

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

*THE LIFE STORY OF ALBRECHT RITSCHL.*¹

THE family to which Albrecht Ritschl belonged had for generations been settled at Erfurt, a place known to all the world from its connexion with Luther. Albrecht's grandfather was pastor of a church and "Professor" in the *Rathsgymnasium*; and at Erfurt was born (November 1, 1783) Albrecht's father, George Charles Benjamin Ritschl, who also became a Lutheran clergyman, rising to hold the position (from 1827) of "Bishop of the Evangelical² Church and General Superintendent of Pomerania." Albrecht, the eldest child of his father's second marriage, was born March 25, 1822, at Berlin, where the family home and the father's duties were then situated. Two younger brothers saw the light, but did not survive infancy. There were, however, children by the first marriage. The father delivered "a beautiful address" at Albrecht's baptism, when he "astonished every one" by giving the child this name, along with one of his own—Benjamin; but the second name Albrecht Ritschl never troubled to employ. Like many men of distinction, Albrecht seems to have owed much to his mother, upon whose affection he had so unique a claim. The father is described as an enemy of Rationalism and a champion of the policy which united the two Protestant confessions in a single Church-fellowship. Briefly, he stands for a sober and moderate Protestant orthodoxy. His grandson, in the biography of Albrecht, contrasts Bishop Ritschl favourably with Schleiermacher's father. Whereas the latter grew bitter towards his son during the days when he seemed drifting from Christianity, Albrecht

¹ Part of a study of Ritschl prepared for Messrs. Chapman and Hall's *Great Christian Theologies*, edited by Dr. H. W. Clark.

² i.e. Lutheran, or in this case United.

Ritschl's father guided his child gently, and was rewarded by hearing him ultimately enunciate positions which could be greeted not merely with relief, but with gladness. Professor Otto Ritschl goes so far as to claim that the Bishop did more than any other single influence to mould Albrecht Ritschl's final beliefs. The thesis may be exaggerated, but it is a pleasant manifestation of a grandson's pious regard.

From 1828 the family home was at Stettin. In 1831 Albrecht became a schoolboy. He soon learned to know every uniform; and an interest in military things accompanied him through life. Like many German families, the Ritschls were musical. As a young man of twenty-one Albrecht is found mastering the organ; a few years later still, "though I am sufficiently child of my age to enjoy pepper and salt in my music," he criticises what his son describes as the concealed sensuality, mixed with mysticism and pessimistic *Weltschmerz*, of Wagner's productions. No two types of personality, adds the biographer, could be more diametrically opposed than Ritschl's and Wagner's. To return to Ritschl's boyhood; he once saw Schleiermacher (anno 1831). The Ritschl family drove the great man out into the country for an airing, and the child Albrecht sat on the box seat. In this he afterwards claimed to trace a parable of his superiority to Schleiermacher as a theologian of wider outlook and fuller mastery. He learned to be fond of gymnastics, of swimming, of dancing; but skating proved difficult and was abandoned. His anxious mother did not greatly encourage exercise, and her criticism of his friendships tended to make him shy. He was confirmed at the age of sixteen, without forming very strong religious impressions.

When he finished his schooldays—as senior boy, and also pupil of greatest distinction—theology was chosen for his life task, partly (he tells us) from a boy's love for

resembling his father, but still more from a "speculative impulse." The university selected was Bonn, in the then detached area of Rhenish Prussia. At Bonn Albrecht's cousin, Friedrich Ritschl, the classical philologist, was a professor. He and his wife proved warm friends to their young cousin during his years at Bonn as student and as teacher. Another attraction for Ritschl's father was the presence in the theological Faculty of Karl Immanuel Nitzsch, one of the central leaders of that "mediation theology" which claimed inspiration rather than instruction from Schleiermacher, and which sought to steer midway between Rationalism and stiff orthodoxy. The most distinguished of Nitzsch's colleagues was perhaps Bleek, the biblical scholar. But no one at Bonn exercised any great influence upon Albrecht's development.

The young man's studies are interrupted for a time by inflammation of the eyes. When he recovers, he reads Strauss's *Life of Jesus* without being greatly moved; he assures his father that Nitzsch has satisfied him of the fact that Strauss's central assumption—presumably the presence of myths in the New Testament—cannot be made good. The narrow and reactionary orthodoxy of the Hengstenberg school proved even less attractive. An exception occurred only once, under the influence of a fellow-student. Diederich's arguments might be weak; his testimony to personal religious help was less easily waved aside. However, the pendulum soon swings back. He reads Schleiermacher's *Letters to Lücke*, and hopes soon to acquaint himself with the *Glaubenslehre*; but apparently this was postponed.

To speak of lighter matters: with some compatriots—no doubt in a narrower sense—he decked a Christmas tree in December 1840; "something of a rarity at Bonn." We are told of the impression made on him by Cologne

cathedral "even in its then unfinished state." We also hear of a holiday journey into Switzerland and as far south as Milan—the only foreign travel of Ritschl's life; unless we should reckon under this head his visit in Lord Acton's company to Döllinger, among the Bavarian Alps, forty-one years afterwards. "Strictly speaking," says his son, "his pleasure in travel did not last beyond his earliest student days." When the party of 1840, seven strong, reached Baden-Baden, Albrecht was the only one who refrained from staking something at the gaming tables. Soon the party dissolved into smaller groups. It was a relief to the mother when the whole journey was over. A few months later, when Albrecht was *en route* for Halle, she had the privilege of seeing her son after an absence of eighteen months. During the same journey Albrecht, as a guest, visited Neander's lectures on the Epistle to the Romans at Berlin, but without pleasure.

The young Ritschl's discontent with Bonn teaching had induced his father to consent to a change, such as the German university system facilitates. The choice lay between Berlin and Halle. It was no attraction to Albrecht that Berlin contained a large circle of relatives. At Halle Julius Müller, Tholuck, Erdmann seemed to him names of promise, and Halle finally was chosen. But here again neither the vigorous mediation theology of Müller nor the more pietistically tinged spirit of Tholuck satisfied the new listener. As for Erdmann, his conservative and theologically orthodox reading of Hegel was being challenged by the revolutionary school of the Left—Strauss, Feuerbach and (at Halle itself) Ruge. Nevertheless, in one shape or other, Hegelianism at that time enjoyed commanding influence. Young Ritschl was caught in its strong current; and, though the biographer claims that he "never completely adopted the standpoint of the Absolute Philosophy," he

grants that the study was a good because severe discipline for thought. Julius Müller's dislike for Hegelianism lest it should involve Pantheism was intolerable to young Ritschl. Tholuck and he were at least friends, but even there friction arose.

He enjoyed Gesenius on Isaiah, finding it "impossible not to laugh at his profane wit." Of Erdmann he speaks sometimes with gratitude, sometimes with censure. But the decisive impression was made on him by the reading of Baur's book on the *History of the Doctrine of Atonement*. He became more than ever Hegelian, and began to incline to historical studies. Nothing will satisfy him but a visit to Tübingen. He considers Baur "the foremost theologian of Germany," while assuring his father that Baur, Zeller, Vatke and most of the Tübingen school are much more positive than Strauss, Feuerbach or Bruno Bauer. He preaches more than once in classroom at Halle. Among his student friends are Max Duncker the historian, Nassemann the philologist (a lifelong correspondent), Rogge, his old room-mate, for whom he once actually preached, and Carl Schwarz, also a theologian, whose book on *Recent Theology* Ritschl reviewed with painful consequences in 1856. The close of the Halle period is marked by his proceeding to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, when he defended six Latin Theses.¹

The next step forward was a first theological examination. The subjects prescribed included a sermon on Rom. ii. 4—a text to which Ritschl constantly turned in later life for its testimony that repentance is a consequence of grace, not its prerequisite. Rather against the grain, he spent

¹ How many of our university men understand the proper meaning of a "thesis" in connexion with graduation? or realise that Luther's ninety-five theses which "shook the world" were meant as an appeal to the learned? Since writing these sentences I have met with references to true "theses" at Cambridge in the biography called "J."

some months in Berlin working for this examination, "without leisure to hear many lectures." However, he made the acquaintance of Vatke, a Hegelian divine, and one of the forerunners of the Wellhausen criticism of the Old Testament.¹ The examination itself took place at Stettin, April 23, 1844, with satisfactory results; a "test sermon" on 1 Cor. i. 20-25 being pronounced "very good." Presently he had to put in six weeks of military service.

Before the visit to Tübingen was sanctioned, the father insisted on a short visit to Heidelberg. There Richard Rothe, who was at the zenith of his career, proved extraordinarily kind. Ritschl also met Ullmann, editor of the *Studien und Kritiken*, and saw something of Umbreit. But it was not long before he pushed on to what his father laughingly called "the promised land." Within a few days, through the kindness of a friend, he was personally acquainted with Zeller, Schwegler, Kuno Fischer, and not long afterwards with Baur himself. He observed the Tübingen custom—it has astonished since then successive generations of Scottish visitors—by which the young theologians pass the evening together in beerhouses.

At this early date the Tübingen theory was still in process of development. Ritschl ardently flung himself into the fray. For an academic purpose, he chose a theme belonging to the field of New Testament study, defending Schwegler's radical theory of the dependence of the canonical Luke upon Marcion's Gospel. Ritschl accordingly dated the canonical Luke between 140 and 180. The essay gave great satisfaction to Baur, who secured its purchase and publication by a Tübingen bookseller, and followed it

¹ His work, according to Robertson Smith (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, Ed. I. p. 418), was "encumbered with a mass of Hegelian terminology of a repulsive kind."

up by an article from his own pen, in the *Tübingen Jahrbücher*, enforcing the same conclusions.

Thus Ritschl, when not yet twenty-four, had become an author, fighting under the banner and supported by the applause of the great radical critic. He did not, however, contemplate settling in the remote Swabian town. Halle might have pleased him, but his friends Duncker and Schwarz had met with unfriendly treatment there. Marked man though he was, friendship might smooth his way to a teacher's life at Bonn. Here accordingly he passed his examination as Licentiate in Theology (May 18, 1846), defending nine more Latin theses. The first of these asserts the priority of Marcion's Gospel to the canonical Luke; the last affirms that we ought to speak of "Theological" rather than of *Christian* "Morals"; a usage which, with a slight modification,¹ Ritschl followed to the end of life. Next came his "habilitation" as *Privatdocent*, a business which dragged on with the unfortunate result that Albrecht could not attend the celebration of his parents' silver wedding. Visits to the parents (then temporarily at Berlin), to the home at Stettin, to Halle, and to Marburg were followed by first experiences as a lecturer.

If one tries to take a general view of the eighteen years spent by Ritschl as lecturer or professor at Bonn, one is struck by the check in his career. The clever and precocious boy seemed to develop with comparative slowness after his first sensational hit in manhood. One cause of this might be his connexion with the suspected Tübingen school; but that cause cannot have operated alone. From very early lecturing days, indeed, he was forsaking Tübingen positions; and published work made this plain, notably in the two editions (1850, 1857) of the *Early Catholic Church*. By 1857 there was no ground for regarding Ritschl otherwise

¹ "Theological *Ethics*."

than as the representative of a moderate orthodoxy. It is the most orthodox point in his whole curve. Still, suspicion may have outlasted its grounds. A curious report formulated by Dorner in 1850 on behalf of the Protestant faculty of theology at Bonn, and presented to the Prussian government, criticises and patronises the younger man, pushing him gently back into what the authorities considered his proper place.

There were several disappointments for Ritschl in other matters besides his promotion. He had hoped for the appointment of Rothe to a vacant chair in 1847; but Dorner was preferred. Later, in 1849, Rothe came, and the numbers of the theological students at Bonn increased; but Rothe accepted a call back to Heidelberg (1851), and the numbers at Bonn fell off again. For a time, it would seem, Ritschl's old friend and fellow-student Krafft surpassed him in popularity as a teacher. In 1850, when a vacancy had to be filled, Krafft, not Ritschl, was chosen, and the Government informed the Bonn faculty it regretted it could not find a vacancy for Ritschl (as had been suggested) in another university. In 1852, after another disappointment, he became *Extraordinarius*, not becoming *Ordinarius* till 1859—when he cut out Krafft.

The biographer gives a record of every course of lectures delivered by Ritschl, whether in winter or summer *Semester*, and of the numbers attending. During three and a half years (seven *Semesters*), hardly more than one-third of the attendances go into double figures, whereas in the four closing years of the Bonn period only one lecture out of twenty-five falls below ten, and it counts nine, while the average over all is above twenty-six. But there had been worse experiences. In the winter of 1847-50 Ritschl had no demand whatever for his lectures. An altered programme was equally unsuccessful, and the *Privatdocent* had to sit down

in his lodgings with his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, sending a message of thanks to his mother for transmitting to him hereditary courage. It is hardly necessary to say how complete a contrast is furnished by the later Göttingen years. Never, not even in a Seminar,¹ do we find an attendance of fewer than ten, while classes approach and sometimes surpass a hundred; and the last years of all are the best. In those days it was Ritschl who was the "foremost theologian of Germany." He had a great door and effectual opened to him, if truly there were many adversaries.

Ritschl had qualified at Bonn as a lecturer in New Testament. Before he got to work, he felt inclinations towards Church History; but university regulations did not allow of a new branch of teaching till after two years' service, and he did not long use this liberty when it became available. In 1853, when Dorner left for Göttingen, Ritschl had opportunity to do something in Dogmatic, and his inclinations had been turning in that direction. Hence he was glad to serve the Faculty; but in a little while he began to fear that they were almost making him a "maid of all work." In the thoroughgoing German fashion, he lectures both on Dogmatics and on Theological Ethics. One feels a difficulty about the frontier between these two studies. We learn that Ritschl himself introduced into Ethics teachings in regard to a Christian's patience, prayerfulness, faith in providence, which he afterwards came to feel claimed a place in Dogmatic *as well*. Göttingen arrangements led him to separate Dogmatic into two courses, and "Ethic," "Dogmatic I," "Dogmatic II" regularly recur, while the few other courses chiefly deal with New Testament Epistles. A New Testament teacher; tempted to diverge into Church History; devoting himself afterwards mainly to system; and within Dogmatic, so far as published work goes, mainly

¹ Taken in alternate years with H. Schultz.

to the great doctrine of "Justification and Reconciliation"—such in outline is Ritschl's place as professor. The biographer reports carefully on the more important systematic courses. He tells us that, in their very first form, they contain all the characteristic Ritschlian positions, but that not nearly all foreign matter is extruded—as ultimately it will be. Ritschl as a lecturer freely enlarged his text by oral additions or corrections. Sometimes he had to secure the results for his own use in the future by copying out a student's *Heft*. Along with this classroom work we must record many articles in learned periodicals, almost all of them leading up to the two editions of the *Early Catholic Church* or to the great task of his life, the trilogy on *Justification*.

Of new friendships we may mention Hilgenfeld, one of the most loyal of Baur's followers, from whom Ritschl naturally diverged in opinion as years elapsed till the friendship faded away; H. Holtzmann and Weizsäcker, lifelong friends, although the latter, so far as the biographer reports, was never personally met; Diestel, a colleague and close friend, on whom Ritschl relied for the Old Testament basis so important in his system. Pupils included Nippold, who afterwards became a very unfriendly critic; Link, loyal through life, who demonstrated that Ritschlian views could be made effective by a working pastor; Thikötter, who also trod the paths of his master's developing thought, and defended Ritschl's views in a pamphlet which, when translated into French, professed to set forth the *Théologie de l'Avenir*. It is impossible not to observe the absence of weighty and brilliant names, such as fill the records of the Göttingen period. While Ritschl's Dogmatic was only half defined, his influence had only half its power. And indeed it was by the printed page more even than from the academic platform that he made converts.

A more important and more promising friendship dated from 1856—with R. A. Lipsius, then at Leipzig, afterwards well known at Jena. When Lipsius communicated to Ritschl his postulates for Dogmatic, Ritschl “had to say to himself that he had essentially been working on the same plan.” They entered on a lively correspondence. And the following year, when Lipsius visited Ritschl, they walked among the Siebengebirge “with much perspiration but still more pleasure.” Unhappily, this friendship was to be wrecked upon theological differences. “Old Baur” himself (*der alte Baur*) permitted a good deal of amicable intercourse even in the face of hostile criticism. Ritschl was naturally proud of this. But his unfortunate anonymous review of Schwarz’s book proved unpardonable, and killed the friendship outright.

We have heard of walks taken in Lipsius’ company. When Thikötter was a pupil, he and Ritschl often went singing together along a certain “pretty path” not far from Bonn. And once, when Link pays a visit to Göttingen as late as 1874, there is the record of a walk taken for pleasure. But one gathers that Ritschl early yielded to that habit of neglecting exercise which reached an evil perfection when he spent holiday months at Göttingen working in his garden. The bill came in promptly. Before the end of the Bonn period, “obstinate sleeplessness” had begun.

The greatest losses of these years were the death of his father in 1858 and of his mother in 1861. Albrecht was present at the Bishop’s death-bed, but not when his mother passed away. The parents had sympathised warmly in their son’s professional disappointments. The careful father had had a copy of the *Early Catholic Church* (ed. 1, 1850) presented to King Friedrich Wilhelm. It made the author smile to see how splendidly the binder gilded it, after he had learned that it was meant for a great Personage. When

a gracious acknowledgment came, complimenting both father and son, the Bishop formally thanked his son for putting him in the way of such praise.

Between the two sad dates fell the happy event of marriage.¹ The bride was Ida Rehbeck (or "Roebuck"), daughter of a late pastor, and sister-in-law to Pastor Edward Steitz of Frankfort-on-the-Main, who had become and who remained Ritschl's warm friend and theological confidant; vol. i. of the *Justification* is dedicated to him. A long day in the woods with Steitz and Ida made Ritschl sure of his own heart. The son prints many of his parents' love letters. They range over all the serious themes of Ritschl's thought and teaching. When opinions differ, the lady tries gallantly to stand up for her beliefs, but she is borne down partly by argument and partly by authority. "Ritschl hated wedding journeys," so, one day after the marriage proper—the religious in contrast with the civil ceremony—they took the steamboat for Bonn. Unfortunately the day was wet, and "the crowded cabin tested their powers of endurance." It was no true omen. The marriage was thoroughly happy. All that we are shown of Ritschl as husband and father redounds to his honour. He was left a widower within ten years, but remained devoted to the beloved memory. His half-sister and, after her death, another lady housekeeper cared for his home.

With his promotion to Göttingen in 1864² begins the last period of Ritschl's life. The university dates from the reign of our second George, who founded it as Elector of Hanover. Indeed it is named after him (German fashion) "Georgia Augusta." In 1864, political conditions in Han-

¹ There is a veiled reference to some other unsuccessful courtship (1856).

² Ritschl is believed to have preached for the last time in 1863. It was in a country church; the text, Rom. ii. 4.

over were strained.¹ Church politics also had a colour of their own. Coming from a "united" church into the undiluted Lutheranism of Hanover, Ritschl is required to give specific assurances of loyalty to the Lutheran faith, and does so cordially. It is a great event for him when Prussia annexes Hanover. The same minister of worship is in office—von Mühler—who in former years had seemed cold, perhaps hostile, towards Ritschl; but renewed relations proved pleasanter. Ritschl, of course, was Prussian to the core. He declares that the stiff confessional Lutheranism of many in the Hanoverian state and university is a cover for "Guelphic" hostility to the new government. A few vacancies, a few fresh appointments, and the situation in *Georgia Augusta* changes in favour of the Prussians. It was put about in certain quarters that Ritschl had great influence with a subsequent minister of worship, Falk, Bismarck's instrument in the *Kulturkampf*; but the biographer assures us this was a delusion. He also repels the charge that Ritschl pulled strings in favour of his personal adherents, summarising the few and slight efforts he was at any time induced to make on behalf of pupils. Quotations prove, indeed, that Ritschl was resolutely anti-partisan. He even chose an orthodox divine to prepare his eldest son for confirmation.

A still greater event than the campaign of Sadowa was the triumph over France. One regrets to find Ritschl sharing the tone of high moral superiority which was so common in Germany, and so embittering.

A series of invitations, to leave Göttingen for other universities, helps to prove Ritschl's popularity. There is, indeed, some disappointment among his friends that he

¹ We have said nothing hitherto of Ritschl's relation to politics; of his mild liberalism; of his presence as a spectator at sittings of the short-lived Frankfort parliament of 1848, the year of revolutions.

is not called to a vacancy at Heidelberg. He is, however, warmly pressed to transfer himself, after the peace, to the remodelled university of Strassburg. But he declines to move; and on four separate occasions, when invited to Berlin, he rejects the offer. For he regarded himself as a "small city man." He took a similar view of Lotze, a colleague at Göttingen whom he greatly valued, and who exercised much influence on his thinking. When Lotze was tempted away to Berlin, Ritschl judged that he had made a serious mistake. It may have been so; certainly Lotze did not long survive his change of sphere. Later (1877) we are told how Ritschl was placed first and Pfeiderer third on a list of names eligible for a vacancy at Tübingen. It was a time of keen controversy. The authorities thought safest to make an appointment which could not be called partisan.

The great events of this period are of course books. First came the *magnum opus*: vol. i. in 1870; vols. ii. and iii. in 1874; later editions of one or other in 1882, 1883, 1888, 1889. Shorter works dealt with *Christian Perfection* (1874; 2nd slightly revised ed. 1889); with Schleiermacher's *Reden* "and their effects on German Protestantism"—here the son takes a different view from his distinguished father. *Instruction in the Christian Religion* is a valuable summary for students, if an unsatisfactory school-book (1875; 2nd and 3rd edd. revised 1881 and 1886; posthumous edd. of 1890 and 1895 are reprints of ed. 3). A short discussion of *Conscience* (1876) removes it from the place of honour it had held in some of Ritschl's courses of dogmatic lectures as the religious faculty proper, and treats it—under the influence of his friend Gass—as derivative, not primary. *Theologie und Metaphysik* (1881; 2nd somewhat revised ed. 1887) shows the increased attention to philosophical prolegomena which we also encounter in later editions of *Justification*, vol. iii.

About this time Ritschl felt it needful to concentrate upon some other great theme. He therefore devoted several years to the history of a phenomenon which he greatly disliked—*Pietism* (vol. i., 1880 ; vol. ii., 1884 ; vol. iii., 1886). He admits to a correspondent that vol. i. turned out more than he had expected an *Anklageschrift*, or speech for the prosecution. The other volumes are very largely in the same key. Yet the work is laborious, thorough, well documented ; and the author never hesitates to praise—though he is skilled in making praise in one quarter reflect blame upon another. As with Tennyson and the *Idylls*, so with Ritschl and *Pietism*, one doubts whether engrossment in such a theme was the wisest disposal of time. The last production which we need name—the posthumous pamphlet on *Fides Implicita*—exhibits a return to Doctrine or History of Doctrine.

These busy and prosperous years at Göttingen greatly enlarged the number of Ritschl's friends. First may be mentioned Hermann Schultz, who left Göttingen just before Ritschl's arrival, but returned after some years of service at Basel and then at Strassburg to be a colleague and close intimate. Professor Otto Ritschl, in his perfectly respectful reference to Schultz, rather underrates the amount of theological sympathy which bound him and Ritschl together. It is quite true that the preface to Schultz's *Gottheit Christi* speaks of a religious sympathy which united the author not only to Ritschl but to men like Schleiermacher—whom Ritschl strongly criticises—or like Lipsius, with whom he had broken. The difference in viewing such men is one of temperament rather than of opinion. Religious sympathy is one thing, detailed theological agreement is another. In the detail of theology, Schultz was exceptionally near to Ritschl. There is a remarkable list of distinguished pupils—among others, Bender (who developed Ritschlianism

on radical lines, and gave up theology), Guthe, Robertson Smith, John S. Black, Duhm, Smend, Baethgen, Wellhausen, Bornemann, Loofs, Wrede, Baldensperger, Oskar Holtzmann, Simons, Gunkel, J. Weiss, Mirbt, Troeltsch, Bousset. Scholz, a Moravian, who became a disciple and made himself known by letters, is an interesting figure. For his benefit Ritschl softens as far as possible his wonted censures on Moravianism. Ultimately Scholz found it necessary to join the national Church. Kattenbusch and Wendt were Göttingen colleagues who adhered to the Ritschlian movement. Men not pupils nor colleagues on the staff who became enthusiastic supporters were Schürer, Harnack, and above all Herrmann.

If Ritschl's books moved his followers to enthusiasm, they evoked hostile criticism from the right and from the left; in the former case, Luthardt and Frank were leaders; in the latter, Pfeiderer and Lipsius. A second burst of hostility seems to have been partly at least due to the publication of a full statement of the new Christology in Schultz's *Gottheit Christi* (1881). The final break with Lipsius belongs to this period. Ritschl suspects Lipsius of jealousy; Diestel with difficulty makes peace. But Herrmann's polemic against Lipsius¹ sharpens the antagonism, and personal friendship goes to pieces. Theologically Lipsius, though a philosophical neo-Kantian, had reached results practically coincident with Pfeiderer's or Biedermann's.² Ritschl could not be expected to concur. But the two might have parted in peace.

This separation marks in a sense the rise of a Ritschlian school. Lipsius seemed to treat Herrmann as a mere underling, speaking or falling silent at his master's bidding.³

¹ In a Review article and in *die Religion* (1879), although the preface to the latter contains an apology for previous severity in language.

² The writer heard him say so in conversation (1881).

³ In *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung*, 1877, quoted in Ritschl's *Life*, ii. p. 309.

Ritschl was indignant at the suggestion, and Herrmann denied that he was the spokesman of any school.¹ One knows how British and American philosophers, profoundly influenced by Hegel, decline to be described as "Hegelians." A further unpleasantness appeared when Nippold, already mentioned as a pupil, insinuated that Ritschl pulled strings on behalf of those of his school. We can understand that there was a disposition to deny that such a school had any existence; yet one believes that Professor Otto Ritschl is only doing his duty as a historian when he records its "rise."

Though reluctant to be entangled in university business, Ritschl was highly capable of doing such service, and twice was called to the pro-Rectorate. On the first occasion the duty fell to him of pronouncing the Göttingen oration on the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth. His second pro-Rectorate was marked by a ball attended by a hundred and twenty guests; to this his family had instigated him. During the same term of office, as public orator on the university's 150th anniversary, he retorted on Catholicism the charge of responsibility for all revolutions. It created much amusement when a Roman Catholic critic treated Ritschl—one of the foremost living New Testament scholars—as a non-expert in exegesis, on no better grounds than that the calendar of the university did not include his name among the New Testament teachers.

Ritschl's health was disturbed from time to time. There was an attack of typhus in 1865, followed in 1866 by inflammation of the lungs; and the old enemy of sleeplessness gave much trouble. In 1883 Ritschl and Schultz had been favoured with anonymous letters from some pious persons at Hermannsburg, where Ludwig Harms earlier in the century carried on his vigorous labours on behalf of evange-

lical religion and orthodox Lutheranism. The letters intimated that several Christians had been praying God to convert the two Göttingen theologians, but if that "could not be" to stop their teaching. After this, when he felt worse than usual, Ritschl would remark, "The people at Hermannsburg are praying." The final break-up came rather rapidly in Ritschl's sixty-seventh year. His biographer gives us few details.

Calumny did not leave Ritschl alone even after death. The old lurid painting, in fancy's hues, of an infidel's death-bed was refurbished and made to apply to him; but his son assures us that neither sickness nor the approach of death interrupted Albrecht Ritschl's peace of soul. He had been no great admirer of Paul Gerhardt's celebrated passion hymn. Perhaps few of us realise that the hymn is based on Bernard of Clairvaux's meditations on the several limbs of the suffering Redeemer—a species of mediæval piety which is also extended to the Virgin Mother. Ritschl quoted against such hymns our Charles Kingsley, whom he did "greatly admire." Nevertheless, when he had reason to apprehend the approach of death, he instructed his son to repeat to him, very near the end, the last two verses of Gerhardt's poem.¹ Evidently he accepted as suitable for the dying a mode of religion which seemed to him undesirable in time of health. But, when death drew near, he was beyond the reach of any human voice, passing away peacefully March 20th, 1889.

The accepted portrait caused Ritschl great annoyance during the necessary sittings. The face recalls, *mutatis mutandis*, Carlyle's verdict on Macaulay's countenance:

¹ Beyschlag has put on record—I borrow from Schaff-Herzog—how, at Ullmann's request, these same two verses were actually recited to him during his last hours. One wonders whether the brusquely original Ritschl condescended to imitate Ullmann, or whether it was a pure coincidence.

“ Well, anyone can see that you are an honest, good sort of fellow, made out of oatmeal ! ” Those who knew a Scotsman of great gifts in another department must still more certainly be reminded of a yacht builder, Will Fife, the second in the Fairlie dynasty of that name, who designed many masterpieces, from the “ terrible *Fiona* ” of the 'sixties to the miraculous *Annasona* of the 'eighties, and whose *Bloodhound* of the 'seventies still, as an aged cruiser, carries to victory the well-known colours of Lord Ailsa.

ROBERT MACKINTOSH.