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Whereupon what an outcry arises. Not from the Athenians, but from modern expositors. 'It is incredible,' says Canon Knowling, 'that St. Paul should have commenced his remarks with a phrase calculated to offend his hearers.' And that is one of the mildest ways of putting it. 'Paul,' says Professor Schaff, 'was too much of a gentleman, and had too much good sense, to begin his address to the Athenian philosophers with an insult.'

Now it is never wise to interpret Scripture by our sense of the fitness of things. But is even the fitness of things all on the other side? Has not Dr. Schaff just said that St. Paul's audience was an audience of philosophers? That it was mainly so is evident. What offence was it to philosophers to call the Athenians superstitious? They called them so themselves. Instead of irritating, nothing would conciliate them more than to find that the Apostle was with them in their contempt of the superstitious practices of the people.

But it may be questioned if the matter once engaged the Apostle's attention. St. Paul was no doubt both a gentleman and an orator, but his first consideration always was for the truth as it is in Jesus. And Dr. Field is not wrong in suggesting that here, as elsewhere, he delivered his message 'with all boldness' and not 'with enticing words of man's wisdom.'

Another Estimate of Ritschl.

By Professor the Rev. J. Dick Fleming, B.D., Manitoba College, Winnipeg.

It is not easy to determine the position of Albrecht Ritschl in the theological world. The Orthodox we know: the Liberals we know; but where does Ritschl stand? It is certain that the Göttingen professor desired to be classed with no theological party, and that he had his desire. From both sides of the theological world he was most bitterly assailed. His criticisms of the pietistic and pagan features of the religious life, and the outworn metaphysic that prevailed in theology, were met by the overwhelming counter-charges of rationalism, phenomenalism, materialism, scepticism, or even nihilism. The very variety and inconsistency of the charges argued at least the apprehension of something portentous in the Ritschlian mode of thought. As Ritschl once observed, he was apparently regarded by his opponents as a kind of theological St. Catherine's wheel, spitting out the fire of heresy to every point of the compass.

To the Liberal theologians Ritschl first gave deep offence by his defection from the Tübingen School of Theology, and by the self-confident tone in which he exalted himself above his former teachers. 'The pigmy, forsooth, making himself out to be superior to the great master (F. C. Baur), to whom belongs the honour of every trace of scientific method he still retains.'[1] But if Ritschl thus seemed to the theological Left to be veering round in a retrograde direction, and to be desirous of ingratiating himself with the orthodox party, he encountered no less the stern opposition of the representatives of orthodoxy. At his death in 1889, the 'Church News' of Berlin—*der Kirchliche Anzeiger*—representing the orthodox side of German opinion, raised a lament that so many of their students were being infected with the Ritschlian doctrines. 'It is deeply to be regretted that the disciples of Ritschl have now a prominent place on the teaching staff of several universities, and that through his influence a great number of young theologians have entered on the ministry without holding the faith of the Church on matters most essential. The Church will need to put forth great efforts before she can succeed in freeing herself from the baneful influence of the Ritschlian theology.' So far from freeing herself from this 'baneful influence,' however, the faith of the

[1] C. Schwarz, *Geschichte der neuesten Theologie*, p. 173.

Church has been increasingly moulded by the new theological method.

The very keenness of the opposition to the Ritschlian doctrine is sufficient proof that Ritschl was no ordinary representative of the mediating school. He had no liking for the theology of the *juste milieu*, its timid admissions of the results of historical criticism, its methodless procedure, its ill-connected doctrines drawn from heterogeneous sources. His own ideal was a *theology in one piece*, resting on a basis of its own, and arriving at its conclusions by a single and uniform method. On the one hand, he had early withdrawn from schools of speculation which turned Christianity into a process of thought, and treated Christ and the Apostles as the originators of philosophical novelties. Ritschl's aim was to rescue theology from the grasp of the metaphysician, whose interest lay in abstract truth, and to bring it into closer association with the religious faith from which it derived its strength and fruitfulness. On the other hand, Ritschl did not abandon his scientific instinct, or throw himself into the arms of a blind orthodoxy. If he was opposed to the abstractions of the philosopher, he was no less opposed to what he regarded as the unintelligent dogmas of the orthodox. He believed that the traditional theologians stood as guardians of a valuable deposit of faith; but they followed no consecutive or uniform method; they adopted pagan and scholastic as well as definitely Christian standpoints; and they clung to positions no longer valid for present-day thought. While accepting the standpoint of Christian revelation, Ritschl had very little regard for what could not be verified by experience, or rendered intelligible by common analogies; and he felt keenly that the traditional dogmas of the Church were a burden rather than a help to the Christian intelligence. The orthodox dogmatic was built up on a rationalist basis—for it started with philosophical proofs of the existence of God and the fact of a revelation; but in its general structure it was merely traditional, and in the interpretation of particular doctrines it did little to meet the needs of the thinking man. Ritschl himself believed he had done much to establish the Christian faith on its true basis, and to bring it into fuller harmony with the common understanding; and he was distressed that the Evangelical party did not appreciate his honest endeavour to reinterpret, and so to vindicate the Church doctrines. He felt it unfair that when he was building a strong rampart, as he thought, against the inroads of scepticism and unwarrantable speculation, the orthodox party should assail him from behind. He complained of his critics that while ever ready to point out his mistakes, they themselves harked back to the old scholastic formulas without making any effort to bring them nearer to the understanding of the Church. He was wont to say of such traditionalists that they bound heavy burdens and laid them on men's shoulders, but they themselves would not touch them with their fingers.

In the following criticism, which must also be in part interpretation of Ritschl's system, I shall deal first with his theological method, along with his view of the relation of theology to philosophy and to the Christian revelation, and then with his application of that method to some of the vital points of theology.

Ritschl's method has three prominent features. He approaches every problem from the standpoint of a philosophical theory of the *relativity of knowledge and of being*: he defines the sphere of theology by a doctrine of *Worth-judgments* (*Werthurtheile*), that is, of the essentially practical point of view in theology; and he finds the source and regulative norm of theology in the *Christian consciousness*, as that has found classic expression in the New Testament.

Though the Right Wing of the Ritschlian School have laid great emphasis on the last of these features, and so have returned in a measure to the old-fashioned Biblicism, the distinctive character of Ritschlianism must rather be sought in his doctrine of relativity, and in his view of the practical religious character of theology. These two points deserve our first attention.

I.

Although, as we shall find, Ritschl excludes Metaphysics from the domain of theology, and relegates it to some undefined sphere of its own, he is far from despising the utility of philosophy as determining the formal procedure of theology. A true theory of knowledge is all the more important to the theologian, since hitherto that science has been dominated by an old-fashioned scholastic theory. According to Ritschl, there are three theories in vogue: (1) the *Scholastic theory*, which regards the essence of a thing as existing

and as knowable apart from its qualities and relations; (2) the *theory of Kant*, who had only half freed himself from the Scholastic view he combated, and who still retained the thing in itself, while proving it to be unknowable; and (3) the *theory of Lotze*, to which Ritschl professes his adherence, that the thing absolute is an unreal abstraction, and that a thing exists and is known in its relations. According to Ritschl, a true theory of knowledge should enable us to correct much that has hitherto been erroneous in theological thought. Thus many theologians have separated God (with His essence and inner qualities) from His working in the world, and His revelation in the carrying out of the purposes of salvation — as though there were some hidden being distinct from the working, revealing God! Similarly, the soul has been separated from its activities, and redemption thought of as a mysterious work wrought in the soul itself apart from its functions, and so has grown up the doctrine of the mystical union with Christ, with its total obscuring of the genuine Christian experience. So the Divine essence of Christ has been separated from His willing and working and historical functions, in such a way as to make impossible any intelligible doctrine of His person. It has been forgotten that the divinity of Christ, or His union with the Father, consists in that essential harmony with God, in aim and will and work, which He manifested in life, and by which He has perfectly revealed the Divine loving will.

This theory of relativity has been stigmatized as a theory of phenomenalism, or of subjective idealism: in my opinion unjustly. If Ritschl is a phenomenalist, it is in the same sense that Lotze and other Post-Kantians are phenomenalists. Ritschl does not deny the existence of God, or the unity and continuity of the soul: his position is simply that these are, and are known, in their activities and in their relations. It is true that in his doctrine of God he comes nearer to the phenomenalist point of view, and at times comes perilously near to identifying God with his ethical relations. Thus, when he defines God as love, or as 'the Loving Will which assures to us the spiritual supremacy over the world,' he seems almost to identify God with one supreme attribute. We cannot simply equate God with His attributes. While holding with Ritschl that God can only be known through His relations of act, feeling, and will, we do not identify Him with any or all of these. We always regard the proposition, 'God is Love,' as conveying a synthetic judgment, and not merely an analytic one, or one of simple identity. It is only fair, however, to recognize that Ritschl's aim is not so much to give a full and final definition of God as to make prominent what he regards as the essential feature of the Divine being in accordance with his theory of the Worth-judgment.

II.

The theory of Worth-judgments, which may be taken as the central feature of Ritschl's method, serves, in the first place, to define the sphere of theology in distinction from science and philosophy, and it also serves to mark throughout the practical aim of all Ritschl's theologizing. The theory is more definitely as follows: It has been customary hitherto in orthodox systems of theology to distinguish theology as the science of revelation from philosophy as the science of the natural reason; but at the same time, by a strange inconsistency, the Divine science has been based upon arguments (proofs of the being of God, etc.) drawn from purely rational sources. In this way theology has not only been heterogeneous in character—a supernatural edifice on a rationalist basis—but it is built up on a foundation of sand. For the existence of God cannot be proved by any merely theoretical processes. Theology does not really depend on any metaphysical basis: it has a practical foundation of its own, and measures the Christian revelation according to laws of its own. In this sphere the ethical conditions are all-important: he that doeth God's will shall know of the doctrine. Theoretical knowledge and religious knowledge move on two different planes. Theoretical inquiry seeks the objective reality, and deals disinterestedly with its causes and laws; while religious knowledge is invariably represented by judgments of value. It is true, theoretical judgments may be accompanied by value-judgments; for the sense of the fruitfulness or moral worth of the investigation is naturally associated with scientific inquiries. But religion and theology express themselves necessarily in value-judgments, that is, in judgments that have direct reference to man's happiness or unhappiness, to his relation to God, or to his spiritual conquest over the world of nature. It is never through the working of the

natural reason on the general laws of nature or spirit that we find God, but through revelation, and through our sense of its practical religious value.

It was only gradually that Ritschl adopted this theory in its completeness, as involving the absolutely self-contained character of theology. At first he had sought to secure for theology an objective scientific basis by allowing that the theoretic reason could prove the validity of the idea of God. He discarded, indeed, the ordinary theoretical proofs, ontological, teleological, and so forth; but he still retained Kant's moral argument, and maintained against Kant himself that this moral proof was not a mere matter of practical faith, but was a matter of theoretical knowledge. In the later editions of his *Rechtfertigung*, however, he withdrew from this position, and declared that the belief in God was no act of the theoretic reason, but could only be justified by revelation, and rightly apprehended within the sphere of 'Werthurtheile.'

This conception of theology as a science in which the practical religious motives are predominant, has certainly proved exceedingly fruitful in matters of critical and historical investigation. It is true, the principle is a very wide one, and not free from the danger of arbitrary application. The doctrine of Werthurtheile has been to Ritschl what the doctrine of the threefold sense of Scripture was to Origen: it has been the ready lever for removing the burden of many an unacceptable doctrine in the Bible, and in the Church's faith. Paul does seem to the uninitiated mind to indulge occasionally in lofty flights of Christological speculation, and the eagle eye of John (or the writer of the Fourth Gospel) seems to strive to pierce the abysmal problems of eternal Deity; but Ritschl utters over both his spell of 'Werthurtheile,' and lo, presently the entire fabric of cosmological speculation vanishes into thin air, and we discover that Paul and John were two thorough and level-headed Ritschlians! Yet we earnestly believe that, apart from his exaggerations, Ritschl has brought new movement and life into the interpretation of the New Testament. He has led the way in searching out those motives and interests, other than theoretical, that lay at the root of the Apostolic teaching; and in this respect his followers have nobly carried on what he began. In the history of Church doctrine, also, Ritschl has attained many fruitful results by proceeding on the supposition that theologians were guided ultimately, not by scientific, but by religious instincts; and Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte* is a magnificent example of the application of the same illuminating principle.

But while admitting to the full the truth to which Ritschl has called attention—that the course of theology has been determined more by religious than by scientific interests and needs; and allowing, too, that Ritschl by emphasizing these needs has relieved theology of many a barren speculation, and turned the tide of thought into more fruitful channels,—we cannot yet find that Ritschl has proved the main point of his contention that theology and philosophy are determined by different laws, and are mutually exclusive. We grant that the essential questions of theology are or may become supremely interesting and vital to the religious mind, and that theologians have been led in their formulations of doctrine by considerations of edification quite as much as by scientific interest. Still, most of us have a higher ideal for theology than that of a utilitarian art. We believe that so far as theologians have made their religious needs the measure of their theology or the guarantee of its truth, they have been unscientific. The practical religious man may make his own spiritual needs an index of truth, and may by an instinctive faith (or credulity) pass directly from the worth of a thing to its reality; but science dare not follow. Ritschl will never be able to convince the world generally—he has not even convinced his followers—that there are two modes of scientific thought. A scientific theology can draw no further conclusion from a subjective need than that the felt need is there, and that a certain conception of the world or of God would gratify or satisfy that need. When it takes the further step of arguing from the need to the reality of the object or truth in view, it is so far from being science that the ordinary mind will rather repudiate it as arguing a lack of common sense.

It is noteworthy that Ritschl's own followers have been unable to rest in this theory of Worth-judgments and the theoretic scepticism that is naturally conjoined with it. One of Ritschl's most distinguished disciples, Professor Troeltsch, inquires how we are to justify the affirmation of the religious man when he asserts the objective reality of the object of his worship? It is admitted

that the idea of the Divine is practically indispensable, just as in æsthetics the idea of the beautiful, or in morals the idea of the good; but we must look beyond the practical value for a scientific justification. Our faith in God is even more difficult to justify than the validity of the ideas of the Beautiful or the Good; for these last are essentially subjective, and belong to the inmost nature or spirit itself, whereas the object of religion cannot be regarded as a simple datum of the soul. After showing that religion cannot spring merely from human wishes and needs, Troeltsch concludes that religion rests on an inner revelation of God, and that this inward experience needs the confirmation derived from the usual philosophical considerations of the harmony of thought with nature, the appearance of immanent design in the world, the moral argument, and the like. 'To abandon this scientific support of faith,' he holds, 'is a very serious matter. It may give the impression of exalted magnanimity when theologians declare their willingness to abandon every "proof of God's existence," and trust simply to the earnestness of their moral and religious experience. But they resemble the sibyl who calmly burns six of her precious books, and regards the remainder as still valuable enough to justify her in asking the same price as before. It looks a very impressive surrender (das imponirt), but it is made at the cost of an invaluable treasure.' Here, we see, the doctrine of the mutual exclusion of the spheres of philosophy and theology is breaking down. If the doctrine of God is to be scientifically treated, the theologians must not despise the aid of philosophy. One cannot exactly say what Troeltsch may mean by an 'inner revelation'; but if we take his argument to be that the religious man starts with an unproved (not unreasonable) practical hypothesis, which expresses itself first in terms of fancy, and, purifying itself along with the growth of conscience and reflexion, reveals itself finally to the reason as the implicit presupposition of all thought, then we are quite back to the region of theoretic speculation, and the barriers between scientific theology and philosophy disappear.

(*To be concluded.*)

The Origin and Character of our Gospels.

By the late Dr. Friedrich Blass, Professor of Classical Philology in the University of Halle.

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IV.

St. Matthew.

There remains Matthew, who really furnishes the most difficult problem. The name is firmly established, and occurs early, even in Papias, by whom a statement is quoted, unfortunately without any information whether it was imparted to the author by John the Elder or not, as was the case with the one about Mark. 'Matthew wrote the sayings in the Hebrew (that is, the Aramaic) tongue, and every one translated them as well as he could.' These words in their brevity leave much to be desired. Only the Sayings or Discourses, and nothing further? And were they something in the style of the 'Logia' lately discovered in Egypt, in which all is dissolved into unconnected details: 'Jesus says,' and then again 'Jesus says,' and so on? But that would be in conflict with the actual fact, as we see it in Matthew, and is not indicated by anything. Nor is it necessary to admit that Matthew has given us only proverbs and speeches, but nothing or next to nothing of narrative; especially if we allow that Papias, whose own work was entitled 'Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord,' spoke about it in his Introduction, and told where these sayings were to be found, and then came on to Matthew. There is no emphasis on 'sayings' in the passages quoted, as Zahn has well pointed out; the emphasis is chiefly on 'in the Hebrew tongue.' It may be added that Papias speaks