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## THE RITSCHLIAN VIEW OF REVELATION

by LEONARD DE MOOR

IN 1967 we published an extended study by Dr. De Moor, Professor of Greek and Philosophy in Hastings College, Nebraska, of "The Problem of Revelation in Eighteenth-Century Germany with Particular Reference to Lessing". In the present study of the doctrine of revelation he moves from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and considers how it was handled by Albrecht Ritschl.

The problem before us in this study is the validity of the concept of revelation. The main difficulty in connection with it is the need of keeping inviolate the supernatural, the divine content, while at the same time acknowledging that all the avenues of communication for the transmission of such a revelation belong without exception, and necessarily so, to our natural, historically-conditioned world. Because of this the problem of revelation in modern thought has taken on an essentially psychological character. Treatises on revelation in the period we are studying show tendencies of becoming essays in epistemology. That is particularly true of the school of Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889).

That the elements of the problem remain the same is clearly shown in the opening pages of the first chapter of the Systematic volume of Ritschl's *magnum opus*, where he defines the problem by which this work is known: *Justification and Reconciliation*. He wants it understood from the start that he is not denying that

Dogmatics comprehends all religious processes in man under the category of Divine grace, that is, it looks at them from the standpoint of God.<sup>1</sup>

He therefore claims not to deny the divine initiative in all experiences of salvation and the divine reference of all dogmas. In this way he, too, claims to take full cognizance of the first term of the equation in the problem of revelation: the divine content. But he immediately adds:

It is, of course, impossible so thoroughly to maintain this standpoint in our experience, as thereby to obtain complete knowledge of the operations of grace. . . . Only for an instant can we transfer ourselves to the Divine standpoint.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, E.T. of 3rd German edition, vol. III, edited by H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay (Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1900), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Hence psychologically we are under compulsion to treat the operations of God in the process of salvation from the standpoint of man's appropriation of them. We are under this constraint because

we observe and explain even the objects of sense-perception, not as they are in themselves, but as we perceive them.<sup>3</sup>

In like manner, therefore, we need to deal with divine grace in its reflection in the human subject. And so, in the work of this school, the problem of revelation comes more decisively than ever to be dealt with as a chapter in a treatise on psychology or epistemology.

This does not mean that the central problem of metaphysics, the question of ontology, is avoided. In fact, a distinctive contribution of the Ritschlian school is that, by means of what they claimed was a more careful definition of the epistemological problem, greater clarity was obtained on the ontological issue than was attained by its predecessors. Therefore Ritschlianism not only continues to grapple with the question of revelation by a further use of the technique of its predecessors, but perfects that technique so that its value is put to a final test. In Ritschlianism the issues involved in our problem come to stand out more clearly than ever. There is such conclusiveness and completeness in the application of the psychological or subjective method here, that the Ritschlians may justly claim to have worked out, more fully than earlier Protestant theologians, principles which derive not only from Kant and Schleiermacher, but, as Ritschl claims, date back to the great founders of the Reformation themselves: Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Calvin.

For the claim is made that these all mean by justification in Christ

a subjective religious experience of the believer within the Church, and not an objective theological dictum in the Church's system of doctrinal beliefs

as was the case in "the mediaeval system" which dealt with religion in a "purely objective way".<sup>4</sup> It is not denied that the Reformers also acknowledged

the satisfaction or merit which Christ gave or acquired toward God on behalf of the human race or the elect

(the objective factor). But Ritschl claims that they

fix the chief interest upon the thought of justification (subjective), and seemingly assign to the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction the

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, E.T. by John S. Black (Edmonston and Douglass, Edinburgh, 1872), ch. IV, p. 121.

position of a subsidiary doctrine, which has the function of explaining the assertion they make, that justification is conditioned exclusively by faith.<sup>5</sup>

A chief claim of the Ritschlians, therefore, is that in respect to this subjective approach to Christian doctrines they stand in a direct succession from the pure Reformation principles and conceptions, which, unfortunately, underwent a disintegration at the hands of the German theologians of the Illumination,<sup>6</sup> but which were again revived by Kant<sup>7</sup> and Schleiermacher.<sup>8</sup>

This profession of loyalty to native Protestant conceptions was elicited by the reaction of the Ritschlians to the main intellectual currents of their day, and those of the era immediately preceding. Ritschlianism was in high degree the theological expression and mirror of the general consciousness of the time.

Early in his career Ritschl had been much influenced by Hegelian conceptions. In fact, the first edition of his *Early Christian Church* employed the Hegelian logic as the key of interpretation of this period of Church history. But in the second edition (1857) of this work, he definitely revolted against Baur, the oracle of the Hegelian-striped Tübingen criticism. One writer has feelingly described this stage of Ritschl's intellectual development:

He had gone into the spider's parlour of the Absolute philosophy, the web of its dialectic had been woven round his limbs, a religion of mere ideas threatened to suck the life-blood from a religion of active and burden-bearing faith. Life and history had been reduced for him to a moving picture, man's struggle to an illusion, the human personality to a fleeting embodiment of the World-Spirit. When he turned from it, it seemed to him like a bad dream, and pantheism in every form remained his nightmare.<sup>9</sup>

Ritschl therefore threw in his lot with the growing party of revolt against the speculative movement of the early part of the century, and joined in with the spirit of his age in raising the cry "back to Kant". He was not the originator of this movement, but his own experience confirmed that of many of his contemporaries. Reason could not vindicate its claims to resolve all problems by the magic dialectic formula of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The more modest procedure of Kant, which recommended setting limits to reason's domain, promised greater ultimate satisfaction.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> A. Ritschl, *ibid.*, ch. VII.

<sup>7</sup> A. Ritschl, *ibid.*, ch. VIII.

<sup>8</sup> A. Ritschl, *ibid.*, ch. IX.

<sup>9</sup> John Oman, *The Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1906), p. 355.

Because the experimental sciences also could not make good on their claims to give certainty in knowledge, materialism and pessimism were becoming more and more rife. Nevertheless, the religious instinct, refusing to be stilled, yearned for satisfaction in a region where reason could not intrude with its questionings, nor science with its doubts.

Thus the stage was set for a revival of a belief that the only correct approach in the construction of a system of thought was a carefully constructed theory of knowledge which should assign to reason its rightful claims and impose definite barriers upon its usurpations. In the field of theology, Ritschlianism, falling in with this spirit of the times, shared a definite distaste for metaphysics; confined the theoretic domain to phenomena, and dissolved the connection between religion and philosophy. In so doing it also linked itself with the main current of thought dominating the modern period from Descartes on, which worked not from the whole to man and his interests, but from man and his experiences to the whole; which set up psychology and its modes of interpretation as the only correct approach to all the deeper problems of existence, and which was therefore strongly immanent in its conception of religion.<sup>10</sup>

When Ritschl defines the problem of theology, as stated earlier in this chapter, and tells us that we must construct our theological formulations in terms of the reflection of divine grace as observable in the human subject, it is possible to see a direct application of the revolutionary method in which Kant has so succinctly expressed the gist of the modern mood when he said:

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. . . . This attempt to alter the procedure which has hitherto prevailed in metaphysics, by completely revolutionizing it, . . . forms indeed the main purpose of this critique of pure speculative reason.<sup>11</sup>

This reversal of method in Kant from the older objective to the subjective point of view is the reason why Ritschl saw in him a

<sup>10</sup> Rudolf Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, E.T. of 4th German edn. by Meyrick Booth (T. F. Unwin, London, 1912), pp. 447 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, E.T. by Norman Kemp Smith (Macmillan and Co., London, 1929), Preface to Second Edition, pp. 22, 25.

continuation of the early Reformation position, the "true Lutheranism".

While confessing that he is alternately captivated and repelled by the procedure of Schleiermacher,<sup>12</sup> in the end he was favourably impressed by him. The reason, as will be shown, was that Schleiermacher had established the truth of the Christian faith on the data of the experience of the Christian's own self-consciousness, which also commended itself to Ritschl as the proper procedure. This connection of Ritschl with the other outstanding German theologians of the nineteenth century deserves more particular attention. The more necessary will this be because the claim has been made that one of the distinguishing features of the Ritschlian theology is that its founder did not take his cue, as Schleiermacher had done, from the subjective phenomenon, but from the objective conditions of religion.<sup>13</sup>

Kattenbusch, whose contention this is, argues that Ritschl did not, like Schleiermacher, take as a point of departure the idea of "piety" as a spiritual "deed", but rather the thought of God as a "revelation"—giving rise in man to a sense of relation to God. While Schleiermacher viewed religion as an autonomous deed of man, Ritschl emphasized the idea that religion is an address (*Anspruch*) which comes to man when God confronts him. Schleiermacher believed the initiative was with man; not so Ritschl. Similarly Schleiermacher's was an autonomous ethics, while Ritschl's was theonomous. And in spite of a similarity in method of expression between them, Kattenbusch expresses himself as believing that there is a real difference between their conceptions, principally because of Ritschl's fuller knowledge and appreciation of the historical. So, for example, the historical person of Christ exerted a determining influence in Ritschl's system, while Christ was more a symbol for Schleiermacher.<sup>14</sup> These are important statements, and only in the light of our complete study will it be possible to determine whether these claims can be vindicated.

But even this writer points out that this does not mean that

<sup>12</sup> A. Ritschl, *Schleiermachers Reden über die Religion und ihre Nachwirkungen auf die evangelische Kirche Deutschlands* (Bonn, 1874), p. 19, as referred to by James Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, 2nd edn. (Thomas Whittaker, New York, date not given, but must be circa 1896-7), pp 21f. Cf. L. De Moor, "Schleiermacher's Idea of Revelation", *Union Seminary Review* (Richmond, Va.) 50, No. 3 (April, 1939).

<sup>13</sup> Ferdinand Kattenbusch, *Die deutsche evangelische Theologie seit Schleiermacher*, 5. Auflage (A. Töpelmann, Giessen, 1926), pp. 58 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Ritschl conceived the reality of God as something existing apart from the spiritual assimilation and acceptance of the deity by man. This human recognition and acknowledgement, he tells us, cannot be severed from what we ultimately mean by God.<sup>15</sup> This is clearly Ritschl's teaching. For on the third page of his Systematic work we are told that the theologian is to reckon himself in the community, and to build up his system from that standpoint:

The material of the theological doctrines of forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation is to be sought not so much directly in the words of Christ, as in the correlative representations of the original consciousness of the community. The immediate object of the theological cognition is the community's faith that it stands to God in a relation essentially conditioned by the forgiveness of sins.<sup>16</sup>

And in a passage already partially quoted<sup>17</sup> in which Ritschl tells us that theological doctrines must be viewed "as reflected in the subject", he expressly declares that "this method has been already adopted by Schleiermacher".<sup>18</sup> And in another small work, especially written to clarify his position and answer objections that had been raised against his method, he reaffirms this position when he says:

Schleiermacher analysed all these relations (of the Redeemer to the believer) in the frame of the subjective life; he is therefore in respect of method my predecessor.<sup>19</sup>

With this agrees the statement of Ritschl's son and biographer, that

Ritschl confesses himself as follower of Schleiermacher in his procedure of gaining the understanding of the objective Christian doctrines from their mirroring in the human subject.<sup>20</sup>

No attempt is made here to reconcile the objective and subjective standpoints, but they are naïvely placed side by side as though there is no problem here at all. Throughout Ritschl's system, however, the mirroring in the human subject—the subjective element—absorbs the attention of the author. It was Schleier-

<sup>15</sup> F. Kattenbusch, *ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> A. Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, E.T., vol. III, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 18f., nn. 1-3.

<sup>18</sup> A. Ritschl, *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> A. Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, 2. Auflage (Adolph Marcus, Bonn, 1887), p. 54: "Ferner analysirt Schleiermacher alle hier einschlagenden Verhältnisse im Rahmen des subjectiven Lebens. Er ist also in Hinsicht der Methode mein Vorgänger".

<sup>20</sup> Otto Ritschl, *Albrecht Ritschls Leben* (J. C. B. Mohr, Leipzig, 1896), vol. II, p. 190: "Damit bekennt sich Ritschl zu dem Verfahren Schleiermachers, das Verständnis der objectiven Christlichen Lehren aus deren Abspiegelung in dem menschlichen Subject zu gewinnen".

macher, then, who introduced the new era in the theological method: Ritschl, only a new phase of it.

Ritschl also expresses an indebtedness to Schleiermacher for his conspicuous assertion of the social character of all the activities of the human spirit<sup>21</sup> and for establishing the general truth

that the religious moral life of the spirit cannot at all be conceived of outside of the "fellowship" that corresponds thereto, and that, in reciprocal action and reaction therewith, the individual attains his peculiar development.<sup>22</sup>

And because Ritschl is himself convinced that the consciousness of the community belongs to the fundamental conditions of religion, and that religion cannot be rightly apprehended or practised therefrom, he declares that

German Protestantism in which this consciousness had been obscured ever since the time of Melancthon, and as good as lost by means of the Illumination, owes a debt of gratitude to the independent, scientific discernment of Schleiermacher, for having opened up to the religious contents of Christianity the path of a richer development than that which it had found in the entire course of Lutheran theology up to his time.<sup>23</sup>

Divine grace (objective) is known only in the redeemed individual; but the redeemed individual is made possible only by the redeemed community of Christ

or

the community which Christ has founded.<sup>24</sup>

Or, as he puts it elsewhere:

Redemption, the Redeemer, and the community that is the subject of redemption, stand in inseparable relation to one another.<sup>25</sup>

Ritschl's indebtedness to Schleiermacher at these two points, therefore, resolves itself into one: the conceptions of the kingdom of God as an inner possession of the redeemed personality in the Christian social communion: all of which is a mirroring of divine grace. But the important thing is that the reality does not exist in some super-terrestrial sphere. We know it only in redeemed personalities and a regenerated society. "Through experience to God": that is at once Schleiermacher's and Ritschl's approach to theology. The fact that for the former this experience was conceived largely in affective terms, whereas for the latter it was viewed more as volitional, does not destroy the continuity in

<sup>21</sup> A. Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 444.

<sup>22</sup> A. Ritschl, *ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>23</sup> A. Ritschl, *ibid.*, p. 452.

<sup>24</sup> A. Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, vol. III, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>25</sup> A. Ritschl, *A Critical History, etc.*, p. 451.

method and conception of these two theologians whose work dominated the theological field throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

If theology must, therefore, be written from the angle of the mirroring of grace in the religious subject, it will be necessary to consider more carefully what justification, if any, Ritschl gives for such a procedure. We are not left without an answer, for Ritschl consciously addressed himself to this question, and worked out a theory of knowledge not only to explain his theological method, but to vindicate his system against hostile criticism. He considered it an indispensable prerequisite for the construction of a system of theology to be oriented epistemologically. For

each theologian as a man of science is under necessity and obligation to proceed according to a definite theory of knowledge, of which he is conscious, and the legitimacy of which he must prove.<sup>27</sup>

Some students have thrown out warnings that we should not take Ritschl's theory of knowledge too seriously. Reasons given are, that his interest was primarily in the facts of the religious consciousness, and that his chief object was to build a theology upon a practical rather than upon a theoretic basis.<sup>28</sup> And, we are told, since dogmatic construction in practical terms was his primary concern, he had an interest in any theory of knowledge only as the same might serve as the general formal framework for scientific procedure in such theological construction. It was also constructed to serve as a useful polemical weapon against false methods in theology, particularly such as threatened religious values.<sup>29</sup> It is also more than likely, as his own son pointed out,<sup>30</sup> as well as Pfeleiderer,

that Ritschl did not make his theory of cognition the basis of his theology from the first, but rather propounded it subsequently, in its defence.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, editors of *Justification and Reconciliation*, vol. III, Editors' Preface, p. V.

<sup>27</sup> A. Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 40: "Jeder Theolog (ist) als wissenschaftlicher Mann genöthigt oder verpflichtet, nach einer bestimmten Theorie der Erkenntniss zu verfahren, deren er sich bewusst sein und deren Recht er nachweisen muss".

<sup>28</sup> Guy Halliday, *Facts and Values: A Study of the Ritschlian Method* (Christophers, London, 1914), pp. 28, 31.

<sup>29</sup> Otto Ritschl, *Realencyclopädie für Theologie und Kirche*, 3. Auflage (Hinrichs, Leipzig), article "Ritschl" (1906), p. 27. Also *A. Ritschls Leben*, vol. II, p. 185.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Otto Pfeleiderer, *The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant, and its Progress in Great Britain since 1825*, E.T. by J. Fred. Smith (Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London, 1890), p. 183.

In this case it would have been abstracted only later from his finished system. If this was the case, that is perhaps the reason why philosophical critics have often smiled at the theory of knowledge which Ritschl did manage to formulate, calling it

only a dilettante confusion of the irreconcilable views of subjective idealism.<sup>32</sup> . . . and commonsense realism, and an epistemology which simply ignores the problem which it professes to solve—the relation between knowledge and existence.<sup>33</sup>

Though these warnings ought not to go unheeded, Ritschl nevertheless professes, in its light, to justify his particular treatment of theological doctrines. An understanding of his theory of knowledge is therefore indispensable, if we desire to grasp the significance and meaning of his entire doctrinal system.

Ritschl arrived at the statement of his own view by means of a criticism, first of all of what he called the Platonic view, which taught that the thing itself, being at rest as "a permanently self-equivalent unity of attributes",<sup>34</sup> works upon us, arousing our sensations and ideas. The fallacy here, he maintained, was that it is assumed that we can know the thing in itself apart from its effects, forgetting

that the thing in itself is merely the stationary memory-picture of repeated intuitions of effects by which our sensation and perception have been stimulated all along within one definite space.<sup>35</sup>

He even attributed this so-called Platonic epistemology to the common-sense man, and as such condemned it, saying:

This fixed difference between things, as they appear in their outer relations to our experience and awareness, and things in their being for us, is an error of the vulgar way of looking at things. . . . For things which on their own merit we can put to proof and determine, but not in relation to ourselves, are of necessity unknowable as far as we are concerned.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Otto Pfeleiderer, *ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>33</sup> Alfred Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology: Critical and Constructive: an Exposition and an Estimate* (T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1899), p. 47.

<sup>34</sup> A. Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, Vol. III, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> A. Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 33: "Diese fixirte Unterscheidung der Dinge, wie sie an sich ausser Beziehung zu unserer Empfindung und Wahrnehmung zu sein scheinen von ihrem Dasein für uns, ist ein Fehler in der vulgären Ansicht. Denn hier wird getrennt, was nach dem Ursprunge des Vorganges Zussammengehört . . . Denn Dinge, die wir einmahl wie zur Probe an sich, aber nicht in Beziehung auf uns setzen und bestimmen möchten, sind notwendig unerkennbar für uns."

Kant's theory of knowledge which

limits the knowledge of the understanding to the world of phenomena, but declares as unknowable the thing or things in themselves,

he also rejected—

for a world of phenomena can be posited as the object of knowledge only if we suppose that in them something real—to wit, the thing—appears to us, or is the cause of our sensation and perception. Otherwise the phenomenon can only be treated as an illusion.<sup>37</sup>

This is an inference which Ritschl was loath to allow, for he wanted to maintain the position that the "real" is actually given in the appearance. The reason why he therefore disclaimed following Kant was because, as he understood him, Kant found no reality in phenomena. Even though Ritschl himself derived the knowledge of God solely from the soul's immediate empirical perceptions of spiritual realities, he always insisted that such experience is reality, never illusion.

Therefore he turned to Lotze, as possessing a theory of knowledge which taught that

in the phenomena, which in a definite space exhibits changes to a limited extent, and in a definite order, we recognize the thing as the cause of its qualities operating upon us, as the end which these serve as means, as the law of their constant changes.<sup>38</sup>

Following Lotze, Ritschl believed that he was able to assert the unknowableness of the thing-in-itself, and yet preserve or hold to the reality of the phenomenal.

In general, Lotze reverses the position implied in Kant that the knowledge of the "thing in itself", if we had it, would be a higher knowledge than that which we possess. He prefers to conceive of the things as a means to produce in us the representations which we have. The higher knowledge "would consist rather in tracing the meaning, bond, and laws of these phenomena than in pursuing anxiously, beyond the power of thought, the means by which the latter are produced in us". It is no doubt this thought which specially seized on the mind of Ritschl.<sup>39</sup>

It is to be understood, then, why Ritschl thought he found help in Lotze. Lotze was not as agnostic as Kant. In modern philosophical terminology Kant may be classified as a phenomenalist:

<sup>37</sup> A. Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, Vol. III, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> A. Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, Vol. III, pp. 19-20.

<sup>39</sup> James Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith* (Thomas Whittaker, New York, n.d., but must be *circ.* 1896-7), p. 40 (footnote). The reference to Lotze is his *Logik*, p. 491 (E.T., p. 431).

we know, and can know, only appearances. Lotze, on the other hand could be grouped with the critical realists. This school holds the belief that the epistemological object is a valid and trustworthy index or representation of what is the ontological object (not a mere shadowy reflex of the same). If Ritschl might be allowed to classify himself he would certainly have himself counted as a member of the latter group. As he interpreted Lotze he claimed to find in him substantiation for the single interest he had, namely to assert that "we know the thing in the phenomena".

But it has been well observed that

although Ritschl professes "to know the thing in its appearance" yet what his practical method amounts to is rather exclusive attention to the appearance, without any attempt to rationally interpret the thing through its appearances. While he thinks he is maintaining the unity of the thing as "the cause of its signs", to use his own words, "which act upon us, as the purpose which these serve as means, as the law of their regular changes", he is really ignoring the thing, and is fixing his exclusive attention on the signs.<sup>40</sup>

For this reason we concur in the judgment of this otherwise sympathetic student of Ritschlianism, that this

simply ignores the problem which it professes to solve, the relation between knowledge and existence.<sup>41</sup>

As another has expressed it, Ritschl's theory of knowledge is

an aspiration rather than achievement. It put the question not amiss; it does not contain the answer.<sup>42</sup>

For as Lotze is here understood by Ritschl, the epistemological views of the latter do not differ substantially from those of Kant. For

to say as Kant does, that the "real thing" is unknowable in itself, and with Ritschl that it is known only in the phenomenon (i.e. its subjective effect) are two expressions for the same thing.<sup>43</sup>

In both we are denied an inspectional knowledge of reality. In neither do we find a deliverance from philosophical agnosticism.

Because of the unphilosophic treatment of this topic, critics have variously given to Ritschl's theory the name of subjective idealism,<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> A. Garvie, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Robert Mackintosh, *Albrecht Ritschl and his School* (Chapman and Hall, London, 1915), p. 182.

<sup>43</sup> James Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 39.

<sup>44</sup> Robert M. Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1897), pp. 92-94.

or critical realism.<sup>45</sup> And another has declared that

the whole secret of the Ritschlian method is here exhibited in this perplexing and capricious swaying and skipping between an idealistic and realistic mode of consideration.<sup>46</sup>

But when Professor Swing, in defence of this method declares that

nothing would be more fatal to a right understanding of Ritschl than to suppose that he does not hold to the reality of the things themselves,<sup>47</sup>

and thereby seeks to shield Ritschl from the charge that his theology was inclined to philosophical agnosticism, he shows that he completely misses the point of the criticism of Ritschl's opponents. For everyone will admit that Lotze, Kant, and Ritschl, all three admit the reality of things-in-themselves, but all deny that we can know these things-in-themselves apart from their phenomenal appearances.

When Kant separated the theoretical from the practical sphere, his real motive was to conserve for the practical reason the values expressed in the terms God, freedom, and immortality.<sup>48</sup> And when Lotze allowed to the reason only the phenomenal world, he did grant to faith, by an inference which superseded the theoretical faculty, a world of self-like beings. But Ritschl did not think it necessary to have resort to any such speculations. He rested content with his simple formula that "we know the thing in its appearances".

It is only in the light of this methodology that we can understand and appreciate Ritschlian dogmatics.

(To be continued)

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<sup>45</sup> A. Garvie, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>46</sup> Otto Pflleiderer, *Die Ritschl'sche Theologie kritisch beleuchtet* (1891), p. 5, quoted in E.T. by Ernest A. Edghill, *Faith and Fact: a study of Ritschlianism* (Macmillan and Co., 1910), p. 76.

<sup>47</sup> Albert T. Swing, *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl* (Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1901), p. 79.

<sup>48</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 650.