To what lengths this contempt of objective truth may lead a man of such an honest character as *Paulsen*, is learned from his advice to the modern Protestant preacher who can no longer believe what he has to preach to his orthodox congregation: he may speak just as suits his congregation, orthodox as well as unorthodox, according to the principles of relative truth. “Let us assume,” he says, “that his congregation is of a remote country village, where not the slightest report of the happenings in theology and literature has penetrated, where the names of *Strauss* and *Renan* are as little heard as those of *Kant* and *Schleiermacher*. Here the Bible is still taken to be the literal Word of God, transmitted to us by holy men commissioned to do it. In this case the preacher may speak without scruple of that book in the same way as his present hearers are used to. Would he thus be saying what is wrong? What is meant by saying the Bible is the Word of God? The same preacher, if transferred to other surroundings where he has to address readers of *Strauss* and *Kant*, may change his manner of speaking without changing his view or without violating the truth one way or the other. He would be speaking to them from their own point of view... Again, should the same preacher publish his philosophical scientific research, he could speak of Holy Scripture in an entirely different way...” And he adds: “Some have taken exception to this opinion.” Surely not without reason!

A justification of this counsel was attempted in these words:

“Just as the electric incandescent light and the tallow-candle may exist side by side, and as each of them may serve its purpose in its proper place, so there exist also side by side various physical and metaphysical ideas and fundamental notions: the scientist and the philosopher and the old grandmother in her cottage on the remote mountain-side, cannot think of the world in the same way” (Ethik II, 240-244). But the argument, if it should prove anything, must be formulated thus: “As the incandescent light can at the same time be a tallow-candle, just so can two different and opposite views about one and the same thing be at the same time both right.”

Thus, thanks to the science of modern subjectivism, every fixed and unchangeable truth, especially in the sphere of philosophy and religion, is removed, and with it also every barrier to freedom of thought in science as well as elsewhere. The human intellect in its autonomous self-consciousness may not only reject those truths which are proposed by revelation or the Church; it may not only experience its views of religion and the world by giving free activity to its feelings, it also knows that to be no longer satisfied with the old truths means to be progressive.

Above we have sketched the deeper-lying thoughts on which the liberal freedom of science is based; it is the humanitarian view of the world with its emancipation of man, and autonomous scepticism in thought, joined to that sceptical disregard of truth which once the representative of expiring pagan antiquity comprised in the words: *Quid est veritas?* Now we also understand better the liberal science which often claims the privilege of being “the” science, and which only too often likes to put down as unwarranted and inferior every other science that does not pursue its investigations in the same way. We understand its methods of thought in philosophy and religion, for which it claims an exclusive privilege; we can also form a judgment of its claim to be the leader of humanity in place of faith.

No doubt there are many who are flirting with this freedom without accepting its principles entirely. They do not reason out the thing to the end, they argue against the invasion of the Church into the field of science, and point to *Galileo*; they denounce Index and Syllabus, and then believe they have therewith exhausted the meaning of freedom of science. That the real matter in question is a view of the world diametrically opposed to the Christian view, that a changed theory of cognition is underlying it, is by many but insufficiently realized.

This freedom is not acceptable to one who professes the Christian view of the world. He will not offer any feeble apology to the eulogist of this freedom, as, for instance: Indeed you are quite right about your freedom, but please remember that I, too, as a faithful Christian am entitled to profess freedom. No; the answer can only be: Freedom, yes; but *this* freedom, no. A wholly different view of the world separates me from it. I see in it not freedom but rebellion, not the rights of man but upheaval, not a real boon of mankind but real danger.

The principle of liberalism has in the field of social economy already done enough to wreck man's welfare. It has here proved its incompetence as a factor of civilization. That in science also, where it is active in the field of philosophy and religion, liberalism is the principle of overthrowing true science, without any appreciation for truth and human nature, that it is a principle of intellectual pauperism and decay, that it despoils man of his greatest treasures, inherited from better centuries – this we shall prove conclusively.

It is difficult to say how long the high tide of liberalism will sweep over the fields of modern intellectual life before it subsides. One thing, however, is certain, that just so long it will remain a danger to Christian civilization, and to the intellectual life of mankind.

Second Section. Freedom of Research and Faith

Chapter I. Research And Faith In General

Introduction

When the youth growing to maturity begins to feel the development of his own strength, it may happen that he finds his dependence on home unbearably trying. Perhaps he will say, "Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me," and then depart into a strange country.

The men of Europe have for centuries lived in the Christian religion as in their fathers' house, and have fared well. But to many children of our time the old homestead has become too confining. Modern man, we are told, has at last come to his senses. He wants to develop his personality, thoughts, and sentiments freely, independently of every authority. He turns his back on his father's house. His parting words are the accusation: The old Church "opposes the modern principles of free individuality, the right to drain the cup of one's own reason and personal life, and it sets itself against the whole of modern feeling, investigation, and activity" (*Th. Ziegler, Gesch. der Ethik, II, 2d ed., 1892, p. 589*).

We are already acquainted with this freedom. We approach now the main question: What is the true relation of the freedom, which man may rightly claim for his scientific activity and reason, to external laws and regulations? Is man really justified to reject them all on the plea that they degrade his intellect and are an obstacle to his development, or does this rejection but manifest an error into which his desire of freedom has decoyed him? This is the question, it will be remembered, that we reached soon in the beginning of our investigation. We have already found the categorical answer – an emphatic rejection of such justification; we also traced the hypotheses on which the answer rests. We now return to the question to discuss it in principle. We begin with the freedom of scientific *research*, in order to take up afterwards the freedom in *teaching*.

What are those external powers that may interrupt or caution the scientist in his investigations and problems? Here we do not yet consider the scientist as a teacher, communicating to the public the result of his investigation, his ideas and views, from the university chair to his scientific audience, or to a wider circle of hearers by means of publications; we here regard him in his private study only, in the pursuit of which he perhaps encounters new questions, and new solutions suggest themselves to him. What freedom can he and must he enjoy here? This private freedom must evidently be judged from a point of view other than that from which the freedom in teaching should be judged. With the latter, the interests of his contemporaries must be taken into account, and the question must be considered, whether they suffer by such teaching. The freedom of the scientist is greater than that of the teacher. Moreover, research is the principal and most important activity of science: nothing, surely, is taught that has not been previously investigated. If, therefore, research is in any way restricted, so also is teaching; but not *vice versa*. Are there, then, exterior authorities that may restrain research and reasoning, and what are they?

One who lives in the Christian world knows at once of what authority to think. It is not the state. The state cannot directly influence the private work of the student: if it may exert its influence directly upon anything, it is only upon freedom in teaching. No, the authority to think of is the authority of the faith, revealed religion and its guardian, the Church.

Of course, this is not the only authority. Even if a revelation from heaven had not been given us, yet those *general convictions of mankind*, common to all nations and times, of the immutability of the laws of thought and morality, of the existence of a supramundane God, of the retribution for moral

conduct to be made in the world to come, of the sanctity of state-authority, of the necessity of private property, and others, would ever remain most revered utterances of truth. No one would be allowed to contradict this avowal of all mankind, relying on his own reasoning, which he calls science, and give the lie to the reasoning of all other men, in order to make his own reason the sole measure of truth.

But for the present let us pass over the natural authority of mankind, of its convictions and traditions. It is surpassed and replaced by the *authority of faith* which belongs to *our Christian religion*. The latter comes to us claiming to possess the only true view of the world, and laying upon us the obligation of accepting it. It has even the courage to put its anathema upon propositions which the scientist may call science; it dares write out a list of the propositions which it condemns as untenable. Against this authority the protest is raised: Where is freedom of research, if one cannot even indulge in his own ideas, if the intellect is to be cropped and fettered? What is to become of frank, unprejudiced investigation, if I am from the outset bound to certain propositions, if from the outset the result at which I must arrive is already determined? It is intellectual bondage that the man of faith is languishing in. Thus reads the indictment; thus sounds the battle-cry. Is the indictment justified? Can and shall science take faith as a guide in many instances without detriment to its own innate freedom? And where, and when?

First, the more general question: Is freedom of research compatible with the duty to believe, or do they exclude each other in principle?

What Faith is Not

What, then, is faith, and what does the duty to believe demand of us?

Here we meet at once with a false proposition which the opponents of the Christian faith will not abandon. To them faith is always a blind assent, in giving which one does not ask, nor dare ask, whether the proposition be true — *a belief without personal conviction*. According to them the believer holds himself “captive to the teaching of his Church. He cannot reflect personally, but follows blindly the lead of authority and force of habit.” Thus “Catholicism is the religion of bondage” (*W. Wundt*, *Ethik*, 3d ed., 1903, II, 255, 254). To them it is but an “uncritical submission to the existing authority, uninfluenced either by the testimony of the senses or the reflection of the intellect” (*K. Menger*, *Neue Freie Presse*, 24 Nov., 1907). The campaign for liberal science is denouncing those who “even to-day dare to demand blind faith,” “without proof or criticism,” faith in the “word of the Popes and men pretending to be interpreters and emissaries of God, men who have proved their incompetence and inability by the physical and religious coercion to which they have subjected mankind” (*T. G. Masaryk*, *V boji o náboženství*, *The Battle for Religion*, 1904, p. 10, 23).

To be sure, if the Christian faith were such, it would be intellectual slavery. If I am compelled to believe something of which I cannot know the truth, this is coercion, and conflicts with the nature of the intellect and its right to truth. Infidelity would then be liberation. But faith is *not* that.

As a rule this view is based on a presumption, which has already been extensively discussed, viz., that faith and religion have nothing at all to do with intellectual activity, but are merely the *product of the heart*, a sentimental, freely acting notion; for, of metaphysical objects no human intellect can form a certain conviction. It is subjectivism that leads to this view. According to it the subject creates its own world of thought, free in action and feeling, not indeed everywhere, — in the sphere of sense-experience the evidence of the concrete is too great, — but at least in the sphere of metaphysical truth.

Such modes of expression find their way also into Catholic literature and language; even here we meet with the assertion that religion is a matter of the heart, and for that very reason has nothing to do with science. On the whole it is a remarkable fact that among believing men many expressions are current that have been coined in the mint of modern philosophy, and have there received a special significance. They are used without real knowledge of their origin and purposed meaning; but the words do not fail to colour their ideas, and to create imperceptibly a strange train of thought.

One who is of the opinion that religion and views of the world are but sentiment and feeling, which change with one's personality and individuality, can, of course, no longer understand a dogmatic Christianity and the obligation to hold fast to clearly defined dogmas as unchangeable truth. I can hold dogmas and doctrinal decisions to be unquestionably true only when I can *convince myself of their credibility* by the judgment of my reason. If I cannot do that, and am still bound to believe them, without the least doubt, then such obedience is compulsory repression of the reason. Then it would indeed be necessary for the Church, as *Kant* says, "to instil into its flock a pious dread of the least deviation from certain articles of faith based on history, and a dread of all investigation, to such a degree that they dare not let a doubt rise, even in thought, against the articles proposed for their belief, because this would be tantamount to lending an ear to the evil spirit" (*Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, 3. Stueck, 2. Abtlg.). Fixed dogmas may then at the very most, according to the great master of modern thought, be of pedagogic value to a minor, until he be grown to maturity. But to more advanced minds must be unconditionally conceded the freedom to construct dogmas as they think best, viz., as symbols and images for the subjective thought they underlie. This also, as is well known, is an article of Modernism, which here again follows in the steps of *Kant*.

"Ecclesiastical faith," says *Kant*, "may be useful as a vehicle to minors who can grasp a purely rational religion only through symbols, until in the course of time, owing to the general enlightenment, they can with the consent of everybody exchange the form of degrading means of coercion for an ecclesiastical form suitable to the dignity of a moral religion – that of free faith." "The membranes," he says in another place, "in which the embryo first shaped itself into man must be cast off, if he is to see the light of day. The apron-strings of sacred tradition with its appendages, viz., the statutes and observances which at one time did good service, can gradually be dispensed with; they may even become a harmful hindrance when one is growing to manhood."

Of course, to him who takes the position of *Kant's dualism of belief and rational judgment*, freedom from every authority in matters of faith, and in this sense tolerance, will appear to be self-evident. Whatever has nothing to do with knowledge, but is merely the personal result of an inner, subjective experience, cannot be offered by external authority as matter for instruction. The sole standard for this belief is the autonomous subject and its own needs. In this sense *Harnack* tells us: "The kernel of one's being is to be grasped in its own depths and the soul is merely to recognize its own needs and the road traced out for their gratification. This can only be done with the fullest freedom. Any restraint here is tantamount to the destruction of the problem; any submission to the teaching of others ... is treason to one's own religion" (*Religioeser Glaube und freie Forschung*. Neue Freie Presse, 7. Juni, 1908). To have one's religion determined by any authority, even a divine one, would be treason to the sovereignty of man!

Viewed from this standpoint, the *reconciliation between faith and science* is no longer a problem. And they congratulate themselves on the solution of this vexing question. Now, they say, deliverance from an oppressive misery has been found, now the peace sought for so long is restored. A fair division has been made: two worlds, the world of the senses, and the world above sense experience. One belongs to science, where it now rules supreme; the other belongs to faith, where it can move freely, undisturbed by, and even unapproachable to science. Just as the stars in the sky are inaccessible to the custodian of civil order, – he can neither support them nor hinder them, nor pull them down, – just so the realm of faith is inaccessible to science: peace reigns everywhere.

Cheered on by this treaty of peace, *Paulsen* writes: "Thus critical philosophy has solved the old problem of the relation of knowledge to faith. *Kant* is convinced that by properly setting the limits he has succeeded in laying the foundation for real and enduring peace between them. In fact, upon this in the first place will rest the

importance and vitality of his philosophy. It gives to knowledge, on the one hand, what belongs to it for unlimited research, the whole world of phenomena; on the other hand it gives to faith its eternal right, the interpretation of life and the world from the view-point of values. There can be no doubt that herein lies the cause of the great impression made by *Kant* upon his time; he appeared as the liberator from unbearable suspense” (Immanuel Kant, 1898, 6).

To a critical observer, such peace-making is utterly incomprehensible. They probably did not consider that in this way *religion and faith* were not liberated, but *dispossessed*; not brought to a place of safety, but transferred from the realm of reality into the realm of fancy. Similarly an aggressive ruler might address a neighbouring prince thus: We cannot agree any longer, let us make peace: you retain all your titles, and I shall see to your decent support, but you will have to lay down your crown and sovereignty and leave the country – in this way we can have peace. Religion, once the greatest power in the life of man, for the sake of which man made sacrifices and even laid down his life, has now become a matter of sterile devotion; it may, moreover, no longer claim power and importance; it is now reduced to a poetic feeling, with which one can fill up intellectual vacancies. No longer is man here for religion's sake; religion is here for man's sake. A buttonhole flower, a poetic perfume to sprinkle over his person. For he does not want to give up religion entirely. “We are the less inclined to give up religion forthwith, since we are prone to consider a religious disposition as a prerogative of human nature, even as its noblest title.” Thus *D. F. Strauss*, when he asked of those who sympathized with his opinions, Have we still religion? (*Der alte u. neue Glaube*, II, n. 33). Of course religion has now become something quite different; it has been *consigned to deep degradation*.

To be sure, feeling is of great importance in religion. Dissatisfaction with the things of this earth, man's longing for something higher, for the Infinite, his craving for immortality, for aid and consolation – are all naturally seeking for religious truths. If these are known, they in turn arouse fear and hope, love and gratitude; they become a source of happiness and inspiration. But these feelings have no meaning unless we are certain that there exists something corresponding to them; much less could they of themselves be a conviction, just as little as hunger could convince us that we have food and drink. If one cannot perceive that there is a God, a Providence, a life beyond, then religion sinks to the level of a hazy feeling, without reason and truth, which must appear foolish to men who think, – as “the great phantasmagoria of the human mind, which we call religion” (*Jodl, Gedanken über Reform Katholizismus*, 1902, 12), – which departs from the sphere of rational intellectual life, and which many have even begun to contemplate from the view-point of psychopathology. It is only due to the after-effect of a more religious past that religion is suffered to lead still a life of pretence: moral support in struggles it can give no more, nor comfort in dark hours, much less may it presume to guide man's thought. It stands far below science.

Despair of the possibility of knowing higher truths is confronting us, the disease of deteriorating times and intellectually decaying nations. But just as Christianity, once in youthful vigour, went to the rescue of an old World dying of scepticism, just as the Catholic Church has ever upheld the rights of reason, especially against Protestantism, which from its beginning has torn asunder faith and knowledge: so the Catholic Church stands to this day unaffected by the doubting tendency of our times, upholding the rights of reason. It also upholds faith. But its faith has nothing to do with modern agnosticism.

What Faith Is

What, then, according to Catholic doctrine, is faith and the duty to believe?

Let us briefly recall to mind the *fundamental tenets* of the *Christian religion*. It tells us that even in the Old Testament, but more especially in the New, through His Incarnate Son, God has revealed to man all those religious and moral truths which are necessary and sufficient for the attainment of his

supernatural end. Some of them are truths which reason by itself could not discover; others it could discover, but only by great labour. And this divine revelation demands belief. Belief is natural to man. The child believes its parents, the judge believes the witnesses, the ruler believes his counsellors. God wished to meet man in this way, and to give him certainty in regard to the highest truths.

But revelation was to be an heritage of mankind, it was to be transmitted and laid unadulterated before all generations. For this reason it could not be left unprotected to the vicissitudes of time, or the arbitrary interpretation of the individual. It would have utterly failed in its purpose of transmitting sure knowledge of certain truth, – the history of Protestantism proves this, – had it been given merely with the injunction: Receive what I have committed to your keeping, and do with it what you please. No, it had to be made secure against subjective, arbitrary choice.

To this end Christ established an international organization, the *Church*, and committed to it His Gospel as a means of grace, together with the right and sacred duty to teach it to all men in His Name, to keep inviolate the heirloom of revelation, defending it against all error. “Going, therefore, teach ye all nations” (Matt. xxviii. 19), was His command. “Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark xvi. 15). “He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me” (Luke x. 16). “Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt. xxviii. 20). He gave His divine aid to the Church, in order that she might *infallibly* keep His doctrine to the very end of time.

Thus the divine revelation and the Church approach all men with the duty to believe: “he that believeth shall be saved,” God gravely commands; “and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican” (Matt. xviii. 17). They lay their teachings before the human intellect, bidding it retain them as indubitable truth, upon their infallible testimony, yet only after convincing itself that God has really spoken, and that this Church is the true one, which cannot err. And only after having convinced itself of the credibility of the proposed teaching is it obliged to believe. Hence, according to the Christian mind, faith is the *reasonable conviction of the truth of what is proposed for belief, by reason of an acknowledged infallible testimony*.

The Catholic dogma we find explained in the definition of the Vatican Council, which had to expose so many errors that are liable in our days to confuse the faithful in their notions of faith and Church. “This faith,” says the Vatican Council (Sess. III, chap. 3), “which is the beginning of human salvation, the Catholic Church teaches to be a supernatural virtue, by which, through the inspiration and co-operation of the grace of God, we believe to be true what He has revealed, not on account of the intrinsic truth of it, perceived by the natural light of reason, but on the authority of God who gives the revelation, who can neither deceive nor be deceived... Nevertheless, in order that the service of our belief might be in accord with reason (‘a reasonable service’) God willed to unite to the internal helps of the Holy Ghost external proofs of His revelation, to wit, external works divine, especially miracles and prophecies, which, clearly demonstrating God's omnipotence and infinite knowledge, are most certain signs of divine revelation and are suited to the intelligence of all.” The Council adds expressly the canon: “If any one say that divine revelation cannot be made credible by exterior signs, and that men ought therefore to be moved to belief solely by their interior experience or individual inspiration, let him be anathema.” We have here stated the Catholic dogma as unanimously taught by all Christian centuries, by all Fathers and theologians.

Hence, the act of faith by which I believe that the Son of God became man, that I shall rise from the dead, is first of all a *judgment of the reason*, not an act of the will, or a feeling of the heart. It is, moreover, a *certain* rational judgment upon weighty reasons, not, indeed, such which I draw from

intellectual knowledge, but those which rest upon the infallible testimony of God. The act of faith agrees therefore with assent to historic truth in that it is of the same kind of knowledge, but upon the authority of infallible testimony. Just as I believe that Alexander once marched victoriously through Asia, because there is sure testimony to that effect, so I believe that I shall rise from the dead, because God has revealed it. The difference being that in the former case we have only human testimony, whereas in the latter God Himself speaks. Thus, according to Catholic teaching, faith and knowledge may be distinct from each other, but in a sense quite different from that of the representatives of modern, sentimental faith. The latter understand knowledge, in this connection, to be any judgment of the reason based upon evidence, and they deny that faith is such; but to a Catholic, faith, too, is a *judgment of the reason*, and in this sense true knowledge; only it is not knowledge in the more common sense of a cognition derived from one's own mental activity *without* the external means of authority.

As we have heard from the Vatican Council, it is the recognized fact of divine revelation which bestows upon the matter of faith its certainty in reason. Hence the knowledge of this fact must precede faith itself. But the knowledge must be certain, not merely a belief, for it is the very presupposition of belief, but a knowledge, derived from the intellect, which may at any time be traced back to scientific proofs if there is the requisite philosophical training. So long as man is not certain that God has spoken, he cannot have faith according to the Catholic view. One of the sentences condemned by *Innocent XI.*, to say nothing of other ecclesiastical testimonies, is this: "The assent of supernatural faith, useful for salvation, can exist with merely probable information of the fact of revelation, even with the fear that God has not spoken." And very recently there has been condemned also the proposition: "The assent of faith ultimately rests upon a sum of probabilities" (Decretum Lamentabile, July 3, 1907. Sent. 25).

It cannot be our task here to show at length how the Christian arrives at this certain knowledge. Our present purpose is only to state the Catholic concept of faith. We have already heard the Vatican Council refer to miracles and prophecies. To most of the faithful the chief fact that offers them this security is the wonderful phenomenon of the *Catholic Church* itself, which proposes to them the doctrines of faith as divine revelation.

Thus again the Vatican Council defines clearly: "To enable us to do our duty in embracing the true faith and remaining in it steadfastly, God has through His incarnate Son established the Church and set plain marks upon His institution, in order that it may be recognized by all as the guardian and interpreter of revelation. For only the Catholic Church possesses all those arrangements, so various and wonderful, made by God in order to demonstrate publicly the credibility of Christianity. Indeed the Church of itself, because of its wonderful propagation, its pre-eminent sanctity and inexhaustible fecundity in everything good, its Catholic unity and invincible duration, is a grand permanent proof of its credibility and irrefutable testimony in behalf of its divine mission. Thus, like a 'standard unto the nations,' it invites those to come to it who have not yet believed, and assures its children that the faith they profess rests upon a most firm foundation."

The Catholic looks with pride upon his Church: she has stood all the trials of history. He sees her endure, though within harassed by heresies and endangered by various unworthiness and incapacity of her priests, and attacked incessantly from without by irreconcilable enemies, yet prevailing victoriously through the centuries, blessing, converting nations and beloved by them; while by her side worldly kingdoms, supported by armies and weapons, go down into the grave of human instability. The most wonderful fact in the world's history, contrary to all laws of natural, historical events, – here a higher hand is plainly thrust into human history; it is the fulfilment of the divine promise: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He

sees the Saints, who have lived in this Church and have become saints through her, those superhuman heroes of virtue, who far surpass the laws of human capacity.

In the most widely different states of life in the Church he sees virtue grow in the degree in which one submits to her guidance. He witnesses the remarkable spectacle, that everything noble and good is attracted by the Church, and their contrary repelled. He sees the miracles which never cease in her midst. Finally he beholds her admirable unity and vigorous faith; she alone holding firm to her teaching, not compromising with any error; she alone holding fearlessly aloft the principle of divine authority, and thus becoming a beacon to many who are seeking a safe shelter from spiritual ruin. In addition we finally have that harmony and grandeur of the truths of faith, and – perhaps not in the last place – that calm and peace of mind, produced in the faithful soul by a life led according to this faith, by prayer and the reception of the Sacraments. This is a clear proof that where the Spirit of God breathes there cannot be the seat of untruth.

These are sufficient proofs to produce even in the uneducated, and in children, true and reasonable certainty, provided they have had sufficient instruction in religion. It must, however, be emphasized that this conviction produced by faith need *not first be gained by scientific investigation* of the motives of faith, or by minute or extensive theological studies. A wrong notion of human knowledge frequently leads to the opinion that there is no true certainty at all unless it is the result of scientific study – a presumption on which is based the claim of freedom of science to disregard any conviction, be it ever so sacred, and the claim that it is reserved to science alone to attain the sure possession of the truth. Later on we shall dwell more at length upon this important point. Let it suffice here to remark that the intellect can attain real certainty even without scientific research; most of our convictions, which we all hold unhesitatingly as true, are of this kind. They constitute a belief that is based upon the real knowledge of the reason, which knowledge is not, however, so clear and distinct that it could be demonstrated easily in scientific form.

The certainty of faith, therefore, is based upon the knowledge that God Himself vouches for the truth of the teachings of faith. This relieves the faithful from the necessity of obtaining by his own reflection an insight into the intrinsic reasons of the why and the wherefore of the proposed truth, and to examine in each instance the correctness of the thing. He knows that God has revealed it, that His infallible Church vouches for it; hence it is credible and true; that suffices for him, just as trustworthy evidence suffices for the historian concerning facts which he himself has not observed.

Let no one say that faith is a *blind belief* and blind obedience, and that dogmatic Christianity, or, to use another phrase, “the religion of the law, demands first of all obedience: it is true it would like, besides that, an interior assent for its thoughts and commandments, but where this is lacking the law itself furnishes the ways and means to compensate the lack of this internal assent, if only obedience is there” (A. Harnack, *Religionser Glaube u. freie Forschung*. Neue Freie Presse, June 7, 1908). Nor let any one say that free research has “at least this advantage over dogma, that its claims can be proved, which is not true of the other's claims” (J. H. van't Hoff, *ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1907). These are misrepresentations.

There is no obedience to faith which is not *internal assent and conviction*, and there is no clinging to dogmas which is not based on motives of faith, or which could not at any time be subjected to scientific investigation. If the term “blindness of belief” were intended to express only that the believer holds the revealed doctrine to be true, not because he has discovered its truth by his own reasoning, but on the authority of God, then we might suffer the misleading word. But it is utterly false in the sense that the believer has no conviction at all. Even though others have it not, the faithful Catholic, the believing Christian, has it, and it is personal conviction. He has convinced himself that God has spoken, and of the credibility and hence the truth of the revealed doctrine, by his own reason, and this is why he assents.

Still greater is the misrepresentation of the real motive of faith, if it is held to be the opinion of the Pope or of Roman Prelates. *Wundt* thus misstates the Catholic position: "Not every one can acquire knowledge. But any one can believe. The enlightened leaders of the Church, and the Church herself first of all, have knowledge, and by dint of authority determine what is to be believed" (*Ethik*, 3d ed., 1903, I, p. 342). According to the popular scientific propaganda of unbelief, we have to deal in the Church merely with "ignorant monks, Asiatic patriarchs, and similar dignitaries, some very superstitious, who, for instance, assembled in the third century and decided *by vote* that the Gospel is the word of God; we have to deal with men who have proved their incapacity and incompetence" (*Masaryk*, *Im Kampfe um die Religion*, 1904, pp. 22-23).

Any one who shares such ideas about the supernaturalness of the Catholic Church has, of course, forfeited his claim to understand Catholic life and faith. The Catholic believes in his Church, not on any account of Asiatic patriarchs and superstitious dignitaries, but because she is led by the Holy Ghost, and the Pope must believe the same as the humblest of the faithful: neither the Pope himself relies upon his own judgment, nor does the Catholic who trusts in the word of the Pope.

We add a few remarks which may further illustrate the action of faith.

The knowledge of the fact of revelation, hence of the credibility of the truths revealed, is certain, as shown above. Nevertheless, *it does not compel* reason to assent. Under ordinary circumstances it would be impossible to think of one's own existence, of the elementary laws of mathematics, without being constrained by the evidence to give direct internal assent. But insight into the truth of a thing is not always of this high degree of clearness. In such cases it is an empirical law of the mind that reason discerns of itself the *logical* necessity, that is, if it desires to proceed according to the merits of the case, without, however, acting under *physical* constraint. There remains then the determination, the command of the will. This is generally true of many judgments about natural things, but especially true of belief. The knowledge of the fact of revelation is true and certain, though it might be still clearer. The truths offered by divine revelation are too deep for us to comprehend them fully; they imply questions and difficulties for us to ponder. We feel the physical possibility of pondering these difficulties, although we see at the same time that the difficulty is exploded by the certainty of the fact of revelation; but we remain *free* in giving our assent.

Herein lies the possibility of *meritorious* faith, the possibility of the creature rendering to God the free tribute of his free submission. At the same time it opens the possibility of turning voluntarily to doubts, and of submitting to them more and more, till the mind becomes clouded and ensnared by error. Thus, since faith depends on free will, the will is strictly commanded to impel the intellect to assent and cling to faith and to put aside doubts. God has revealed the truths of faith that they may be firmly believed.

Hence faith is a product of the will also, and may become part and parcel of the sentimental life. Firmly believed, revealed truths engender in man love and gratitude, fear and hope. And being beautiful and comforting, they are embraced fervently by the heart, and become objects of desire, sources of comfort and happiness. Nevertheless they are in themselves, and remain, rational judgments, based upon insight and knowledge; just as the fond recollections of home are and remain acts of cognition, though our affections are twined round those reminiscences like wreaths of evergreen.

What has just been said illustrates also another point, – the *relation of faith to grace*. The Vatican Council says: “Faith is a supernatural virtue by which, through the inspiration and co-operation of the grace of God, we believe to be true what He has revealed.” Faith is called a gift of God, a work of grace. But this must not mislead us to think that it is a mystical process, taking place in the human mind, indeed, but not moving along the natural course of human cognition, but along quite a different course: perhaps an immediate mystical grasp of the revealed truth, while natural intelligence stands aside, not understanding it. This would be returning to our starting point, – making faith anything but a judgment of the reason. It is a common doctrine of theology that the process of faith differs nothing in kind from the natural process of human intellect in its apprehension of the truth. It is belief on grounds recognized as sufficient motives for assent.

What then does grace do? Two things. First, it elevates the act of the soul in the process of believing to a higher sphere. Just as sanctifying grace elevates the soul itself to a supernatural sphere, permitting it to partake of the nature of God, so does the grace of faith raise the acts of the soul to the supernatural order. The *kind* of cognition, however, remains the same: just as a ring does not alter its form by being golden instead of silver.

In the second place, grace is *assistance*: it enlightens the intellect that it may be able to see more clearly, not giving to motives of faith an importance which they have not of themselves, but helping the intellect to see them as they are; removing the troubles and dangers of doubt which beset the mind, so that it may retain that calmness which generally accompanies the possession of the truth. The pledge of this assistance is given the Christian at baptism and with each increase of sanctifying grace. But the actual effect of grace depends on many conditions. If one omits prayer and neglects religious duties, deafens one's ear to the word of God, incurs knowingly unnecessary dangers to faith, forsakes the path of virtue, then grace may withdraw to a considerable extent; doubts become stronger, intellectual darkness and confusion increase, and man goes on apace towards infidelity.

This is the Catholic doctrine concerning faith.

Faith and Reason

But to return to our question: In what relation do faith and the duty to believe stand to freedom of research? We said that freedom of research consists in exemption from all unjust external restraint, that is, from those external hindrances to the action of the human intellect which prevent it from attaining its natural end. Now what is this natural end? The answer will make clear what restraint and laws must be respected by the human mind, and which may be rightly rejected.

On the coat-of-arms of Harvard University is written the beautiful word “Truth.” Upon the human mind, too, is inscribed the word *Veritati—for the truth*. The human mind exists for the sake of truth; for the truth it reasons and searches; it is its natural object, as sound is the object of the human ear, and light and colour the object of the eye. And truth attracts the mind strongly. The child wants the truth, and tries to get it by its many questions; the historian wants the truth, and tries to get it by his incessant searching and collecting. “I can hardly resist my craving,” *William von Humboldt* confesses, “to see and know and examine as much as possible: after all, man seems to be here only for the purpose of appropriating to himself, making his own property, the property of his intellect, all that surrounds him – and life is short. When I depart this life I should like to leave behind me as little as possible unexperienced by me” (apud *O. Willmann*, *Didaktik als Bildungslehre*, 3d ed., II, 1903, p. 7). The great physicist, *W. Thomson*, a few years ago closed a life of eighty-three years – he

died in December, 1907 – devoted to the last to unabated search for the truth. It is true not all are called to labour in this field like *W. Thomson*. But every one who has capability may and should help to promote the noble work. Only they are excluded who do not want to look for the truth, or who are even ready, for external considerations, to pass off falsehood for the truth, unproved for established results. “I know of nothing,” says the ancient sage, *Plato*, “that is more worthy of the human mind than truth” (Rep. VI, p. 483 c.). And so the poet *Pindar* sings: “Queen Truth, the mother of sublime Virtue.”

If this is the aim of the human mind and its science, there is but one freedom of research, the *freedom for the truth*, the right not to be hampered in searching for the truth, not to be forced to hold as true what has not been previously vouched for to the intellect as true; in a word, the freedom to wear but one chain, the golden chain of the truth. Hence, if the scientist should be compelled by party interest, or public opinion, to pursue a course in science which he cannot acknowledge as the right one; if the younger scientist should feel constrained to conform the results of his research to the pleasure of his older colleagues or of men of name, against his own better judgment, then he would be deprived of his rightful freedom of searching for the truth, and of deciding for himself when he has found it. But there is one sort of freedom the scientist should never claim — *freedom against the truth*, freedom to ignore the truth, to emancipate himself from the truth. He is bound to accept every truth, sufficiently proved, even religious dogmas, miracles too, provided they are authenticated. Not freedom, but truth, is the purpose of research: emancipation from the truth is degeneration of the intellect, destruction of science.

What, then, does the duty to believe require of the faithful Christian? He is required, first of all, to assure himself of the certain credibility of those truths which he is required to believe, and here authentic proofs are offered him. On his perception of the credibility of these truths, he ought to assent to and accept God's testimony. Hence there should be no coercion to believe without interior conviction, no obstacle put in the way of recognizing the truth. *Where, then, is here any opposition to the lawful freedom of research*, to the right of unimpeded search for the truth? How is reason hindered in its search for the truth when truth is offered it by an infallible authority? We have here no opposition to the laws of reason, but due honour to its sacred rights; no bondage, but elevation and enrichment, completion and crowning of its thought, for the highest truth has been communicated to the reason that it may be of one mind with that Infinite Wisdom which has shaped reason for the truth, and from which it obtains its light as the planet from the sun around which it revolves.

Therefore, it cannot be said that “the Catholic resolves to believe as true what the Church teaches in the Apostles' Creed, but were he offered anything else as Church doctrine he would accept it as well. Hence these doctrines do not express his own personal opinions, they are something extraneous to him.” (*W. Herrmann*, Roemische u. evangelische Sittlichkeit, 3d ed., 1903, p. 3). No, what the Catholic, what any true Christian, believes by faith, that is his innermost conviction, as it is the firm conviction of the historian that what he has drawn from reliable sources is true. – But what if the contrary were offered him? Well, this assumption is absurd; and why? Because God and His Church are infallible, and an infallible authority cannot speak the truth and its contrary at the same time. Much less than a reliable historical witness can testify to the truth and its contrary at the same time.

This same conviction gives to the faithful Christian the firm assurance that no certain result of human research will ever come in conflict with his faith, just as the mathematician does not fear that his principle will ever be contradicted by any further work. Truth can never contradict truth. “Thus we believe and thus we teach and herein lies our salvation.” It is the very old conviction of the faithful Christian “that philosophy, that is, the study of wisdom, and religion are not different things.” *Non aliam esse philosophiam, i.e., sapientiae studium et aliam religionem* (*Augustinus*, De Vera Religione, 5). It is precisely this that enables the believing scientist to devote himself with great freedom and

impartiality to research in every field, and to acknowledge any certified result without fear of ever having to stop before a definite conclusion.

Such is the *peace between faith and science* according to Christian principles. They are not torn apart, but join hands peacefully, like truth with truth, like two certain convictions, only gained in different ways. Similar is the peace and harmony between the results of various sciences, as physics and astronomy, geology and biology, which results, though arrived at by different methods, are still not opposed to each other, because they are both true.

The authority of faith, however, must be *infallible*; the authority of a scientist, a school or the state, can never approach us with an absolute obligation to believe it, because it cannot vouch for the truth. To the Catholic his Church proves itself infallible; hence everything is here logically consequent. Protestant Church authorities have not infallibility, nor do they claim it. Hence their precepts are seen more and more opposed. Hence to the Protestant the firm attachment of the Catholic to his Church must ever remain unintelligible, and it is regrettable that Catholics take instruction from Protestants about their relation to their Church.²

We must go a step further. If there is a divine revelation or an infallible Church – we speak only hypothetically – then no man and *no scientific research can claim the right* to contradict this revelation and Church. Scientific research is not the hypostatized activity of a superhuman genius, of a god-like intelligence. No, it is the activity of a human intellect, and the latter is subject to God and truth everywhere. There can be no freedom to oppose the truth; no privilege not to be bound to the truth but rather to have the right to construct one's views autonomously.

But here lies the deeper reason why to-day thousands to whom *Kant's autonomism in thought* has become the nerve of their intellectual life, will have nothing to do with guidance by revelation and Church. They can no longer understand that their reason should accept the truth from an external authority, not, indeed, because they would not find the truth, but because they would lose their independence.

It was *Sabatier* who maintained that “an external authority, no matter how great one may think it to be, does not suffice to arouse in us any sense of obligation.” And *Th. Lipps* says on this further: “If obedience is taken in its narrower sense, that is, of determination by the will of another, then no obedience is moral.” “In brief, obedience is immoral – not as a fact but as a feeling, betokening an unfree, slavish mind” (*Die ethischen Grundfragen*, 2d ed., 1905, p. 119). And *W. Herrmann* assures us. “We would deem it a sin if we dared treat a proposition as true of which the ideas are not our own. If we should find such a proposition in the Bible, then we may perhaps resolve to wait and see whether its truth cannot be brought home to us after we have obtained a clearer and stronger insight of ourselves. But from the resolution to take that proposition as true without more ado, we could not promise ourselves anything beneficial.”

² The difference between the Protestant and the Catholic manner of reasoning is stated by the convert, Prof. *A. von Ruville*, as follows: “My mind had harboured up to now the characteristically Protestant thought that I, from my superior mental standpoint, was going to probe the Catholic Church, that I was going to pass an infallible judgment on her truth or untruth, and this in spite of my being ready to acknowledge the truth in her. But now I became more and more conscious of the fact that it was the Church who had a right to pass judgment on me, that I had to bow to her opinion, that she immeasurably surpassed me in wisdom. Many details, which I was inclined to criticize, demonstrated this to me, for in every instance I recognized that it was my understanding that was at fault, and that what appeared to me as an imperfection was rooted in the deepest truth. In this way I was gradually brought to the real Catholic standpoint, to accept the doctrines immediately as Truth, because they proceeded from the Church, and then to endeavour to understand them thoroughly, and to reap from them the fullest possible harvest of Truth. Formerly, with regard to Protestant doctrines, I always retained my independence and the sovereignty of my judgment. Why should I not have had my own opinion, when every denomination and every theologian had an individual opinion? How different with the Catholic Church. Before her sublime, never varying wisdom, as it is proclaimed by every simple priest, I bowed my knees in humility. Compared to her experience of two thousand years my ephemeral knowledge was a mere nothing” (*Back to Holy Church*, by Dr. *Albert von Ruville*, pp. 30, 31).

It is for the sovereign subject himself to decide whether the ideas offered are compatible with the rest of his notions. A truth offered from without is acceptable to the subject only when, and because, he can produce of himself at the same time what is offered; but he cannot accept the obligation of *submitting* to that truth in obedience to faith. “There is no infallible teaching authority on earth, nor can there be any. Philosophy and science would have to contradict themselves to acknowledge it,” says another champion of *Kant's* freedom (*Paulsen*, *Philosophia militans*, 2d ed., p. 52). Hence the reason why there cannot be any infallible authority is, not because it does not offer the truth, but because the human intellect must not be chained down.

Now, this is no longer true freedom, but rebellion against the sacred right that truth has over the intellect. It is rebellion against the supreme authority of God, who can oblige man to embrace His revelation with that reason which He Himself has bestowed upon man. It is a misconception of the human mind, for it is by no means the source of truth and absolute knowledge, but weak and in need of supplement. Many truths it cannot by itself find at all, while in the quest for others it needs safe guidance lest it lose its way. If it refuses to be supplemented and guided from above, it demands the freedom of the weak vine allowed to break loose from the needed support of the tree, the freedom of the planet allowed to deviate from its orbit to be hopelessly wrecked in the universe. The barrenness and disintegration in the ideal life of our own unchristian age, are clear testimony that freedom is not only lawlessness but a sin against one's own nature.

Or, do they seek to save themselves by asserting that a divine revelation and the founding of an infallible Church are *impossible*? Very well, then, let them prove it. On this the question hinges. If they can prove it to us, that very moment we shall cease to be faithful Catholics, and Christianity will have been the most stupendous lie in history. But if the reverse is the case, then all declamations in the name of free research fall to the ground.

This impossibility, however, could only be proved by the aid of a presumption. This presumption is *atheism*, which denies the existence of a personal God, or at least doubts it. If it is admitted that there is a personal God, then it is self-evident that He can give a revelation, and found an infallible Church, and can oblige all to believe. But herewith collapses also the liberal principle that, in reasoning, one may reject an external authority. Hence the principle of liberal freedom in science can only then be taken seriously, when one advances to atheism. Then, of course, they will say with *Nietzsche*: God is dead; long live the transcendental man!

Our assertions are proved by experience. At the end of the eighteenth century the enlightenment began by excluding all revelation; but it was desired to retain the rational truth of God's existence. Since then, liberal science has been aiming at atheism in philosophy, whether open or masked. And if we follow up the career of men who have left their faith, we shall soon find that if they do not seek peace in the sheltering harbour of thoughtlessness, they have reached the terminal station of atheism. There is no stopping on this incline.

Since it is the express fundamental principle of the liberal freedom of research, that science is not bound to any external authority, it is evident that it is nothing else but the refusal to submit to God's authority, hence, also, to submit to truth if it appears as revelation. For, either it is admitted that if there is a divine revelation, we have to give it our assent – and in this event liberal freedom of science would have to be abandoned, – or this liberal freedom is adopted in real earnest – then it must be admitted that it is tantamount to *radical apostasy and defection from the truth*. If a man wishes to be a faithful Christian and at the same time to uphold the liberal freedom of science, then he has never made clear to himself what he wishes.

Ecce ancilla Domini. Thus spoke the Mother of the Lord, when she heard the message that she was to receive the Word of the eternal Father in her bosom. This word of humility and submission was the condition under which she could receive in herself the eternal Wisdom of the Father.

Behold, the Handmaid of the Lord! This word of humility and submission to God must also be spoken by the creature's intelligence, if it desires by faith to share in God's truth. Without humility

of mind a faithful attachment to God is impossible; pride and arrogance lead to desertion of God, faith, and truth. *Multum errant, quoniam superbi sunt*, says *Augustine* of the erring companions of his youth. Only if there is humility does God's wisdom cross the threshold of the creature's mind, only if there is humility can it be said of man: *Et verbum caro factum est et habitat in nobis, plenum gratiae et veritatis*.

Chapter II. The Authority Of Faith And The Free Exercise Of Research

Preliminary Remarks

We must not stop at what we have just said in general about the relation between the freedom of research and the obligation to believe. We must go further into detail, in order to give a more exact explanation of how and where the authority of faith clashes with research and restrains it. Is it true that the believing scientist cannot move freely in his research, that there are barriers on all sides which he may not overstep? Is it true that the Church may prescribe for the Catholic scientist what he is allowed to defend and approve, what he ought to refute and reprove, suppress or advocate, so that his eyes must ever be turned towards Rome, to inquire and ascertain what might there be approved? And what a chain of proscriptions of free thinking is attached to the name of Rome! Index, Syllabus, *Galileo*— link after link is added to this chain of miserable slavery!

We shall say something more about this chain later on. First we must consider the principal question: Where and how do faith and science come in contact? And what we are going to say we shall condense into four points. Thus freedom of science will be more precisely defined; it will be shown what freedom revelation, and especially the guardian of revelation, the Church, offers to science: there can be no doubt that its natural freedom of exercise must be left to science intact.

We shall deal in the first place with the *profane sciences*, and, at least for the present, leave aside the discussion of theology, since it is clear that theology, being the science of faith, must assume a peculiar position in regard to the authority of faith: theology, moreover, is a special mark for attack; accordingly we shall deal with it particularly later on. However, the principles to be cited, being of a general nature, refer also to the science of faith, and for this reason we shall have occasion to refer to them.

1. Authority of Faith and Private Authority

We often meet with the most inconceivable notions. We are told quite seriously that the Church teaches, and that the Catholic has therefore to believe, that the earth is a flat disc surrounded by the sea, as the ancients believed; above it is a vault, below it hell-fire; that the earth stands still and the sun and stars revolve about it, just as *Ptolemy* of Egypt taught; that God created the whole world just as it is now in exactly six days of twenty-four hours each; that He made the sun and moon, just as they are now illuminating the skies; that the strata, just as they now look when bared by the geologist's hammer, even the coal-fields and petrified saurians and fossils – all were made, just as they now are, well nigh six thousand years ago. The Scriptures teach this, the Fathers of old and the theologians believe this: and that is where the Catholic must get his science. And then they are astonished, and consider dogma retreating before science, when they see other notions prevailing, when they see Catholic scientists defend without prejudice the evolution of the solar system, and even the system of the whole universe, from some primitive matter, or assume an organic evolution, as far as science supports it (cf. *Braun*, Ueber Kosmologie u. Standpunkt christlich. Wiss., 2d ed., 1906, etc.). They would be still more astonished perhaps to learn that similar ideas had long ago been proposed by *St. Augustine* and *St. Thomas* (cf. *Summa* c. G. 1. 3, c. 77; *Knabenbauer*, in *Stimmen* a. M. Laach xiii, 75 seq.).

A distinction must be made between the teaching of the Church and the private views of individuals, schools, or periods. Only the teaching of the Church is the obligatory standard of Christian and Catholic thought, not the opinion of individuals. Hence not everything that Catholic

savants have held to be true belongs to the teaching of the Church. Only when theologians unanimously declare something to be contained in the deposit of revealed truth, or the teaching of the Church, – only then is their teaching authoritative; not because it is the teaching of theologians, but because it is contained in revelation or the teaching of the Church. Else the maxim holds good: *Tantum valet auctoritas, quantum argumenta*. Nor is all that which a former age found in Holy Scripture, therefore to be believed as revealed truth, to the exclusion of all other interpretations.

The foregoing may be elucidated by the examples given above. When Holy Writ describes in figurative language and Oriental, demonstrative style, how God created the heaven and earth, the sun and moon, the sea and its contents, it means to teach us religious truths: that God is the First Cause of everything, and hence that the sun and moon, for instance, are not uncreated deities, as the Egyptian believed them to be. The narrative need not be taken in a literal sense, as if God immediately formed everything in the exact condition as it now appears to us; it may be interpreted in the sense that God let the present condition of things gradually grow out of the forces and materials and plan of nature He created, the result of a lengthy evolution. When our Lord tells us in the gospel that His Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air and clothes the grass of the field, we know that this is to be understood as a mediate action of God, which He exercises through the instinct of animals and through natural forces which He created for the purpose. Now when former ages, reading the narrative of Genesis, generally understood an immediate creation of the world, because the knowledge of nature at the time did not admit of any other interpretation, it is by no means necessary to conclude from it that every other interpretation must be rejected as against the Bible, or that the Church herself has prescribed this literal interpretation as the only correct one. As is known, *St. Augustine*, the greatest Father of the Church, had another very liberal explanation of the Genesis narrative, and the Church has never censured him. (He taught that the whole world had been created at one time, and that the six days of the Mosaic narrative were the logical divisions of an account of the various orders of creatures.) And now the interpretations vary greatly. The passages in Scripture, in which, according to popular modes of expression, the sun is said to rise and set and revolve about the earth, the latter standing in the centre of the world – these, too, were interpreted literally in the days of the Fathers: there was no cause for interpreting them otherwise; but it was only due to defective knowledge of nature at the time. These temporary errors remained till corrected by research in the field of the natural sciences: had the discoveries been made sooner, the errors, too, would have disappeared sooner.

The Church knows, and the holy Fathers knew, that it is not the purpose of Holy Writ to teach profane sciences, but to instruct in faith and morals; if it speaks of other matters, it is but occasionally, and then in the idiom of common life, which is not the same as the scientific language of the specialist. Indeed, the Bible does not intend to give scientific instruction in such matters, nor could it have done so at a time when men were not ripe for such enlightenment.

Thus *St. Augustine* insists that the Spirit of God who spoke through the authors of Scripture did not intend to instruct men in matters which do not serve for salvation, and hence he objects to the Scriptures being taken literally in regard to such matters, because the Bible adapts itself to man's manner of speech: a distinction is to be made between letter and sense (“Multi multum disputant de iis rebus, quae majore prudentia nostri auctores omiserunt, ad beatam vitam non profuturas discentibus ... Breviter dicendum est, ... Spiritum Dei, qui per ipsos loquebatur, noluisse ita docere homines nulli saluti profuturas,” *De Gen. ad lit.*, II, 9, n. 20. Cf. *De Gen. contra Manich.* 1, 5, n. 3; 11, n. 17). He further cautions Bible students against putting their own interpretation upon obscure passages and then claiming it to be dogma, because one may easily go astray and thus make the Scriptures appear ridiculous. “In rebus obscuris atque a nostris oculis remotissimis, si qua inde scripta etiam divina legerimus, quae possint salva fide, qua imbuimur, alias atque alias parere sententias, in nullam earum nos praecipiti affirmatione proiciamus, ut si forte,

diligentius discussa veritas eam recte labefactaverit, corruamus, non pro sententia divinarum scripturarum sed pro noscra ita dimicantes, ut eam velimus scripturarum esse, quae nostra est” (De genesi ad lit. I, 18 n. 37). “Plerumque accidit, ut aliquid de terra, de coelo, de ceteris mundi huius elementis ... etiam non christianus ita noverit, ut certissima ratione et experientia teneat. Turpe est autem nimis et perniciosum ac maxime cavendum, ut christianus de his rebus quasi secundum christianas literas loquentem ita delirare quilibet infidelis audiat, ut, quemadmodum dicitur, toto coelo errare conspiciens, risum tenere vix possit” (Ibid. I, 19 n. 39). Cf. also I, 21. *St. Thomas of Aquin* also expresses himself in this sense: “Multum autem nocet, talia, quae ad pietatis doctrinam non spectant, vel asserere vel negare, quasi pertinentia ad sacram doctrinam ... Unde mihi videtur tutius esse, ut haec, quae philosophi communiis senserunt et nostrae fidei non repugnant, neque sic esse asserenda ut dogmata fidei, licet aliquando sub nomine philosophorum introducantur, neque sic esse neganda tamquam fidei contraria, ne sapientibus huius mundi contemnendi doctrinam fidei occasio praebeatur”(Opusc. X. ad Jo. Vercel. Proem.).

The doctrine of the *Church* concurs with this, as laid down in numerous documents, many of them quoting the above-mentioned words of *St. Augustine*. It also insists that the interpretation of the Fathers be only taken as a standard of the Church's explanation of the meaning of Scripture when they are unanimous on the meaning of a passage relating to faith and morals; but not to other things (cf. Encycl. Providentissimus, Denz. 10 ed., n. 1947, 1944; Conc. Trid., sess. IV., Conc. Vat. sess. III., c. 2, Denz. nn. 786, 1788).

Now if one simply opens Holy Scripture, takes up some passage at random, explains it in its most literal sense, and then insists that this is the evident meaning, and goes on to assert with the same insistence that this is the interpretation of the Church, and a part of the faith of Catholics in regard to the natural sciences, then of course it is very easy to make out contradictions between faith and science: but such efforts cannot claim to be scientific. It is not necessary to know theology and the principles of Catholic exegesis; but it is not proper that those who are ignorant of these matters pass judgment on them, not even in the name of objective research.

Hence we may easily see what we should think of a writer who asserts that the examination of the Christian-Catholic idea of the world leads to the following results: “The Books of Moses, inspired by divine revelation, are the golden key to the understanding of the whole history of creation. Other Scriptural passages of the Old and New Testaments, the writings of the Fathers, etc., are to be considered as supplementary to these. According to these authorities the earth is a flat disc, surrounded by the sea. Above it arches the firmament of heaven, with its great lights for day and night. Below it are purgatory and hell. All this is not the gradual outgrowth of lengthy evolution, but was created by God out of nothing in a few days, about six thousand years ago, of which four thousand are reckoned before Christ and two thousand after Christ. Although modern science has long since established that the Biblical narrative is of no worth, nothing but an imperfect reproduction of older myths, the Catholic Church continues to teach it literally to this very day, spreading it broadcast by thousands and thousands of catechisms, and insisting on it being learned as a part of religious instruction in all schools, and to be accepted as the revealed truth” (*L. Wahrmund, Katholische Weltanschauung und freie Wissenschaft, 1908, p. 14. The scientific value of this work has been considered by L. Fonck, Katholische Weltansch.*)

“Clericalism,” we are told, “stands on a rigidly fixed view of the world, corresponding in part to the childhood of mankind, to the dawning of civilization... Philosophy, built upon the results of progress, since it is unceasingly forcing its way ahead, cannot remain in accord with the notions belonging to a remote past, partly to Babylonian and Egyptian civilization, partly to the thought of nomadic times.” It is then pointed out how this view of the world on which clericalism, that is, the Catholic Church, is based, has already been overthrown in many instances. “The geocentric position, the doctrine of our earth being the centre and man the ultimate aim of the universe, must needs be abandoned by the world of scientists, in view of the new system of Copernicus; the doctrine also of the earth being a disc must be abandoned in consequence of the voyage of Columbus, and subsequent discoveries, which make it certain that the earth is a globe” (Prof. *K. Menger*, *Die Eroberung der Universitaeten*. Neue Freie Presse, Nov. 24, 1907). It is surprising what little knowledge suffices to warrant writing about theological matters in the name of “objective research.”

These passages, in regard to their scientific contents and manner, recall vividly an American work that appeared some time ago, and reached many editions. It is entitled, “A History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science,” by *J. W. Draper*. The book was answered by a competent authority, *De Smedt*, S. J., “L’Eglise et la Science,” 1877.

It seems *Draper’s* arguments have since become a pattern for many. He, too, maintains that Holy Writ has always been declared by the Church and the Fathers to be a source of profane science. This, he states, is true especially of *St. Augustine*. We read: “The book of Genesis ... also in a philosophical point of view became the grand authority of Patristic science. Astronomy, geology, geography, anthropology, chronology, and indeed all the various departments of human knowledge, were made to conform to it... The doctrines of *St. Augustine* have had the effect of thus placing theology in antagonism with science...” “No one did more than this Father to bring science and religion into antagonism; it was mainly he who diverted the Bible from its true office – a guide to purity of life – and placed it in the perilous position of being the arbiter of human knowledge...” “What, then, is that sacred, that revealed science, declared by the Fathers to be the sum of all knowledge?.. As to the earth, it affirmed that it is a flat surface, over which the sky is spread like a dome. In this the sun and moon and stars move, so that they may give light by day and by night to man... Above the sky or firmament is heaven; in the dark and fiery space beneath the earth is hell...” (pp. 57-63).

By reading again what we said above, especially the urgent admonitions of *St. Augustine* not to look upon the Scriptures as a text-book of profane science, one will be able to appreciate the scientific quality of the book in question.

The fancy of this writer has distorted Christianity and the Church into a monster that has nothing more important to do than to tread down and crush science and civilization. A few examples will suffice to show how he proves the *contradictions between faith and science*. The Christian religion teaches that man is subject to death as a penalty for original sin: prior to that sin death had no power over Adam and Eve. It is claimed that this is a contradiction of science. But how? Long before Adam, thousands of animals and plants had died, the author asserts. “The doctrine declared to be orthodox by ecclesiastical authority is overthrown by the unquestionable discoveries of modern science. Long before a human being had appeared on earth millions of individuals, nay, more, thousands of species and

even genera had died” (p. 57). The author has completely missed the point. The matter in question is not the death of animals and plants, but the death of man. The infallibility of the Pope is refuted by the fact that he failed to foresee the result of the war between France and Germany. “Notwithstanding his infallibility, which implies omniscience, His Holiness did not foresee the issue of the Franco-Prussian war” (p. 352, also p. 362).

How high his historical statements are to be rated is shown by the assertion that *Cyril of Alexandria* had much to do with the introduction of the worship of the Virgin Mary (p. 55); that auricular confession was introduced by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 (p. 208). He asks when the idea originated that the Pentateuch was written by Moses under divine inspiration, and he finds that “not until after the second century [of the Christian era] was there any such extravagant demand on human credulity” (p. 220). It would seem incredible that any one could write such stuff.

The author says in his preface: “I had also devoted much attention to the experimental investigation of natural phenomena, and had published many well-known memoirs on such subjects. And perhaps no one can give himself to these pursuits, and spend a large part of his life in the public teaching of science, without partaking of that love of impartiality and truth which philosophy incites” (VIII-IX). We do not care to argue with the author about his experience in experimental research, nor about his love for the truth, but he himself has shown superabundantly that they have not sufficed to keep him clear from scientific shallowness and the grossest blunders. Nevertheless, it seems that his scientific ability obtained for him in the consideration of many the weight of an authority. *Haeckel*, in his “*Weltraetsel*,” refers repeatedly to the book, and recommends “its truthful statements and excellent discussion” to his readers (*Weltraetsel*, 17. Kap., *Wissenschaft u. Christentum*).

Such is the fashion in which contradictions between faith and science, and the Church's hostility towards scientific research, are proved.

The result is that we must distinguish clearly between dogmas of faith and private opinions or interpretations. Of course it may frequently happen, and has happened, that the Christian savant is too timorous, and looks askance at the discoveries of science, and even thinks he ought to resist them, because he is afraid that religious truth might be opposed by them. Nor can it be said that this timidity is altogether without excuse, for there was hardly one scientific discovery of the nineteenth century that was not immediately grasped and exploited by eager enemies of the Christian religion. Too often has science been made the menial of infidelity, and the assertion has been untiringly repeated that science and faith cannot agree. No wonder, then, that timid souls become suspicious, that they are prone to resist the whole theory of evolution in a lump, instead of trying to distinguish between what is of scientific value in it, and what is misused for the purpose of denying creation.

Nevertheless, such narrow-mindedness is strongly to be censured. It has often caused the reproach, that Catholics lack the freedom to admit scientific discoveries. They forget the wise admonition of the prince of mediæval theologians, that it were advisable, in regard to scientific views which have nothing to do with religion, neither to set them down as truths of faith, nor either to reject them as contrary to faith lest occasion be given to think contemptuously of the faith. As long as men are and men think, narrow-mindedness will never be lacking. Hence if the believing scientist wants to know whether he is running counter to faith in any particular, he has to ascertain from theological text-books what the Church declares to belong to faith, what explanation of Holy Scripture is unconditionally binding, and not what is the individual opinion of theologians, much less what some pious nurse is telling the little ones.

This is the first rule concerning the relation between faith and science: it states what the scientist is *not* tied down to.

2. Science Retains its Method of Research

But when and how may the scientist be restricted? Here we come to the second point: the directions which faith may give to the profane sciences are in themselves not of a positive but of a *negative kind*; revelation and Church cannot tell the scientist what he is to assert or defend in the field of the profane sciences, but only what propositions he must *avoid*. Thus every science is left free to pursue its own method of research. It is not difficult to understand this.

Faith draws from divine revelation; profane sciences, as such, do not draw from divine revelation, but only from experience and reason. Philosophy would cease to be philosophy and become theology did it demonstrate the immortality of the soul by revelation. The anthropologist would cease to be an anthropologist and become a theologian if he would attempt to prove the common origin of mankind by Holy Scripture.

In other words, the profane sciences are distinguished from faith and theology by their formal object, by the end they have in view, by the scientific method with which they handle their subject. Theology, of course, uses revelation extensively; and in this it differs from the other sciences. Hence faith cannot command the anthropologist to defend also in profane science the common origin of the human race from Adam and Eve, because it is held to be a revealed truth. He must say: I believe as a Christian that this is true, established by divine revelation, and no science will ever prove the contrary; but whether I can positively defend this fact as resulting from anthropology, depends on my ability to corroborate it by the methods of this science, that is by the testimony of profane history. And just as little could the historian be required to obtain historical results of which he cannot produce the evidence according to his method.

Therefore faith can only tell the profane scientist that he must not assert anything which is held by faith to be erroneous; that it is false to say there is nothing but force and matter, that the human soul ends in death, or that the various families of the human race have not a common origin. As soon as the scientist knows by faith that a thing is false, he is bound to refrain from asserting it: bound in the first place by the duty to believe, but also by the principles of his own science, which is to find not error, but truth, which forbids to assert what has been proved to be erroneous. Perhaps his own means will not enable him to prove the truth independently of revelation; then from the standpoint of his science he must say, *Non liquet*.

The position of the Catholic Church agrees with these principles. She knows, and emphasizes that science has its own method, and hence a natural right and freedom to proceed in its own field according to its method. The Church rejects but one kind of freedom, viz., the freedom to propound a doctrine proved by faith to be erroneous. “The Church by no means forbids these disciplines to use in their own field their own principles and method,” declares the Vatican Council. “But, while acknowledging this lawful freedom, the Church takes care to prevent them from taking up errors in opposition to divine teaching, or from creating confusion by transgressing their limits and invading the realm of faith” (Vat. sess. III, ch. 4. Cf. also the letter of *Pius IX.*, “*Gravissimas*,” of Dec. 11, 1862, to the Archbishop of Munich, Denz. n. 1666, *seq.*)

These few remarks show the lack of intelligence in the charge that “Catholic philosophy starts from dogmas and revelation,” or that the Church would dictate to scientists everything they should teach; that, according to its principles it could claim the right “to impose upon a physicist of *Zeppelin's* era the task of proving the Ascension of Christ or the Assumption of Mary by aërostatic rules.” This is simply gross ignorance or misrepresentation.

3. Restraint Only in the Province of Revelation

In what matters may faith and the Church be a guide to research in this negative sense? In all fields, or only some? Evidently only in their own sphere. But to the sphere of faith belongs only what is contained in divine revelation, viz., the truths of *religion and morality*, as laid down in Scripture and tradition, the truths of God and His work of salvation, of man and his way to his eternal destiny, of the means of grace, and of the Church. Whatever lies outside of that sphere does not belong to the province of faith. This is true also of the teaching authority of the Church. The purpose of the Church is to guard faithfully the treasure of divine revelation and to transmit it in an authoritative manner to mankind: hence her authority in teaching is confined to what is contained in revelation, and what is necessary for an efficient custody and transmission of it to mankind. Hence she may declare certain truths as revealed, she may reject opposing errors, she may condemn books offensive to faith, she may approve or reject systems of ethics. But she cannot set up wholly new religious truths or revelations. *Depositum custodi*— this is the purpose of the Church. Still less are matters of an entirely profane nature subject to the teaching authority of the Church. Profane sciences can therefore receive direction from faith only in those matters which at the same time belong to the province of faith.

What follows from this? It follows that *almost all the profane sciences are incapable of being instructed or restricted by faith*, because their province lies outside that of faith, and does not come in touch with it: they are left to themselves to correct their errors. When the astronomer in his observatory watches the movements of the planets, and bases thereon his mathematical calculations, when the physicist or chemist in his laboratory observes the laws of nature or makes new discoveries, when the pathologist studies the symptoms of diseases in organisms, no warning voice interrupts their work of study. Of course when they deny the creation, the possibility of miracles, then they conflict with faith; but then they have ceased to be naturalists, they have become philosophers. When the botanist or zoölogist in his laboratory is studying plants and animals and collecting his specimens, when the palæontologist is excavating and examining his fossils, they enjoy perfect freedom: all this has nothing directly to do with faith. And there is no warning sign set up for the geographer or geologist when settling the orographical or hydrographical conditions of countries or measuring geological strata; no danger signal disturbs the linguist in establishing the grammar of unknown languages, nor the archæologist or the historian, when they discover new documents or decipher inscriptions. Nor does anybody interrupt the mathematician in his calculations.

What unnecessary worry, then, for the representatives of mathematics, geology, palæontology, and chemistry to write burning protests against the fetters of dogma in the interest of their scientific activity! And it is superfluous worry for professors of the technical arts to get excited by imagining that electricity and steam must be treated according to ecclesiastical precepts. Nor is there need of emphasizing the statement that there cannot be a Catholic chemistry, geography, or mathematics – it is self-evident.

Hence almost the entire province of the profane sciences, which are the pride of our age and occupy the foremost position in our universities, with their laboratories, institutes and observatories and meteorological stations, are free and perfectly undisturbed by faith. If accordingly any one should be of the opinion that the Christian-minded scientist were hindered in his scientific research, he would have to consider him an unhampered investigator at least in this vast field.

Most in touch with faith comes *philosophy*. Not in the vast field of logic, of empirical psychology, in questions concerning the essence of bodies and their forces, in matters of mere history of philosophy; but in questions of views of the world and life, in metaphysics and ethics, it does. These, the highest questions, bearing on the direction and pursuit of human life, matters that most occupy the human mind, are at the same time subjects of revelation; God Himself has deigned to teach the truth in these matters, to make them safe for all time against the error of the mind of

man. Here philosophers encounter danger-signals. They hear, what their reason even tells them, that it is erroneous to think there is no world of spirits, no God above nature, no immortality, no life hereafter, no providence. Nor could one say that philosophy is the loser by being kept from error which endangers human life. Nowhere are errors so apt to occur as in questions which are outside the sphere of immediate experience; nowhere are self-deceptions more common than there, where disposition and character continually influence the mind.

A modern representative of philosophy, *E. Adickes*, writes as follows: “In the course of this history (of metaphysics) there have been given long since all the principal answers that are at all possible to all metaphysical questions. The building up of metaphysical systems can and will proceed, nevertheless, and their multiplicity will remain. . . Of course, progress will not be gained thereby: results will not gain in certainty, contradictions and mysteries do not diminish.”

“If the greatest of the ancient Greek natural scientists, physicians, and geographers should rise again they would be amazed at the progress made in their sciences; like beginners they would sit at the feet of teachers of our day, they would lack the most elementary ideas; they would first have to learn what every grammar-school boy knows, and much of what they once considered achievements would be disclosed to them as deception or mere hypothesis. On the other hand a *Plato*, an *Aristotle*, a *Zeno* or *Epicurus*, might readily take part in our discussions about God and the soul, about virtue and immortality. And they could safely use their old weapons, the keenness of which has suffered but little from the rust of time and the attacks of opponents. They would be astonished at the little progress made, so that now, after two thousand years, the same answers are given to the same questions.”(Charakter und Weltanschauung, 1905, p. 24).

A science which must make such a confession has no reason to reject with haughty self-confidence the intimations of a divine revelation.

The *science of history* again has not the duty of praising everything that has happened within the Catholic Church or else to repress it; no, only the truth is desired. But it must not start out with the assumption that God's influence in the world, a divine revelation, miracles, and a supernatural guidance of the Church, are impossible; nor must it attempt to construe history according to that assumption. Hence it must not undertake to explain the religion of the Jewish nation, or the origin of Christianity, by unconditionally ignoring everything supernatural, and attempting to eliminate it by prejudiced research and by means of natural factors, whether they be called Babylonian myths or Greek philosophy or anything else; it must not impugn the credibility of the Gospel, claiming that reports of miracles must be false; it must not write the history of the Church and deliberately ignore its supernatural character, as if it were the violent struggle of a federation of priests for universal rule. Assured results undoubtedly are arrived at in history less frequently than in other sciences; it offers full play to suppositions, hypotheses, constructive fancy, the influence of ideas inculcated by education and personal views of the world, especially when summing up facts. Hence here more than anywhere else must moral character and unselfish love of the truth stand higher than the desire for freedom.

The *history of religion* and *anthropology* must be forbidden to assume that the human mind is but a product of animal evolution, that therefore religion and morality, family and state life, reason and language, and the entire intellectual and social life have necessarily evolved from the first stages of animal life. If we add that *jurisprudence* in its highest principles comes in touch with faith, and that it also must not dispute the divine right of the Church, we have mentioned the most important sciences and instances in which the investigator must take faith into consideration.

We now understand in what sense we may rightly speak of a “*Christian philosophy and science*” or of a “*Catholic science of history*.” Surely not in this sense that philosophy and history have to draw

their results from Holy Scripture or from the dogmatical decisions of the Church; nor in the sense that they have to make positive defence for everything that the Church finds it necessary to prescribe. The sense is merely this: they guide themselves by faith, as we said above, by refraining from propositions and presumptions proved by faith to be false. In a large measure this is also the meaning of the often-misrepresented term, *Catholic University*. In the reverse sense we may speak of a liberal science. It is that science which in the field of philosophy and religion guides itself by the principles of liberalism and the principle of liberal freedom and the rejection of faith. But to speak of a Catholic, Protestant, Liberal chemistry or mathematics, has no sense at all, because these disciplines, like most other profane sciences, have no direct connection with Catholicism, Protestantism, or Liberalism.

That we have stated correctly the *attitude of the Catholic Church* is evidenced by more than one official document. In the decree of the Holy Office of July 3, 1907, the so-called Syllabus of *Pius X.*, the following (5.) proposition is condemned: “Inasmuch as the treasure of faith contains only revealed truths, it does not behoove the Church under any consideration to pass judgment on the assertions made by human sciences.” Similarly was the proposition (14), likewise condemned in the Syllabus of *Pius IX.*: “Philosophy must be pursued without any regard to supernatural revelation.”

These condemnations stirred up anger: “Now,” it was said, “the Church wants to subject the whole of human knowledge to her judgment: this is unbearable insolence.” But what follows from these condemnations? The opposite truth asserted in them is this: the Church in one respect must pass judgment on the assertions made by human science, namely, in so far as they come in conflict with the doctrines of faith. The only freedom rejected by the Council is the freedom to contradict revealed truth: it must not be held “that human science may be pursued with freedom, that its assertions can be considered true and must not be rejected by the Church even if they contradict a revealed doctrine.” (sess. III, ch. 4, can. 2). The Church does not want to judge on matters of profane science; but she claims the right, due to her as guardian appointed for the preservation of the pure faith, to raise her warning voice when, for instance, natural science transgresses its limits and trespasses on the province of religion by denying the creation of the world. It is but self-defence against an attack upon her inviolable domain. But she does not claim the authority to sit in judgment upon the results of astro-physics, upon the atom-hypothesis, or its opposite; or on the acceptance of a theory about ions or earthquakes.

Another question may be touched upon: Is the *Catholic historian* free to proceed steadily in the search after historic truth, even where he discovers facts which do not reflect honour on his Church? And where it is a question of uncertain, private revelation, of doubtfulness of relics and other sacred objects exposed for public worship, may he proceed undisturbed with his critical research, or is he restrained by ecclesiastical authority?

Should the Catholic meet with dark passages in the history of his Church, then every well-meaning observer will demand that he display in the treatment of such matters a pious forbearance for his Church. His respect for her will dictate this. Unsparing criticism and hunting for blemishes and shadows must be excluded. But he cannot on this account be bound to pass by the unpleasant facts he may meet in his researches, or to cloak or deny them against his better knowledge. He knows that the divinity of his Church shows itself to best advantage just because, notwithstanding many weaknesses and faults, past and present, she passes unvanquished and imperishable through all storms, – a token of the supernatural origin of her strength and power of endurance.

It was this very thought that moved *Leo XIII.* to open the Vatican Archives for freest research to friend and enemy, – the clearest proof that could possibly be given that the Church does not fear

historical truth. In his letter of admonition, of August 18, 1883, urging the fostering of historiography, the same Pope gives the following rules for the Catholic scientist: “The first law of history is that it must not say anything false; the second, that it must not be afraid of saying the truth, lest a suspicion of partiality and unfairness arise.” An excellent example of the application of these rules is found in *L. v. Pastor's* “History of the Popes,” especially in what he says about *Alexander VI.* and *Leo X.*

In his historical investigation of private revelations, such as those of *St. Gertrude*, *St. Mechtild*, *Bl. Juliana of Liège*, or of relics and objects of veneration, the historian is likewise not restricted by Church-direction. Having merely the task of preserving the treasure of the faith received from Christ and the Apostles, the Church in her function as Teacher never vouches for the divine origin of new, private revelations, nor for the accuracy of pious traditions of another kind. True, she decides authoritatively whether private revelations contain anything against faith and morals, but she decides nothing more. If she accepts such revelations or traditions as genuine, she claims for the facts in question only that human faith which corresponds to their historical proof.

This is clearly stated by the recent encyclical *Pascendi*: “In judging of pious traditions, the following must be kept in mind: the Church employs such prudence in treating of these matters that she does not allow such traditions to be written about except with great precaution and only after making the declarations required by *Urban VIII.*; and even then, after this has been properly done, the Church by no means asserts the truth of the private revelation or of the tradition, but merely permits them to be believed, provided there be sufficient human reasons. It was in this sense that the Sacred Congregation of Rites declared thirty-one years ago: “These apparitions are neither approved nor condemned by the Holy See; it merely permits them to be believed in a natural way, provided the tradition on which they rest be corroborated by credible testimonies and documents.” Whoever follows this maxim is safe. The veneration of such things is always conditional, it is only relative, and on the condition that the tradition be true. In so far only is the veneration absolute as it relates to the Saint to whom the veneration is paid. The same applies to the veneration of relics.” (*Benedict XIV.* says of private revelations: “*Praedictis revelationibus etsi approbatis, non debere nec posse a nobis adhiberi assensum fidei catholicae, sed tantum fidei humanae juxta regulas prudentiae, juxta quas praedictae revelationes sunt probabiles et pie credibiles.*” De Serv. Dei beatificatione, III, c. ult. n. 15).

Hence the historian is free to investigate such traditions critically, provided, of course, that he does not violate the reverence due to sacred things.

4. Infallible and Non-Infallible Teachings

Now to consider a last point. Does it not rest entirely with the pleasure of ecclesiastical authority, as would seem from what has been said above, to suppress at any time the results, or at least the hypotheses, of scientific research by pointing to putative truths of faith presumed to be in opposition? Then, of course, the scientist would be at the mercy of a zealous ecclesiastical authority. Or will it perhaps be said that this authority is infallible in its every decision? Think of *Galileo*, of the interdict against the Copernican view of the world, and you will be able fully to appreciate the danger alluded to!

We shall later on return to the famous case of *Galileo*. For the present we only call attention to a distinction which must not be overlooked, the distinction between infallible teachings and those that are not infallible.³

According to Catholic teaching, the universal teaching body of the Church, when declaring unanimously to be an object of faith something relating to faith and morals, is endowed with *infallibility*, and also when in its daily practice of the faith it unanimously professes a doctrine to be a truth of faith. This infallibility is also possessed by the Pope alone when, acting in his capacity as Supreme Teacher of the Church in matters of faith and morals, he intends to give a permanent decision for the whole Church (*ex cathedra*).

Besides these infallible teachings there are also *non-infallible* teachings, and they are the more frequent. Such are, first of all, the ordinary doctrinal utterances of the Pope himself in his regular supervision of the teaching of doctrine: these instructions and declarations are of a lower kind than those peremptory ones that are pronounced *ex cathedra*: he is infallible only in the utterance of these ultimate, supreme decisions, the chief bulwark, as it were, erected against the floods of error. Decisions *ex cathedra* are very rare. Encyclical letters, too, are, as a rule, not infallible. It is self-evident that the theological opinions and statements of the Pope as a private person, not as Supreme Head of the Church, do not belong here at all. They have no official character and are in no way binding.

Among decisions that are not infallible are further included, in various degrees, the doctrinal utterances of Bishops, of particular synods, and especially those of the Roman Congregations. The latter are bodies of Cardinals, delegated by the Head of the Church, as highest Papal boards, to co-operate with him in the various offices of administration. Of these, the Congregation of the Holy Office and that of the Index may also render decisions on doctrinal questions. Although the Congregations act by virtue of their delegation from the Pope, and publish their decrees with his consent, the decisions are not decisions of the Pope himself, but remain decisions of the Cardinals. Much less can the infallibility of the Pope pass over to them: it is his personal prerogative, the aid of the Holy Ghost is promised to him, and protects his judgments under certain conditions against error.

But the Catholic owes submission also to the non-infallible teachings; and not only an outer submission, a reverent silence, that offends not either verbally or in writing against the decision rendered, but he owes also his inner assent. But it cannot be that unconditional inner assent which he owes to the infallible decision, for this he holds to be irrevocably certain; nor is his assent to non-infallible decisions a real act of faith. He is not given any unconditional guarantee of the truth. An error is, of course, most unlikely, but not absolutely impossible. Hence the faithful Catholic should always be ready to accept such decisions in as far as they are warranted by recognized truth. This applies to all kinds of doctrinal teaching, but of course in different ways, corresponding to the degree of authority, – for instance, Papal decisions are of higher authority than those of the Congregations, – yet it applies also to the doctrinal decisions of the Congregations, because they are the ordinary teaching organs of the Church.

When the Congregation of the Index, 1857, had forbidden the works of *Guenther* and many thought they could evade the decision, *Pius IX.* wrote, June 15, to the Archbishop of Cologne: “The decree is so far-reaching that nobody may think himself free not to hold what we have confirmed.” Similar was what the Pope had written to the Archbishop of Mecheln after the condemnation of the ontological errors of *Ubagh*. The *Motu proprio* of *Pius X.* of November 8, 1907, speaks similarly

³ Infallible teachings are often also called dogmas. But they are not always dogmas in the strict sense. In the strict sense dogmas are such truths as are contained in divine revelation, and are proclaimed by the infallible teaching authority of the Church to be believed as such by the faithful. In a broader sense those tenets are often called dogmas which are presented by revelation or by the Church as infallible truths. In this sense all teachings of faith clearly found in Holy Scripture are dogmas, even if not declared by the Church. In this sense Protestants, too, believe in revealed dogmas.

of the obligation of submission to the decisions of the Papal Biblical Commission relating to doctrines, and to the decrees of Congregations when approved by the Pope. (Cf. also the Syllabus of Pius IX., sent. 22.)

Theologians agree that this requisite internal assent is not the same as irrevocable assent. This was also declared by *Pius IX.* in his letter to the Archbishop of Munich-Freising, saying that this inner submission is by no means faith; and no theologian will ascribe infallibility to a mere congregational decree. (See on this point: *e. g. Grisar*, *Galileistudien*, 1882, 171 *seq.* *Cr. Pesch*, *Theol. Zeitfragen*, Erste Folge, 1900, III. *Egger*, *Streiflichter ueber die freiere Bibelforschung*, 1889.)

It would be erroneous to think that only in recent times, after the embarrassment caused by the regrettable *Galileo* decision the subtle distinction had been invented that congregational decisions are not binding on Catholics with absolute force. This was taught by theologians long before the *Galileo* case caused any excitement. In this sense the celebrated writer on Moral Theology, *Lacroix*, said: “The declarations of none of these Congregations are infallible... No infallibility is promised to the Congregation in so far as it is viewed as separate from the Pope” (*Theologia Moralis*, 1729, I, n. 215). *Raccioli*, soon after the *Galileo* trial, wrote: “The Holy Congregation of Cardinals as separate from the Pope cannot give to any proposition the proper authority of faith.” And he adds: “There being extant no decision of the Pope, or of a Council directed and confirmed by him, the proposition of the sun moving and the earth standing still cannot on the strength of a congregational decree be considered a truth that must be believed” (*Almagestum novum*, 1651, I, 52).

The obligation to give interior assent also to an authority not infallible, cannot seem strange if this authority offers a guarantee for the truth commensurate to the assent demanded. We certainly ask of a child to receive the instruction from his parent and teacher with internal assent, so far as the latter does not run counter to its instinct for the truth, else the education of the child and the needful influence over its intellectual life would be impossible. Upon the Church has been bestowed by her divine Founder the task of guiding the faithful authoritatively in the educational matters committed to the Church, and not only in their youth but throughout their lives. This guidance in religion and morality would be impossible if the faithful could constantly deny their internal assent to the instruction of the Church, which is given generally in a form that is not infallible. The full power of the Church to teach with authority implies a corresponding duty of the faithful to assent to her teachings as far as this is possible. Does not the scientific specialist think himself obliged to accept a proposition on the strength of a certain authority, even if the latter's infallibility is not established? He reads in his scientific periodical and finds in it the report of special researches made by a colleague. He cannot examine them over again, yet he accepts them because of the reliability of his colleague, in which he sees the guarantee of truth. Likewise, only more so, does the Catholic owe it to his sense of truth to impose upon himself an assent even where the representatives of the teaching authority of the Church are not endowed in their decision with the gift of infallibility. For he knows that even in such teachings the Church is commonly under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who will seldom tolerate error. He is promised to the teaching Church for the safe guidance of the faithful; these declarations are, however, the ordinary doctrinal utterances of that ecclesiastical office. And the Holy Ghost cannot permit that the teaching authority should by a wrong decision forfeit the confidence it enjoys.

Moreover, this authority ranks very high even when looked at from a purely human standpoint. Those who are invested with it are mostly men of great learning, competent to give such doctrinal decisions by virtue of their experience and position, and learned advisers are at their side. They are guided by the tradition and wisdom of a universal Church, which measures its history by thousands of

years: the decisions, too, are for the most part but the application or repetition of previous doctrinal utterances. Besides, there is the hesitating caution which advances to a decision only after long deliberations, and in undemonstrated matters usually refrains from decision; a caution which has increased still more in recent times, since so many subtle questions have arisen on the boundaries of science and faith. It is also known that many inquisitive eyes are constantly turned on Rome, and a single wrong decision might entail most disagreeable consequences for friend and foe. The pressure must be very great before a much-disputed question is taken up at all.

Of course it is by no means impossible that difficulties may pile up in such a way that an error may really be made. History knows of such a case. But the very fact that the one case of *Galileo* is always quoted, and, therefore, that in the long history of the Congregations this is considered to be almost the only case of importance, is a proof how carefully the Congregations proceed, and that supernatural aid is granted them. An institution which in the course of its long existence had to reply to innumerable questions and against which only one wrong decision of importance can be pointed out, must necessarily be an exemplary institution. An institution so free from human error must surely be guided by the Holy Ghost. Compare with this the many cases in which science has had to correct itself, had to abandon its long-championed propositions as untenable.

Thus, in a given case, the decision is not difficult for the Catholic. On one side stand the representatives of a science which has erred, very often, incomparably more frequently than the ecclesiastical teaching authority, and which lacks the special aid of God. On the other side is the ecclesiastical authority, which has almost never erred, and which enjoys special divine aid; moreover, it examines into its questions with greater caution and care, because it has more to lose. In addition it is almost invariably able to point to a large number, and frequently the majority, of savants who indorse its decisions, because these mostly concern disputed questions not yet scientifically determined. Hence the Catholic will find no difficulty in presuming that the decision is in accord with the truth; the more so because, as a rule, he himself is unable to examine scientifically both sides of the question.

Should any one, nevertheless, be clearly convinced, by substantial and valid reasons, that there has been prejudgment, then he would not be any longer obliged to give it his interior assent: truth before all else. It would be easy, too, by presenting reliable information to an authoritative quarter, to secure the triumph of the truth. However, in this case a man must be ever on his guard against the tendency to overrate his own arguments. In excitement he easily thinks himself to be certainly in the right, but when considering the matter quietly before God and his conscience, he will rarely come to the conclusion that it would be wise to set his judgment above the decision. In the case of *Galileo* the decision of the Congregation was by no means opposed by a clear conviction of the truth of the opposite.

Take, for instance, a more recent decision of the Congregation, forbidding craniotomy. It has often been denounced. The question was submitted to the Congregation of the Holy Office whether it were permissible to teach that craniotomy is allowable in case the mother cannot give birth to the child, and that both will have to die unless the child be killed and removed by a surgical operation. The Congregation answered twice in the negative, in May and August, 1889. Neither craniotomy, nor any operation implying the direct murder of the child or mother can be taught to be permissible. The reason on which the answers were based is that the direct murder of an innocent person in order to save human life is never allowable; and this applies to the murder of a child, which has as much right to its life as any other person. In the case of craniotomy we have the direct murder of the child. We, too, shall have to admit, if we judge according to the objective morality of the action, that the Congregation is in the right; though it may seem hard to let both mother and child die rather than take a life directly, we shall have to admit that it is more in accord with the sanctity of the moral law than the opposite, though the

latter may seem preferable to medical practice. Viewed in the interest of truth and the purity of the moral law, it is gratifying to know that there is a court courageous enough to uphold this law always and everywhere, even when it becomes hard.

So much about assenting to doctrinal decisions that are not infallible.

In regard to *infallible* decisions, the Catholic knows that there are certain truths which no result of science can contradict. To these decisions he owes unconditional submission, and he gives it with conviction: he knows the promise, "I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the world." New decisions of this kind are very rare. When the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope was proclaimed in 1870, the fear was frequently expressed that the Head of the Roman Church would hasten to make the fullest use of this prerogative, by erecting theological barriers at all nooks and corners in the realm of thought. The fear did not come true; it was unfounded.

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