The place of the bible in the theology of Albrecht Ritschl with special reference to Christology and the kingdom of god

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JONATHAN LEE DRAPER

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham, Department of Theology, 1984.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the proper significance of Albrecht Ritschl can only be appreciated if the importance of his biblical work, a hitherto neglected aspect of his achievement, is adequately taken into account.

Accordingly, Ritschl's claim to be viewed as a biblical theologian is first evaluated in the context of the contemporary understanding of Biblical Theology. Then three main methods of enquiry into his theology are employed. First, Ritschl's own understanding of the place of the Bible in theology and his general criteria for exegesis and interpretation are described. In this section of the thesis, in particular, manuscript lectures on the New Testament delivered by Ritschl in Göttingen are used for the first time in Ritschl research to provide a more comprehensive picture of Ritschl's commitment to the Bible than is provided in his published work alone. Secondly, Ritschl's actual theological argument (in this case from his Christology) is analysed and tested, using D.H. Kelsey's tools for dissecting theological argument to elucidate precisely how the Bible functioned in Ritschl's own theological argument. Thirdly, Ritschl's use of the Bible in formulating his understanding of the Kingdom of God is analysed, in comparison with that of Johannes Weiss, who was both a contemporary and critic of Ritschl.

The results of these descriptive, functional and comparative methods of enquiry demonstrate that Ritschl's commitment to the Bible in theology was genuine, both methodologically and actually, and significant in both the form and content of his theology. In response to criticisms from Weiss and Troeltsch, it is argued that, even though Ritschl was a comparatively conservative critic, his commitment to historical-critical methods was genuine and an important part of his understanding and use of the Bible.

The conclusion reached in the thesis is that a more balanced appreciation of Ritschl's theological achievement, and its place in the history of modern theological thought emerges when Ritschl's commitment to biblical theology is acknowledged, and the coherence between his methodology and his use of scripture is clarified.

This thesis is dedicated to those,
especially my wife Margaret, who
suspended their disbelief.

PREFACE

I wish to take the opportunity of this Preface to thank those without whose help this thesis could not have been researched or written.

Thanks are due to the University of Durham for providing funds for travel for a period of research at the University of Göttingen, West Germany. Also to the Turnberry Trust, Glasgow, Scotland, for their kind assistance with my academic fees and the cost of typing and binding the thesis. And to Mrs. Kate Belcher for her dedicated typing of the thesis.

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Finally, thanks must also go to my wife Margaret, to whom the thesis is dedicated, and who gave up a year of her life to keep me while researching the thesis, and to her parents and my parents; all of whom believed, despite evidence to the contrary, that the thesis would be finished.

To all and sundry, my hearty thanks. Needless to say, in spite of many debts, the responsibility for the thesis and its inadequacies remain my own.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

(Full bibliographical information can be found in the Bibliography, pp.244ff).

AKK A. Ritschl, Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche.

RuV I A. Ritschl, Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung. Vol. 1: Die Geschichte der Lehre.

RuV II A. Ritschl, Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung. Vol. 2: Der Biblische Stoff der Lehre.

J&R III A. Ritschl, Justification and Reconciliation ET of Vol. 3: Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung. Die positive Entwicklung der Lehre.

J&R I A. Ritschl, A Critical History of the Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation. ET of Vol. 1: Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung. Die Geschichte der Lehre.

Leben (I or II) O. Ritschl, Albrecht Ritschls Leben. Two vols.

ET English Translation.

Wherever possible in the thesis quotations are from English translations of works in German. Where no ET is available, however, quotations are in German.

CHAPTER ONE

RESUMÉ OF RITSCHL RESEARCH TO-DATE

The purpose of this thesis is to argue that Albrecht Ritschl's theological achievement can only be fully appreciated if the importance of his use of the Bible is adequately taken into account. It is no part of the claim, however, that Ritschl is simply to be understood as an exegete. Ritschl has suffered at the hands of his interpreters from a number of stereotypes, and it is not intended to develop another. On the contrary, as the discussion of the use of the Bible in systematics will eventually show, biblical exegesis can only be part of the formulation of a dogmatic argument. But in Ritschl's case it is a neglected part, as this thesis will demonstrate.

The first task, therefore, is to give some account of the current state of Ritschl research, in order to make good the claim that the case which is being argued here is new.

1. Introduction

A well known handbook of Christian theology states:

> ... Ritschl owed much both to Kant and Lotze. Ritschl had begun as a Hegelian, but he came to reject metaphysics as a distorting influence for religion and theology. The traditional formulations of ecclesiastical dogma he likewise rejected, as an illegitimate mixture of metaphysics and religion. Religious assertions are not to be taken as disinterested statements of fact, but as value judgements ... The theology which he developed is therefore dominated by ethical rather than metaphysical categories. The religious estimate of the historical Christ as God perfectly revealed arises from the ethical estimate of Christ's moral perfection; while the aim of the Christian religion is the realisation of the Kingdom of God, which is both the highest religious good and the moral ideal for men. 1

There is no doubt that this interpretation of Ritschl's theology, or one very much like it, is common to a wide range of the second-

ary literature on Ritschl. So widespread is it, that it has almost assumed the status of an "oral tradition". But it is obvious to any student familiar with the recent literature of Ritschl research that this is by no means the only or the currently dominant assessment of Ritschl's theology. Because of that, Ritschl research may be divided into two main types or classes: the "philosophical" and the "traditional". Like the work quoted above, the large majority of works on Ritschl fall into the philosophical type. The distinguishing feature of this type is the emphasis in interpretation on the philosophical elements in Ritschl's theology. By far the most common designation is "neo-Kantian", though "rationalist" and "moralising" or "ethicising" (or a combination of these) are also to be found in the literature. Within the traditional type, on the other hand, is found the majority of recent works on Ritschl. The distinguishing feature of this type is the emphasis in interpretation on Ritschl's wider relation to the Christian tradition, especially to the Reformation and the New Testament. It is true, of course, that no work discussed below purely represents its type. Within each type there are always qualifications to be made and caveats to be entered. But the two types do show clearly different emphases in interpretation, and share, to a greater or lesser degree, in the distinguishing features of those emphases.

Within the literature on Ritschl there is also a wide diversity in scope and tone of approach. In scope it ranges from the summary article (eg., Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche[2]) to the full length monograph (eg., Otto Ritschl's full and comprehensive biography of his father [3], or Hök's Die Elliptische Theologie

Albrecht Ritschls[4]); in tone, from the dismissive (eg., Barth's Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century[5]) to the laudatory (eg., Swing's The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl[6]). The purpose of this chapter then, is to examine representative works from the literature within the framework of these two types. The major elements, trends or methods of approach to Ritschl's theology are presented and discussed, and the need for research into Ritschl's biblical work made apparent.

II. The Philosophical Type

A. In many ways it is fitting that the account of the philosophical type should begin with Karl Barth. His view of the place of Ritschl in the history of Protestant theology and his understanding of the essence of Ritschl's theology have been a dominating factor in the interpretation of Ritschl's theology for much of the middle of this century. Rolf Schäfer's assessment of Barth's criticism of Ritschl states the case plainly:

> Trotz ihrer Kürze ist Barths Ritschl-Darstellung, mit der seine Theologie-geschichte des vergangenen Jahrhunderts schliesst, besonders wichtig: Nirgends sonst ist Ritschl so eindeutig und einleuchtend als Aufklärer gewürdigt worden, der den Christlichen Glauben in den Dienst des Bürgertums der Bismarkzeit stellt. Durch die Autorität, die Barth allerwärts geniesst, hat dieses Bild von Ritschl sich ebensoweit verbreitet wie die dialektische Theologie, von deren Standpunkt aus es entworfen wurde, und es dürfte kaum zu viel behauptet sein, wenn man es trotz der Korrekturen, die hie und da angebraucht werden, als das bis zum heutigen Tag herrschende bezeichnet. 7

And, since the forceful polemic against Ritschl in the lectures Barth gave on the theology of the nineteenth century in 1932-33 (which form the substance of his volume on nineteenth century theology), "an entire generation (has) interpreted it from his perspective".[8] That Barth's cursory treatment of Ritschl's

achievement is less than satisfactory has been amply demonstrated by current scholarship.[9] There have even been attempts to show something of how much Barth actually owed in his theology to Ritschl (though this attempt is not a new one [10]). The point is this: the study of Ritschl virtually came to a halt for a generation because of Barth's influence. We turn now to briefly consider the content of that influence.

Barth's most famous assessment of Ritschl's theology is found in his volume on nineteenth century theology: "Ritschl has the significance of an episode in more recent theology ... not that of an epoch"; "he energetically seized upon the theoretical and practical philosophy of the Englightenment ... he went back to Kant ... interpreted as an anti-metaphysical moralist."[11] But that is not the only comment Barth made on Ritschl. References to Ritschl are manifold in the Church Dogmatics, and taken together they form a considerable assessment of the main points of Ritschl's theology. Barth saw Ritschl's theology as merely a reaching back "over Idealism and Romanticism to the quintessence of the Enlightenment" (I:1,p.276), and that the subordination of theology to ethics formed "the very nerve of the theology of Albrecht Ritschl" (I:2,p.786). Because Barth saw Ritschl's theology as the perfection of Englightenment thought, Ritschl's Christ is "the form of the purest man on earth" (I:2, p.128), and his christology is therefore docetic (I:1p.421; I: 2,p.20). Ritschl interpreted the "reality revealed in Jesus Christ simply as the revelation of the deepest and final reality of man" (I: 2,p.12). Ritschl failed in his attempt to return to a christocentric theology because of his Kantian metaphysics

(1:2,p. 123). Likewise are Ritschl's view of God and the Kingdom of God interpreted: God is the constant summoning will[12] bringing the loving man to his supreme destiny, the final purpose of the world (II: 1,p.279); and that the personality of God means "that God is to be understood as the content of the highest human values" (II: 1,p.291). Ritschl, according to Barth, does not understand the love or the wrath of God (I:2,p.377; II:1,pp.279-80, pp.364-66; III:4,pp.48-9; IV:1,p.490). And, finally, that Ritschl and his school tied nationality, mythology and theology together to the falsification of them all (III:4,p.307)

These are strongly negative judgements, painting a somewhat simplified picture of that theology which dominated Germany (at least) from the 1870's to the Great War, and which was powerful precisely in the thought of Barth's own teachers (eg., Harnack and Herrmann). But if Barth's assessment were to be substantially correct, then little or no explanation could be found for the power seen in Ritschl's theology at that time, or for the influence it exercised over some of the ablest minds at the turn of the century: men of the stature of Harnack, Kaftan, Herrmann and (even) Troeltsch, strongly though this last fought to free himself from Ritschl's dominance.

But most current scholarship protests at the unfairness and inaccuracy of Barth's judgements, and goes to some lengths to show the "real" content of Ritschl's theology, and points to how much, in fact, Barth's own theology owed to Ritschl's. Indeed, so strong has been the reaction against Barth's view of Ritschl, and so decisive the criticisms of his understanding of Ritschl's theology, that James Richmond could describe Barth's judgements on Ritschl as "discredited".[13] And, "liberated" from the Barthian

point of view, he can boldly conclude with Ferdinand Kattenbush that "Barth's early theology can be interpreted as bringing the best of Ritschl to fulfilment"[14].

Barth's interpretation of Ritschl, though widely accepted, cannot[90] and has not, gone unchallenged. And yet today, even after the advent of the "Ritschl renaissance", Barth is likely to be the greatest obstacle to the serious student of the nineteenth century in the way of a fair and honest appreciation of Ritschl's theology. And this can be demonstrated especially in those theologians who were associated with or influenced by Barth's theology.

B. In the influential early work of Emil Brunner, The Mediator,[15] Brunner makes one of the more extreme statements of the philosophical type; a statement reminiscent of Barth's judgements. Brunner characterises Ritschl's theology as being "a rationalistic system clad in scriptural garments". It is something of an irony that much recent scholarship argues that this sort of statement about Ristchl ought in fact to be turned on its head; that is, that Ritschl's theology is really a scriptural system clad with ill-fitting philosophical garments.[16] This characterisation of Ritschl's theology by Brunner controls his judgement and understanding of Ritschl's thought, though Brunner admits that this "rationalistic system" was not Ritschl's real intention. But his emphasis remains on the philosophical, and especially the anti-metaphysical, to the exclusion of almost everything else. Brunner does, however, see Ritschl's rejection of metaphysics from theology as a partial truth. For in protesting against metaphysics in theology, Ritschl "was thinking only

of the ontological speculations of the Hegelians; he had forgotten that there is also an ethical metaphysic, and he did not perceive that his whole theological system was simply a well constructed system of ethical metaphysics developed along logical lines."[17] That Ritschl laid a heavy emphasis on the ethical in his theology, and that this involved some speculative or metaphysical thinking, is undeniable. But, that his theology was nothing more than ethical metaphysics is highly questionable. As will be made more apparent in chapter two of this thesis, the reduction of Ritschl's theological system to an ethico-philosophical system is open to a number of objections. It minimises or passes over the biblical and historical work that Ritschl held to be the basis of his theology, and ignores completely the Lutheran roots of much of his thought. It even overlooks the apparent inability of Ritschl adequately to use those philosophies to which he did lay some claim.

C. The problem of Ritschl's competence in philosophical matters is clearly seen in the most comprehensive study to-date of Ritschl's philosophical roots, that of Paul Wrzecionko. It argues that Brunner's is by no means the only kind of result possible from a study of Ritschl's theology from the philosophical prespective. In his study, Wrzecionko[18] shows that Ritschl's philosophical positions spring from two roots: first, an eclectic use of R.H.Lotze's theory of knowledge; second, the ethics and philosophy of religion of Kant. But concerning both sources Wrzecionko makes very important qualifications. Of the first, he holds that Ritschl made only an incomplete and eclectic use of Lotze's theory of knowledge, in that he stripped it of its

metaphysical substructure, only making use of parts of it, while apparently remaining unfamiliar with other parts.[19] And of the other source, Wrzecionko sees it as a misunderstood reading of only some of Kant's work that makes up Ritschl's appropriation of Kant.[20] That Ritschl was to some extent familiar with and made use of both Kant and Lotze is clear. That Ritschl claimed to found to some degree his own theory of knowledge on the philosophical work of Kant and, especially, Lotze is also, to some extent, clear.[21] But to what extent Ritschl's theory of cognition and his reliance on Kant and Lotze are integral to his theology remains unclear.[22] The value of Wrzecionko's work can be seen in its demonstration of the uncertainties and confusions that surround the philosophical work that Ritschl did undertake, and Wrzecionko shows the difficulties and dangers of approaching Ritschl's theology solely or primarily from a philosophical point of view.

II. There is, however, an older tradition of assessing Ritschl's theology on the basis of philosophy. This can be seen in the work of the scottish theologian James Orr, whose books The Ritschlian Theology[23] and Ritschlianism[24] exercised considerable influence on the study and interpretation of Ritschl in Britain for much of the 1890's and the early part of this century. Like many others, Orr's philosophical perspective on Ritschl centred on what he saw as Ritschl's rejection of the metaphysical in theology; "theology without metaphysics" he saw as the watchword of the Ritschlian school.[25] The genesis of this watchword comes, according to Orr, from Kant; "In tracing the obligations of the Ritschlian system, we naturally turn our attention first to Kant."[26] From Kant (with modifications from Lotze) Ritschl learned

his epistemology[27], derived his ethical understanding of the Kingdom of God, and founded his understanding "of (transcendental) human freedom, with its important bearings on the ideas of guilt and punishment"[29]. But as much stress as Orr puts on these points, he is also careful to state that at the same time "the thoughts he (Ritschl) appropriated from others he passed thoroughly through the alembic of his own mind; ... wrought them into a new and original combination through union with ideas which were his own contribution."[30]

And yet, Orr's assessment is an ambivalent one. Although he sees an essential dependence in Ritschl upon Kantian philosophy (though Ritschl made a "vacillating" and "inconsistent" use of him), he also sees a theological reason for this dependence. Ritschl demanded a theory of knowledge as a guide for the theologian ("if only to bring out its essential limits"[31]), but only to guard against "theoretical" reasoning and speculation in theology. For Ritschl, according to Orr, Christianity had its own sufficient ground of knowledge in the revelation of Christ, and any other pretence to knowledge was spurious. That this assessment differs widely from Brunner's is clear. Brunner saw Ritschl rejecting Hegelian metaphysics in favour of another, namely the metaphysics of the Enlightenment. Orr correctly saw that the real reason for Ritschl's rejection of metaphysics was a theological one. Orr indeed points to the truth when he asserts of Ritschl that "to prove that philosophy should have no place in theology, it is necessary to philosophise."[33]

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The reason for including this discussion of Orr's reading

of Ritschl's theology is to demonstrate the wide variety of interpretation possible even within the philosophical approach. Most of the works of this type share a common preoccupation with Ritschl's anti-metaphysical/-philosophical stance, but differ considerably in the use made of that assessment. Brunner was able, with Barth, to dismiss much of Ritschl's theology because of his supposed affinity with Enlightenment thought. Orr saw the theological roots of Ritschl's rejection of metaphysical philosophy, while Wrzecionko stressed the incomplete and inadequate use Ritschl made of the philosophies of Kant and Lotze. The kind of picture which emerges from the variety of conclusions reached is one of confusion: confusion over what part philosophy actually played in Ritschl's theology, and Ritschl's own apparent confusion in his use of philosophy in his theology. A large body of literature about Ritschl suffers from these confusions to a greater or lesser degree, and their conclusions must be read with care. The more sophisticated approach to Ritschl's theology as represented by some of the more recent studies of Ritschl's theology, avoids this misunderstanding, as is shown below, and gives due consideration to the historical, theological and biblical foundations of Ritschl's theology - considerations almost totally lacking in the philosophical type of approach.

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III. Transition from the philosophical to the traditional type.

Not all "older" works on Ritschl are of the philosophical type, and not all "recent" works are of the traditional type. There are some works that bear clearly the marks of both types. These do not quite make a class of their own, but neither do they

fall easily within the "definitions" of the two types used here. the distinguishing feature of these works is the emphasis in interpretation on a wider range of factors than in the philosophical type, while showing at the same time, an inability to follow through on the full implications of those factors.

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A. One of the more important older works on the theology of the nineteenth century is Pfleiderer's The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant.[34] In book II, under the general heading of "The development of dogmatic theology under the influence of Idealistic philosophy", Pfleiderer discusses Ritschl in a section called "Eclectic theologians". The characteristic which distinguishes the theologians of this type is their effort to "reconcile the faith of the church with their own thought and that of their contemporaries, without making their faith dependent upon the hypotheses and formulae of a definite philosophical system".[35] Pfleiderer applauds this approach because experience shows that "in proportion as a theology is dependent upon one particular philosophical system, it is certain to be wrecked upon the limitations of the latter".[36] Pfleiderer sees the eclectic use of philosophy as a positive good to be encouraged.

But Pfleiderer is not positive about Ritschl's achievement as an "eclectic theologian". While he does not link Ritschl exclusively with Kant and Lotze, as others do, and while he does see Ritschl's attempts to reach back to Luther through Schleiermecher as being in a limited way formative for his theology, he does emphasise that Ritschl's "theory of cognition" is (superficially, at least) the basis of his theology. However, whilst

Ritschl's epistemology and method were "eclectically derived from Kant and Lotze"[37], they are really "only a dilettante confusion of the irreconcilable views of subjective idealism ... and common sense realism".[38] Though Pfleiderer is, as a speculative idealist, unremittingly harsh in his criticisms of Ritschl's theology, he has provided two central and linked observations about Ritschl's use of philosophy in his theology. One, the "confusion" from which Ritschl's epistemology suffers; and, two, the place of that epistemology in his theological work.

Of the first point, Pfleiderer is concise: so confused is Ritschl's eclectic use of the philosophies of Kant and Lotze, that he must be classed as an "amateur in these questions".[39] That is not unlike the judgement made by Wrzecionko as seen above.[40] Pfleiderer sees Ritschl's epistemology as being so confused, that he can talk of its "intrinsic worthlessness ... wavering between the subjective dissolution of the objects of theology and the affirmation of their objective reality".[41] But, and this is the second point, this is of less importance than it may at first seem to Ritschl's theology. Pfleiderer judges that Ritschl's epistemology is not, in the end, fundamental to his theology: "we may, moreover, conjecture that Ritschl did not make this theory of cognition the basis of his theology, but rather propounded it subsequently, in its defence".[42] This is a point of considerable importance. For if the basis of Ritschl's theology is not to be found in his philosophical thinking, then that basis must be found elsewhere. And Pfleiderer is able to point toward that basis, even though he can find no good in it. He sees the fundament of Ritschl's theology in an eclectic combination of the ideas of the

Bible, Luther, Schleiermacher, Kant and with his (Ritschl's) own, with the last being the unique alembic through which all of these ideas passed, and changed. But Pfleiderer sees Ritschl's exegesis as "arbitrary"[43] and "valueless"[44]; Ritschl's understanding of Luther and Schleiermacher does "violence to essential interests of Christian piety"[45]; and his confused use of Kant (and Lotze) has already been noted. Yet, in spite of these criticisms, Pfleiderer has adumbrated what most current research now takes for granted: namely, that the roots of Ritschl's theology must be sought in the Christian tradition, in the New Testament and the Reformation.

Pfleiderer makes something of a break with the philosophical type by identifying the Lutheran and biblical roots of Ritschl's theology. As will become more evident later, recent scholarship has valued Ritschl's use of tradition more highly as an interpretive tool, and comes thereby to a much clearer understanding of Ritschl's intentions and achievement.

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B. Emanuel Hirsch, in volume five of his massive Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie[46], interprets Ritschl in a way that approaches, more than does Pfleiderer, the traditional type. Hirsch sees Ritschl very much as a transitional figure in nineteenth century theology. He broke from the old "mediating theology", and led toward a new "mediating theology".

> Er hat die Vermittlungstheologie von ihren teils spekulativen teils pietistischen Voraussetzungen losreissen und auf den neuen positiv-historischen Boden hinüberführen wollen . [47]

Hirsch sees Ritschl as a theologian of the church, who, unlike the Pietists, encorporated the historical-critical method into his theology, and who, unlike the Tübingen school, did so without the

"admixture of Idealism".[48] This approach was founded on and strengthened "(mit Hilfe) eigentlichen Studiums der Bibel, der Dogmen- und der Theologiegeschichte"[49]. And Ritschl gives pride of place in his theology to the Reformation understanding that Jesus must be assessed by means of his historically accomplished work.[50] Ritschl, according to Hirsch, is a transitional figure precisely because he applied so vigorously the method of historical-critical study. His achievement provided a stimulus to more historical-critical study which meant ultimately that the contents of his own dogmatics would be reformed.[51] Ritschl's theology was a "spiritual power" founded on the positive biblical revelation.

This marks a clear shift of emphasis away from the "received tradition" of Ritschl research as seen above. But, as much as Hirsch's judgements coincide with the spirit of the current scholarship on Ritschl, they are not completely satisfactory judgements. Ritschl is portrayed fundamentally as a theologian of the "realistisch-positivistischen Epoche" of German thought.[53] He is seen as a transition figure between the eras of the idealist speculation in theology and the History of Religions school. His theology is a backlash of historical positivism awaiting modification. This is not unlike the results of Philip Hefner's study of Ritschl's use and understanding of history.[54] But Hirsch, like Hefner, overplays the historical element, to the detriment of the biblical/Lutheran elements of Ritschl's work. As we shall see below, Ritschl's evident interest in the history of Christian thought provides stimulus and material for his theology, but is not therefore regulative for its interpretation. Hirsch's treat-

ment of Ritschl is refreshing; but, while it approximates to the traditional approach to Ritschl's theology, it does not properly belong to it.

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IV. The traditional type.

The discussion of this type of Ritschl study will be more comprehensive than that of the other type. Five books will be discussed at length, all of which make up a large part of what James Richmond has called the "Ritschl renaissance"[55], and each of which has contributed an important element to that renaissance. The books will be treated in chronological order. And it is interesting to note that all of the works discussed here cover a span of time of no more than twelve years, from 1966 to 1978.

The common features of this type of perspective on Ritschl centre on the attempt to see Ritschl in the wider context of his self-understanding as a theologian of the Bible and the Lutheran Reformation. This is not to say that Ritschl is "removed" from his own historical context, or that his own self-understanding is the only understanding of him that is correct. Rather, it is the attempt to explore Ritschl's theology on its own terms and to see it in that fresh light. The results are encouraging in the way that the roots and intentions of Ritschl's theology have become clearer, and the criticism of the results of his theological endeavour more intelligible. This has helped to clear away many of the stereotypes and caricatures of his theology, and permitted a more just evaluation of its leading features. As the interest in the theology of Ritschl continues to grow (and especially as the search for the "roots" of the major theological movements of the twentieth century grows), the books discussed below will take on

larger significance.

A. The first book discussed is Faith and the Vitalities of History[56], by the American Lutheran theologian Philip Hefner. In many ways Hefner's book is a seminal work. It marked, in English at least, the beginning of a major "rediscovery" of Ritschl, and of the effort to "rehabilitate" at least the study of his theology, if not aspects of it. A large part of the impact of Hefner's study is due to his abandonment of the usual philosophical approach to Ritschl's theology in favour of an access through Ritschl's very evident interest in history.[57] Hefner takes this approach not only because he sees 80% of Ritschl's published work as historical (in the sense of the "documentation" for his "proclamation"), but also because "this scheme for interpreting Ritschl's work takes into account more adequately than any other yet presented the structure and sequence of his own theological output, as well as his own statements concerning his task as a theologian of the on-going Reformation".[58] Hefner characterises Ritschl as "a theologian of the christian tradition" [59] who strove to construct his theology out of his historical study of early christianity, the Old Catholic church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation (especially), and Lutheran orthodoxy. And his assessment of Ritschl's theology (and more specifically his methodology) is based on this understanding of Ritschl's "preoccupation with a certain historical continuity".[60]

Hefner identifies the notion of "conduct of life" (Lebensführung or Lebensideal - Hefner takes them as synonymous[61]) as representing the central thread that Ritschl took from the Reformation understanding of the human condition vis à vis God,

which Ritschl traced through the history of the Church.[62]

> Ritschl understands this continuity to consist of the Lebensführung which he considered to be central to Reformation christianity. This is his category of historical continuity. This is his criterion by which he measures varying historical manifestations of christianity and compares them for continuity or discontinuity ... His concern is personal and religious. 63

This notion of Lebensführung is, according to Hefner, the central key to understanding Ritschl's preoccupation with the study of Christian history, and following from that, his reconstruction of Christian doctrine. And it is significant to an understanding of Ritschl that Hefner sees this quest for continuity as personal and religious, orientated "towards an illumination of the personal relation between God and man."[64] This sets Ritschl outside of the philosophical and inside the Reformation for the fundamental orientation and categories of his theology. "The Grundprinzip of Christianity for Ritschl ... is the assertion that the God-Man relation of reconciliation is grounded in the spirit (in faith or trust in God) rather than in the literal or legal works which man can effect in his own behalf."[64]

But it is at just this point that Hefner identifies a problem in Ritschl's understanding of the Lebensführung as the mark of Christian historical continuity. Hefner accuses Ritschl of "freezing" the content of this Lebensführung so that grace was accessible "only to those who shared the idiosyncrasies of a Paul or a Luther or a Ritschl ... One suspects that only the nineteenth century bourgeois would really meet the specifications of this category of piety."[66] Hefner sees Ritschl as reading back into christian history the Frömmigkeit of the nineteenth century bourgeois society in which he lived. However, that Hefner states this

in so extreme a manner contradicts his own criticisms of Barth on just this point. "Barth's error", Hefner wrote, "lies in his overemphasis on the particular forms which vocation takes, as if Ritschl were canonising nineteenth century bürgerlich modes of life. A more balanced reading suggests that Ritschl's use of terms did not intend any such glorification of particular forms, but that it meant to emphasise the significance of the Christian religion for the concrete realities of human existence ... (it is) chiefly love for fellow men and a vocation in society - while trusting in God's providence."[67] This is far closer to the actual case than his later comments allow.

But those two merits remain: freeing the study of Ritschl from its merely philosophical restraints, and seeing in Ritschl a primary concern for the "existential", for the "personal and religious", in the historical continuity of Christian thought. But, Hefner overplays the historical hand in his assessment of Ritschl. Ritschl never states that history as such is wholly normative for theology, and this cannot be taken as read simply because he happened to spend a great deal of time and effort in the study of Christian history. Along with Ritschl's interest in history must be set his emphasis on the definitive revelation of God in Christ, and his stress on scripture as the source and norm for theology.[68] Indeed, a study of Horst Stephan's assessment of Ritschl would have done much to inform Hefner's appreciation of the Biblical and Lutheran elements of Ritschl's theology; Stephan saw clearly how the interplay of biblical/critical, Historical and Lutheran ideas conducted Ritschl to consistently independent theological thought.[69]

B. Two years after the publication of Hefner's work (and on the 79th anniversary of Ritschl's death) there appeared in Germany Professor Rolf Schäfer's book Ritschl: Grundlinien eines fast verschollenen dogmatischen Systems.[70] The demise that Ritschl scholarship had undergone in the previous forty years is well attested in the subtitle of the book, and it is part of Schäfer's purpose to arrest that demise, and to make some attempt at trying to reverse it. In a sense, Schäfer's attempt is a study of the roots of contemporary theology, and an attempt to identify those roots by their proper name.

> Ritschls Theologie ist zugleich verschollen und gegenwärtig. Seine Schriften werden kaum mehr gelesen - nur dann und wann gedenkt man seiner als des alle Verkehrtheit seines Jahrhunderts vollenden Ketzervaters. Wer sich jedoch der Mühe des Lesens unterzieht, findet unter der leichten Decke des altertümlichen Ausdrucks die Kostbarsten Güter unserer zeitgenössischen Theologie ausgebreitet. Nicht weniges, was uns als Neuste bewegt, ist von Ritschl gebildet und gelehrt worden. Doch heute trägt es die Namen seiner Erben. 71

After opening his book with short discussions of some important recent works on Ritschl, Schäfer moves to analyse the Grundlinien of Ritschl's system. In contradistinction to the majority of previous Ritschl studies, Schäfer begins his study with Ritschl's christological Ansatzpunkt.[72] This is significant for at least two reasons. One, in a positive way Schäfer is de-emphasising the approach to Ritschl from philosophy. And, two, Schäfer is stressing the "biblical"[73] character of Ritschl's theological and presuppositional work. Schäfer delineates in some detail the christological framework of Ritschl's dogmatic venture, showing by means of his christology the essential elements of his methodological approach. Schäfer outlines this "christologische Ansatzpunkt" by means of Ritschl's teaching about Jesus: in Jesus' preaching of

the Kingdom of God; his forgiving of sins; his relation to the Old Testament; his resurrection; his messianic consciousness; his relation to the community.[74] Schäfer does this as a prolegomenon to Ritschl's dogmatics precisely because that was the approach that Ritschl took in his theology. In Ritschl's understanding of the work and person of Jesus, Schäfer finds the foundation for all of the main points of Ritschl's theology. "Das Bild vom historischen Jesus, wie das Neue Testament ihn als Gründer der Gemeinde zeigt, enthält für Ritschl alle Leitgedanken, die seine Dogmatik normieren."[75]

This "biblical" approach to Ritschl is also seen very clearly in Schäfer's treatment of Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God. To understand the meaning of the term "Reich Gottes" and the priority that Ritschl gave to the idea, Schäfer points to the fact that Ritschl found in the idea the oldest (and therefore most authentic) tradition of the Verkündigung of Jesus, and to the fact that Ritschl interpreted the idea of the "Reich Gottes" on the basis of the prophetic teaching of the Old Testament.[76] It is here that Schäfer identifies Ritschl's hermeneutical principle, and not in Enlightenment philosophy (such as Kant's idea of the moral association of men[77]), or through the influence of Hellenistic ideas. "Denn es ist sein hermeneutischer Grundsatz, dass das Neue Testament nicht von der Profangräzität, sondern vom Alten Testament her zu erklären sei."[78] The point that Schäfer is making here is important if, later, Ritschl's regulative use of the idea of the Kingdom of God in his theology is to be properly understood. If Ritschl's understanding is thus seen to be fundamentally "biblical" (however his handling of the relevant biblical material

is judged), then this has clear implications for his understanding of the social and ethical ramifications of the Christian Gospel. Indeed, Schäfer made the point in bolder terms in an article written shortly before the publication of his book[79] when he wrote;

> Ritschl hat diesen Grundsatz (the Kingdom of God) nicht nur in der Theorie aufgestellt, sondern in breiter neutestmentlicher Arbeit nach ihm gehandelt. Er hat auch seine Dogmatik so aufgebaut, dass er die normativen Gedanken grundsätzlich nur dem Neun Testament entnehmen will, das mit Hilfe der Alten Testament ausgelegt wird. [80]

The bulk of the rest of Schäfer's book is given over to a presentation and analysis of the main points of Ritschl's theology. These Schäfer summarises under two main categories. First is Ritschl's historical understanding of Revelation; and, second, his concrete picture of a healthy evangelical piety. Schäfer sees these two as the main points that attracted the younger theologians to Ritschl's theology. Of the first point, Schäfer makes statements about Ritschl which no-one who approached him from the point of view of philosophy could make.

> die historische Offenbarung in Jesus ist der Angelpunkt, um den sich das Christentum dreht ... Ferner ist auf die hermeneutische Erkenntnis zu verweisen, dass zum Verständnis Jesus - also auch zur historischen Darstellung seiner Person - die Beziehung zu ihm gehöre und dass folglich trotz allen relativen Gegensätzen eine Kontinuität zwischen vor - und nachösterlicher Jungergemeinde. [81]

Schäfer places Ritschl's theology amongst those with historical and biblical intentions. Ritschl had appropriated Schleiermacher's christological concentration, but had anchored it in history rather than the individual self-consciousness. And, fundamentally, according to Schäfer, Ritschl saw the necessary interdependence of dogmatics and exegesis.[82]

Of the second point, Schäfer stresses Ritschl's pract-

ical picture of concrete piety in the christian life, or of "christlichen Vollkommenheit"[83], where the ideals of practical church life and ethical living in society are emphasised. Schäfer shows the weight that Ritschl gave to the practical christian life, and to the importance to Ritschl of the personal involvement of the theologian in the life of the church. For Ritschl the test of a theology lay in the life of the theologian - a test which Schäfer sees the Ritschlian theology passing.[84]

Schäfer's book clears much ground for a full and proper understanding of Ritschl's theology. And though he points regularly to the "biblical" character of Ritschl's theology, and hints at the nature of Ritschl's biblical work, the larger part of Ritschl's biblical work is left unexplored. And it is slightly disappointing that not more of the lecture material available to Prof. Schäfer (specifically Ritschl's lectures on the theology of the New Testament) is incorporated into the book, though the extracts from lectures that he published as an appendix to his book do provide some useful information about Ritschl's attitude toward Scripture. As informative as Prof. Schäfer's book is, the large majority of questions about Ritschl's biblical work remain unanswered.

C. The next work to consider is an introduction to Ritschl's theology written by David Mueller in 1969.[85] Mueller's approach is to examine Ritschl's theology in the light of Ritschl's doctrine of justification and reconciliation, and to assess the presuppositions and consequences of his theology in that light. Like other recent works on Ritschl, Mueller trys to structure his exposition of Ritschl's thought in a way similar to that in which

Ritschl presented his thought. So after a brief discussions of the nature of religion (and the Christian religion in particular), and the place of Christianity within the general framework of religion[86], Mueller begins his analysis with a discussion of the "Scientific character of systematic theology".[87] This is a particularly interesting and important section of Mueller's book. In it Mueller brings to the fore several important factors that are basic to a proper understanding of Ritschl's theology. One, Mueller shows that Ritschl saw the Church as the proper sphere within which theology should be done. According to Mueller, "Ritschl regarded the church as the origin and focus of meaningful Christian language."[88] And that for Ritschl, "it is only within the fellowship of those who have experienced the forgiveness of sins deriving from Jesus that a proper estimate of him and the whole 'Christian circle of thought' can be obtained."[89] Thus Ritschl's theology is properly seen as a church dogmatics. But the important thing to note here is Mueller's statement of why Ritschl assumed this posture:

> By adopting such a stance, Ritschl consciously opposes the rationalist interpretation of Jesus as a 'moral legislator', 'religious example', or 'ideal man' - without reference to the community that he founded or the forgiveness of sins experienced through him. In short, the attempt to write a life of Jesus apart from any presuppositions is an impossibility - a note Martin Kähler was to sound again a quarter of a century later. Jesus is rightly known only in faith by one who as a member of the church 'subordinates himself to his person'. 90

Mueller sees this churchly emphasis in Ritschl's theology as a basic assumption on which his method and presuppositions are founded.

Second, Mueller notes the importance to Ritschl's theology of his understanding of the "bi-focal" nature of christ-

ianity, the elliptical religious and ethical centre of Christianity. Mueller sees in this a pre-Schweitzer emphasis on the eschatological in the New Testament, in that the Kingdom of God is "the moral end of the fellowship (Jesus) had to found".

> Whereas for Ritschl the 'spiritual redemption' effected through Jesus of Nazareth represents the religious pole of christianity, the stress upon the Kingdom of God points to the ethical and teleological dimension. Christianity is incomplete without both elements, and both issue directly from the 'Founder of christianity'. 91

These two assumptions upon which Mueller sees the presuppositions of Ritschl's theology standing have important implications for the ensuing presentation and assessment of Ritschl's theology; and it is significant that there follows from this discussion the presentation of the two great pillars on which Ritschl's theology was founded; Scripture and the Confessions of the Reformation. According to Mueller, Ritschl essayed the task of formulating his theology on the basis of the books of the New Testament, and that this task was held to be consonant with and demanded by the confessional and theological writings of the Evangelical church.[92] From the New Testament Ritschl drew the sources for his theology; from the confessional writings he drew his interpretative standards and methodological principles. Only by adhering to the New Testament as source and norm can a "theology which seeks to develop the 'authentic content of Christianity' be maintained."[93] And the "standard writings of the Reformation" render imperative the position that "the person of Christ is ... the origin and source of all knowledge of God and the certain ground of the redemption of the Christian community."[94] From these statements a clearer picture of Ritschl's presuppositions begins to emerge, and Ritschl's conscious intentions become more evident.

And as regards the approach to Ritschl by way of philosophy, Mueller can say (in the context of his discussion of Ritschl's epistemology) "that Ritschl's acceptance of Lotze's epistemology is not the most significant element in explaining his own theological method ... (he) finds his immediate guides in certain Lutheran Confessional standards and in a formula of Melanchthon's (that God exist pro nobis and pro me)." [95]

But however useful Mueller's book is an an introduction to Ritschl's theology, it remains just that: an introduction. Many areas of interest and importance to which he makes reference are left unexplored, not the least of which is Ritschl's biblical work. Indeed, Mueller bases his assessment of Ritschl's "biblical foundation"[96] only on the prolegomena to volume II of R&V, and leaves out completely the whole area of Ritschl's exegetical work and hermeneutical principles. If Ritschl did build his theology on a truly biblical foundation, then these are matters which demand a priority and thoroughness of treatment which they do not find in Mueller's book.

D. Mention has been made with increasing frequency of Ritschl's relationship to the theology of the Reformation. This is the subject of David Lotz's book, Ritschl and Luther[97], a study of Ritschl's theology from the perspective of Ritschl's study and use of Luther. Lotz's main thesis is that "Ritschl envisioned his primary duty as that of recovering Luther's original Reformation motifs and then recasting them in a new theological system which would actually be controlled by these motifs in both its form and content."[98] Lotz maintains that Ritschl's self-inderstanding as a theologian is controlled to a large extent

by his desire to complete what Luther had begun, and that Ritschl's theology, in its fundamental and basic concepts, is controlled by that self-understanding. He finds appropriated in Ritschl's theological categories the main motifs of Luther's thought. Ritschl, according to Lotz, took over his experiential view of the nature of justification from Luther:

> For Ritschl, therefore, Luther's original idea of justification related to the believers new understanding of himself (as a reconciled child of God) and of his place in the world (as 'lord' over the entire natural realm) ... On Ritschl's reading, the early Luther devoted primary attention not to a doctrine of justification but to the personal religious experience and assurance of God's reconciling love. 99

Ritschl took from Luther the correlation of justification ("the believer's personal entrance into communion with God") and reconciliation ("the subjective proof or individualising of justification" evidenced in the religious and moral life.[100]). Lotz sees Ritschl's emphasis on the nature of God as love as being Ritschl's attempt to gain and hold on to the insight of the early Luther of the nature of God and his role in justification. "Ritschl believed that with such emphases he was linking up with the very heart of Luther's evangelical theology, with what he designated Luther's theological first principle, namely, 'the abiding relation of love as the essence of God in Christ'." [101] Lotz shows Ritschl's acceptance of Luther's Christocentrism and the "revelation positivism" he extended from that, as the reasoning behind his rejection of the philosophical in theology.

> Following in Luther's steps, Ritschl held that all genuine knowledge of God is based solely on his self-revelation in Christ ... He interpreted Luther's rejection of every theology of glory - all claims to knowledge of the divine essence via inference from the created realm - as wholly compatible, if not identical, with the Kantian critique of pure reason and its rejection of the metaphysical proofs for

God's existence. 102

In Ritschl's central emphasis on the church as both the community to whom God in Christ is revealed and as the locus of justification, Lotz shows Ritschl's reliance on the thought of Luther as expressed, for example, in the Large Catechism: "'The Church, as a mother, bears and nurtures every individual through the Word' ... it was axiomatic for Luther ... that the community is the sole sphere for the proclamation and realisation of God's will to forgive."[103] And finally, in Ritschl's correlation of revelation and faith, Lotz shows Ritschl's Lutheran basis. For Ritschl, knowledge of God is found in the revelation of Christ in the community, and that knowledge takes solely the form of unconditional trust in the God who discloses himself as pure love. "This correlation of revelation and faith points to a concluding, all-important feature of Ritschl's theology as informed by Luther: the cardinal motif that owing to the very nature of religion there can be no merely 'disinterested' knowledge of God, or, positively stated, that 'religious knowledge consists of value judgements'." [104]

Lotz's careful analysis shows that time after time Ritschl made his personal reading of Luther the "starting point" for his own theological work, especially for some of the most fundamental parts of that work. Lotz firmly points out, however, that too often it is just that: Ritschl's personal reading of Luther, and not neccessarily Luther himself. Because of Ritschl's emphasis on the "young" or "early" Luther, as opposed to the "old" or "defective" Luther, and "inspite of his impressive analytical and expository skills, Ritschl failed to lay hold of the authentic

Luther."[105] That Ritschl's own interpretive structure mitigated his understanding of Luther should not, however, obscure the fact that Luther was his theological mentor. Ritschl helped to pave the way for the resurgance of interest in Luther around the turn of this century, and he made Luther's theology live in his own in a truly determinative way. Lotz has done Ritschl-research a great service by bringing these points to the forefront of current thinking. Also useful is Lotz's appended translation of Ritschl's "Festival address on the 400th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther" delivered on 10th November 1883, in which, toward the end of his life, Ritschl made plain his self-understanding as a theologian of the Lutheran Reformation.[106]

And yet, Lotz's book tells only a partial story. For while it is true that to some degree Ritschl's reading of Scripture was shaped by his understanding of Lutheran theology, he did make an independent and extensive study of the Bible in formulating his theology. But Lotz's treatment of Ritschl's exegetical work only extends as far as stating that Ritschl misunderstood the fundamental fruits of Luther's exegetical labours, and consequently "oversimplified" the complexities of Luther's insights concerning grace and the principle of sola scriptura.[107] Lotz is surely right in showing the inadequacy of Ritschl's grasp of Luther's exegetical struggles; but that cannot stand as the only criterion by which Ritschl's biblical work is measured. It must be remembered that Ritschl's first teaching post, at Bonn, was as Privatdozent in New Testament; an area in which he specialised for at least six years, and in which he taught throughout his working life. And his lectures on the Biblical theology of the New Testament, as will be

seen in the course of this thesis, show a far wider grasp of New Testament exegesis and theology than Lotz's purely Lutheran standpoint would indicate.

E. It is slightly ironic to end this survey of the "traditional" approach to Ritschl's theology with James Richmond's book Ritschl: A Reappraisal [108]. The irony lies in the fact that in this, the most recent work on Ritschl, and in spite of his strictures about the almost inevitable stereotyping of Ritschl's theology that comes from the philosophical approach, Richmond nevertheless comes to Ritschl's theology by means of philosophy. But the point of Richmond's approach is to discredit the philosophical study of Ritschl's theology. Richmond's assessment of Ritschl's epistemology strikes a blow against what he calls the "injustice" of "labelling him as a 'neo-Kantian' or 'Lotzian' epistemologist who was interested only or mainly in 'value judgements' in theology."[109] Richmond sorts through the complex and confusing use Ritschl made of philosophy in his little book Theologie und Metaphysik and in volume III of J&R. And after a long and careful discussion, finally concurs with the judgement of A.E.Garvie that because "Ritschl's theology is not always consistant with his philosophical principles ... his so-called epistemology is a 'foreign element' in his work."[110] And Richmond goes further to say that there is a "certain reverent agnosticism in Ritschl"[111], meaning that Ritschl held it as wrong to "go beyond the datum of Christ's revealed solidarity with God ... because the attempt to determine in detail Christ's relationship with God ... is superfluous because ineffectual."[112] And while Richmond is not uncritical of Ritschl's philosophical work, he has shown Ritschl's

true intentions in emphasising the religious and practical motivations in Ritschl's use of philosophy in his theology.[113]

But Richmond's is a wide-ranging work, embodying in it the attempt to rehabilitate Ritschl's theological reputation, the attempt to break through the stereotypes of Ritschl's thought, and the attempt to assess the importance of Ritschl's theology for contemporary theology. Richmond's approach takes the form of a full discussion of the main points of Ritschl's theology, both in their own right, and in contrast and comparison to previous studies of them (he includes discussions of epistemology, religion and God, man and justification, the doctrine of Christ, and the life-style of the Christian). It is a comprehensive study which pulls together in a unified form much of the best Ritschl-research that had gone before. And therefore it is a useful handbook for the student of Ritschl.

But precisely because Richmond's is a wide-ranging book, and because so much of it is drawn from previous study of Ritschl, Richmond makes some rather surprising omissions. He has inexplicably failed, in any acknowledged way, to make use of Professor Schäfer's invaluable study of Ritschl published some ten years before his own. This is a significant oversight on the part of one whose book is, in part at least, a chronicle of the "Ritschl Renaissance". Schäfer's book is a very important part of that "renaissance", and its absence is a seriously felt neglect indeed. Schäfer's book would have been of considerable help at various points in Richmond's discussion (for example, in the matter of the Kingdom of God, or the place of the Bible in Ritschl's theology).[114] And also, Richmond has not paid much more than lip-service to Ritschl's

biblical work, which, after all of the many studies before his that have pointed toward Ritschl's biblical work, is a particularly disappointing feature of his book. Indeed, apart from his studies of the Ritschlian roots of modern theology, Richmond has done little more than Robert Mackintosh did in his book 63 years earlier to explore the biblical and Lutheran aspects of Ritschl's theology.[115]

Richmond's book is and will remain a useful collation of Ritschl-research covering the hundred years since the publication of volume III of J&R in 1876. But apart from his helpful study into the relations of Ritschl to the modern theological movements associated with Barth and Bultmann, Richmond offers little that is new or which moves the study of Ritschl's theology forward significantly.

V. Summary.

From the preceeding pages it can be seen that a major shift has taken place in recent years in the kind of approach made to the study of Ritschl's theology. Contemporary theology has seen fit to treat him with seriousness, if not respect, and has made the attempt to meet him on his own ground. The result has been important gains in understanding Ritschl himself (by overcoming the conventional stereotypes), and in a clearer understanding of some of the "roots" of modern theology (by showing the extent to which his problems - and some of his solutions - are the problems of contemporary theology). Detailed studies have explored the nature of Ritschl's use of philosophy (Wrzecionko), Ritschl's use of history (Hefner), the fundamental elements of Ritschl's theology (Schäfer), importance of Luther in Ritschl's

dogmatic constructions (Lotz), and the place of Ritschl in the formulation of twentieth century theology (Richmond). From those studies a considerable common ground has been established, and in an area where little research has been previously carried out, this thesis goes on to explore more fully the extent to which Ritschl may be called a "biblical" theologian, and what the fundamental principles and methods in his exegesis were.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. John Macquarrie, Twentieth Century Religious Thought (London: SCM, 1963), p.76.

2. heraus. von J. Höfer und K.Rahner, (Freiburg: Herder, 1963).

3. Otto Ritschl, Albrecht Ritschls Leben, two vols., (Freiburg: Mohr, 1892-6).

4. Gösta Hök, Die Elliptische Theologie Albrecht Ritschls (Uppsala: 1942).

5. Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century (London: SCM, 1972).

6. Albert Swing, The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901).

7. Rolf Schäfer, Ritschl: Grundlinien eines fast verschollenen dogmatischen System (Tübingen: Mohr (P.Siebeck), 1968), p.11. James Richmond also relates Barth's utter contempt for Ritschl as a theologian, and tells how, when asked to compare Schleiermacher and Ritschl as theologians, Barth replied that one couldn't compare Ritschl to Schleiermacher as a theologian because Ritschl was not a theologian at all! (James Richmond, Ritschl: a Reappraisal, London: Collins, 1978,p.36).

8. David Mueller, An Introduction to the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p.145

9. See Richmond, op.cit., pp.266ff. for a summary of recent scholarly findings on the relationship between Barth and Ritschl.

10. H.R.Mackintosh (in 1937!) could call Barth "Ritschl's great successor", (Types of Modern Theology,(London: Nisbet, 1937 p.173); see also John Ballie, Our Knowledge of God,(Oxford: University Press, 1939), p.17,18; and Paul Tillich, Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology, (London: SCM, 1967), p.241.

11. Barth, op.cit., pp.654,655.

12. One of the more eccentric suggestions made concerning Ritschl in recent years is that of Horton Harris in his thesis "Albrecht Ritschl's Theology: An investigation into its origin and development" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Universität Göttingen, 1970). In spite of the fact that Ritschl himself never mentions him, and that Otto Ritschl omitted "this vital piece of evidence" (p.96; cf.Otto Ritschl,op. cit., Vol.1, p.246 - the only reference to him in the biography), Harris posits that "in the summer of 1853 or shortly before, Ritschl had read The World as Will and Conception and appropriated Schopenhaur's concept of the

Urwille, which then became the basis of his whole theology" (p.91). And, despite Ritschl's own refusal to have anything to do with the concept of the "Absolute" of Hegel (cf. Introduction to J&R III), Harris has Ritschl combining the Hegelian "Absolute" and the Schopenhaurian "Urwille" to come up with the "Absolute Will" (p.83). "What Ritschl achieved in this proceedure was the combination of the speculative process of Hegel, the primeval will of Schopenhaur and the Christian concept of God" (pp.95-6). Not even the most adamantine and assertive philosophical critic of Ritschl could have gone so far on so little evidence - and evidence that is contrary to everything Ritschl ever said or wrote!

13. Richmond, op. cit., p.275.

14. ibid., p.282.

15. Emil Brunner, The Mediator, (ET Olive Wyon, London: Lutterworth Press, 1934).

16. See in particular Richmond, op. cit., "Religious Epistemology", pp. 46-78; also David Mueller, op. cit.; see also below, Chaper Two.

17. Brunner, op. cit., p.59

18. Paul Wrzecionko, Die Philosophischen Wurzeln der Theologie Albrecht Ritschls, (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964).

19. ibid., pp. 112-120.

20. ibid., pp.194-198.

21. Cf. J&R III, pp.18-20; and Theologie und Metaphysik (ET in Philip Hefner, Three Essays, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972, pp.149-218).

22. Wrzecionko, op. cit., pp. 247ff.

23. James Orr, The Ritschlian Theology (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897).

24. James Orr, Ritschlianism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903).

25. Orr, Ritschlian Theology, p.59.

26. ibid., pp. 31-2.

27. ibid., pp. 33-4; cf. pp. 38-41 re Lotze.

28. ibid., pp. 34-5.

29. ibid., pp. 35-7.

30. Orr, Ritschlian Theology p.30

31. ibid., p.60.

32. ibid., p.58.

33. ibid., p.60. This judgement is not dissimilar to Marx's dictum that "you cannot transcend philosophy without realizing it" ("Introduction to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in Marx's Early Writings, London: Penguin Books, 1975,p.250).

34. Otto Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant (ET London: Swann Sonnenschein & Co, 1890).

35. ibid., p.154.

36. ibid., p.155.

37. ibid., p.183.

38. ibid..

39. ibid..

40. See above pp.7-8.

41. Pfleiderer op. cit., p.183.

42. ibid..

43. ibid., p.193

44. ibid., p.188.

45. ibid., p.194.

46. Emanuel Hirsch, Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1968, vol.5).

47. ibid., p.558.

48. ibid..

49. ibid..

50. ibid..

51. ibid., pp. 558-9.

52. ibid., p.559.

53. ibid., p.557.

54. See below pp. 16-18.

55. Richmond, op. cit., p.13.

56. Philip Hefner, Faith and the Vitalities of History (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

57. ibid., pp.88-95, especially p.94,n.19.

58. ibid., p.90.

59. ibid., p.93.

60. ibid., p.9.

61. ibid., pp. 12-13,n.4.

62. ibid., pp.26-44: pp.51-60.

63.ibid., p.27.

64. ibid., p.28.

65. ibid..

66. ibid., p.107.

67. ibid., p.13,n.4.

68. Cf. R&VII, pp.5-26, especially pp.5-8; J&R III, pp.5-7, re. the knowledge of God found only in Christ.

69. Horst Stephan, Geschichte der Deutschen evengelischen Theologie (second edition, ed. M.Schmidt, Berlin: Töpelmann, 1960), p.214.

70. Schäfer, op. cit..

71. ibid., p.v.

72. ibid., pp. 47-67.

73. "Biblical" here must be understood in the broadest possible sense of the word: namely, an approach to theology that in some basic sense has its "starting point", its presuppositional basis, in a particular understanding of the Bible. A fuller discussion will be found below in Chapter Two.

74. Schäfer, op. cit., pp. 44-67.

75. ibid., p.67.

76. ibid., p.44.

77. See for example Kant's teaching about the community of men under a common moral law in Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone (New York: Harper, 1960).

78. Schäfer, op. cit., p.44

79. Rolf Schäfer, "Das Reich Gottes bei Albrecht Ritschl und Johannes Weiss", Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche (Tübingen: Mohr, vol.1. (1964), pp.68-88).

80. ibid., p.87, especially n.67.

81. Schäfer, Ritschl, p.177.

82. ibid., p.178.

83. ibid..

84. ibid., pp.178-9.

85. David Mueller, op. cit..

86. ibid., pp.23-30.

87. ibid., pp.30-38.

88. ibid., p.30.

89. ibid..

90. ibid..

91. ibid., p.31.

92. ibid., pp.32-3.

93. ibid., p.32.

94. ibid., p.33.

95. ibid., pp.40-1.

96. ibid., p.32.

97. David Lotz, Ritschl and Luther (New York: Abingdon Press,1974).

98. ibid., p.32.

99. ibid., pp.34,35.

100. ibid., p.37.

101. ibid., p.41.

102. ibid., pp.42,43.

103. ibid., p.46.

104. ibid., p.48.

105. ibid., p.113.

106. ibid., pp.187-202.

107. ibid., pp.115-120, especially pp. 118-9.

108. Richmond, op.cit..

109. ibid., p.46.

110. ibid., p.72.

111. ibid., p.73.

112. ibid..

113. Cf. ibid., pp. 46-77, especially pp.46-52.

114. Cf. Schäfer, Ritschl, pp. 114-129; pp. 155-170.

115. Robert Mackintosh, Albrecht Ritschl and His School (London: Chapman and Hall, 1915).

CHAPTER TWO: RITSCHL AS A BIBLICAL THEOLOGIAN

1. Introduction

A. The "oral tradition" concerning the significance and extent of Ritschl's engagement with Kantian epistemology (as described in chapter one), has undergone a considerable period of testing and scrutiny. The results indicate that the "tradition" can no longer be considered a "safe" position to assume (though the "tradition" does persist in certain circles[1]), and that Ritschl's theology can no longer be used to show the "foremost instances of religious subjectivism, moralism, anthropocentrism, etc.."[2] Further, it has been shown in recent scholarship that it is misleading to describe Ritschl's entire theological effort as "neo-Kantian" or "Kantian". Not only does this beg the question of what precisely a "Kantian" or "neo-Kantian" is, but it "can only be done if we choose to turn a blind eye to his criticisms of Kant and the extent to which he deliberately and sharply diverged from Kant."[3] It also ignores the research that shows Ritschl's own apparent inability adequately to use and interpret Kant's thought.[4] Indeed, the recent literature on Ritschl has consistantly deplored the way in which Ritschl's theology is caricatured by such descriptions as "Kantian" or "neo-Kantian", and the way in which these obscure his theological intentions.

This is not, of course, to deny that Ritschl did have <u>some</u> engagement with Kant. This can readily be seen by anyone interested in Ritschl's epistemology. But the real question concerns the nature and extent of that engagement with Kant, its importance for Ritschl's theology and the criteria with which Ritschl made his qualified though positive evaluation of Kant's epistemology.

This is not, however, the place for a detailed discussion of Ritschl's epistemology. Not only has this been frequently and adequately attempted (as noted in Chapter One), most notably in recent times by Wrzecionko and Richmond, but it would also run contrary to the results of the most recent scholarship on Ritschl and would constitute a reversion to a "philosophical type" of approach to Ritschl's theology. For even if the surface of Ritschl's text is considered, it is obvious that he is inviting his readers to interpret him not primarily in respect of his philosophical antecedents, but on the basis of his confessional, and thus ultimately, his biblical roots.

This can be seen, for example, in the question of how man can have a knowledge of God, which is an important question to Ritschl and is integral to his theological programme. A brief survey of this question, therefore, in the introductory part of this chapter will help to put the philosophical question into a more helpful perspective, and allow for a more detailed discussion of the meaning of the term "biblical theology" and what it means to call a theologian a "biblical theologian" to take place. Ritschl's claim to be a "biblical theologian" can then be assessed in light of that discussion and his place in history of biblical theology charted. It is argued in this chapter, as a prolegomenon to a detailed study of Ritschl's biblical work, that it is appropriate to describe Ritschl as a biblical theologian and that it is, therefore, of considerable importance properly to understand Ritschl's biblical work in order adequately to interpret his overall theological achievement.

B. In answering the question of how, according to Ritschl,

man can have a knowledge of God, not only do Ritschl's confessional and biblical roots become more clear, but something of a clearer picture of the place of Kant in Ritschl's thought emerges too. Ritschl strongly opposed what he considered to be the lingering neo-Platonic tradition in western Christianity which taught that God can be known in himself - a se - where a knowledge of God is possible that transcends his operations on man.[5] This Ritschl treats as a metaphysical illusion because it leaves open the question of whether the phenomena men perceive are related to the Ding an sich.[6] Rather, Ritschl insists, God can only be known in his activity; that is to say, in his revelation.

It is at this point that the fundamentally Reformation nature of Ritschl's understanding of the knowledge of God becomes apparent, and where the difficulties over "value-judgements" are made clear. It is from the Lutheran Confessional standards and Melanchthon's formula of 1521, "hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere", that Ritschl derived his understanding of how God is known. God can only be known as God pro nobis through his revelation in Christ, as received by the Christian Church.

> Every part of theological knowledge is construed from the standpoint of the Christian community, since only so can the worth of Christ as Revealer be employed throughout as the basis of knowledge in solving all the problems of theology. This constituted the new principle that Luther set forth ... Luther admits no 'disinterested' knowledge of God, but recognises as a religious datum only such knowledge of Him as takes the form of unconditional trust ... This knowledge is exclusively bound up with Christ. [7]

This Lutheran and christocentric focus is the punctum stans of Ritschl's theory of knowledge. And the place of Kant in this theory is judged accordingly. David Lotz makes an illuminating statement about this with reference to both Schleiermacher and Kant in

Ritschl's theology: "Ritschl's primary criterion for assessing their significance is their fidelity to the Reformation. In various ways and to varying degrees they had appropriated the legacy of the Reformers ... The point is that he expressly called them both to account before the bar of Reformation theology".[8] Therefore, when Ritschl criticises neo-Platonic thought and Scholastic theology for their metaphysical illusions about God, and turns to Kant to argue that there can be no a priori knowledge of God in himself, he makes both decisions on the basis of their fidelity to the criterion of knowledge that he has already established: the Lutheran understanding that God is known only in his revelation in Christ by faith ("unconditional trust"), pro nobis. Indeed, the background must be broadened further to a biblico-Lutheran understanding of the knowledge of God. For it is precisely the Lutheran understanding of dogma that it should be subject to biblical examination and correction (as is seen below p.44ff).

It is certain, then, that Ritschl engaged in his theology with the work of Kant, and that he made limited use of the Kantian principles of epistemology. But this use of Kant was controlled by a more fundamental commitment to Lutheran theology. It is therefore unhelpful in understanding Ritschl and his theological programme to describe him as a "'neo-Kantian' ... epistemologist who was interested only or mainly in 'value-judgements in theology'".[9] And it is more helpful to recognise the Lutheran tradition in his theology.

C. Not only has modern Ritschl scholarship pointed away from the "Kantian" portrayal of Ritschl and toward the Lutheran and

traditional sources of Ritschl's theology, it has also given unanimous testimony to the idea that Ritschl's biblical work must be taken more seriously. Representative of this emphasis is the judgement of Rolf Schäfer. Schäfer, in a discussion and criticism of Gösta Hök's understanding of Ritschl, argues that the centre of Ritschl's theology is more reliably found by a due consideration of the influence of the Reformation and the Bible in Ritschl's thought: "Denn auch Ritschl selbst dürfte mit der Beurteilung seiner selbst nicht so unrecht haben, wer er sich der Bibel und der evangelischen Überlieferung zuerst verpflichtet wusste." [10] Indeed, throughout his book, Schäfer stresses the importance of viewing Ritschl's formulations in the light of his biblical work.

If, as Schäfer argues, the Bible is so central to understanding Ritschl's theology adequately, it is then of the utmost importance that a thorough and detailed study of Ritschl's biblical work be undertaken. And if Richmond is correct (quoting Garvie) that Ritschl's theology is "biblio-spheric" [11], then more needs to be done to understand the implications of that "bibliospherism" for Ritschl's theology than merely to state it. Indeed, if, as Ritschl's son and biographer puts it, Ritschl's "theological system is thoroughly based on his biblical theology", [12] then to give due place and attention to Ritschl's biblical work 87 years after those words were penned is not before time. It is, therefore, to the first full discussion of what it means to call Ritschl a biblical theologian and to Ritschl's place in what might be called the history of biblical theology that this chapter now turns.

II. Ritschl's understanding of "Biblical theology"

A. While the history of the use and development of the term "biblical theology" is sufficiently well documented so as to not need repeating here,[13] a brief sketch of the broad outlines of that history will help to "place" Ritschl within the development of "biblical theology", and to clarify his understanding of the task of "biblical theology".

It is generally accepted that the term "biblical theology" was first used in the early part of the seventeenth century, and was a development out of the Reformation dogmatic principle of sola scriptura. Initially it was a critical reflexion on Lutheran orthodoxy, not, however, concerning its content, but concerning its form. Its earliest use (1669) by the Württemburg court preacher Christoph Zeller bore within it the seeds of theological revolution. Zeller criticised Orthodoxy for having the form of de theologia scholastica, and he called it back to de theologia Biblica.[14] This criticism of the form of orthodox dogmatics from the Bible, while at this stage only a criticism of the form, became a programme for the reform of dogmatics itself under the influence of Pietism. In this two important lines of development are represented in the figures of Phillip Jakob Spener (the so-called "father of Pietism") and Abraham Calov. Neither of these figures represent a break with the main content of orthodox dogmatics, but both have significant emphases which are important for later development.

Spener's plan for the reform of dogmatics (as outlined in the Pia Desideria)[16], while maintaining essential agreement with the content of orthodox dogmatics, is set out as a challenge

to the form of orthodox dogmatics. First, "the whole of theology must be brought back to apostolic simplicity."[16] This, combined with his desire to see the professors regulate in their work the "curiosity of lustful intellects",[17] was designed to bring the study of theology and its dogmatic presentation back to the Bible, and the Bible alone. As the verbally inspired Word of God from which the propositions of doctrine had only to be culled and systematised, there could be no reason for speculating beyond its content. This, it was argued, was the hard-fought battle that Luther had won for true Christianity at the Reformation. And the presentation of dogmatics in scholastic form and with philosophical accretions, was a debasement of that victory. But not just that, it was incumbent upon the theologian especially to demonstrate the truth of his dogmatics by the quality of his life.[18] Spener's understanding of "biblical theology" was a call for a reform of the style and ethos of theology so that the pure biblical form of Lutheran theology could be clearly seen.

Calov, too, was a theologian with a high regard for Lutheran orthodoxy, and saw the substantial agreement of "biblical theology" and dogmatics. However, as the tools and use of more analytic methods in theology increased, the need was felt for a seperate account of the biblical foundations of dogmatics. Thus, "biblical theology" became a subsidiary discipline within dogmatics with the function of underpinning dogmatics. This is the first hint of the eventual separation of "biblical theology" and dogmatics, and represents a line of development that was to diverge significantly from Spener's.

The line of development from Calov's use of the term

"biblical theology" as a subsidiary discipline within dogmatics, went in two distinct but similar directions. On the one hand, Johann Philipp Gabler (1753-1826) took the logical step of separating "biblical theology" from dogmatics, establishing it as an independent, historical-critical discipline.

> Die biblische Theologie trägt historischen Charakter (e genere historico), indem sie überliefert, was die heiligen Schriftsteller über die göttlichen Dinge gedacht haben (quid scriptores sacri de rubus divinus senserint); die dogmatische Theologie dagegen trägt didaktischen Charakter, indem sie lehrt, was jeder Theologie gemäss seinem Verständnis, dem Ort, der Sekte, der Schule und ähnlichen Dingen dieser Art mit der Vernuft über die göttlichen Dinge philosophiert. 19

"Biblical theology" became a completely "exegetisch-historisches" discipline formally in opposition to dogmatics.

On the other hand, Anton Friedrich Büsching proposed the elevation of "biblical theology" from a subsidiary discipline of dogmatics, to a status separate from but equal to dogmatics. Like Calov and Spener, Büsching's plan was far more a reform of dogmatics along biblical/theological lines. Like Spener he pursued "apostolic simplicity" in theology, and therefore set himself "in sharp opposition to the logical-scholastic system."[20] But unlike Spener, Büsching wanted in a decisive way to pursue this simple Gospel "freed from the ballast of dogmatic tradition".[21] "Biblical theology" could even declare itself free from the constraints of the confessions of the Reformation and build its dogmatic solely from the Bible. At this point, an important corner had been turned, and two kinds of "biblical theology" were dominant. The one pointed to a totally independent historical and critical study of the Bible; the other to a reformed dogmatics built solely from the Bible. Both points are of importance for Ritschl's understanding of "biblical theology".

From Gabler's position two further lines of development emerged that are only germane to Ritschl's understanding of "biblical theology" in that he stood to some degree in opposition to both of them. The one line became the rationalist view of Scripture where "biblical theology" was conceived of as interpreting the text so that the "timeless meaning" of it became clear and separate from the time-conditioned literal meaning. The other became the not insignificant development known, broadly, as the religionsgeschichtliche Schule. This was a "biblical theology" freed completely from any and all dogmatic constraint (including and especially the restraint of canon), and free to range over the whole spectrum of literature relevant to the historically studied Bible. Theological or dogmatic matters were of only secondary concern to the School. The primary concern was history and the freedom of the historical method. Wrede may be taken as the exemplar of this type of biblical theologian.[22] (More is to be said in Chapters Four and Five about the question of history in discussions of the Canon and E. Troeltsch's criticisms of Ritschl's use of historical method).

The broad outlines of this sketch of the history of the use and meaning of the term "biblical theology" should make it easier to "place" Ritschl in that history, and to understand better the biblico-theological milieu in which his formulations were conceived. The debate about what content the term "biblical theology" should have has, of course, continued, and significant contributions have been made by both protestant and (increasingly) Roman Catholic theologians in the past thirty years.[23] As important as that debate is, however, it cannot be followed further

here.

B. It was the Scottish theologian James Orr who noted that "the thoughts he (Ritschl) appropriated from others he passed thoroughly through the alembic of his own mind; ... (he) wrought them into a new and original combination through union with ideas which were his own contribution."[24] This is certainly the case when one views the elements that constitute Ritschl's understanding of "biblical theology". His is an attempt to encompass in his theology the best insights of the historical-critical method and his reading of traditional Lutheran theology, combined with his own view of the nature of the relationship between "biblical theology", "dogmatic theology" and "ecclesiastical theology". It is in fact, this very relationship which goes to form the substance of his understanding of the "Theologia Positiva" (as discussed below). The main interest here, then, is to explore the constituent parts of his understanding of "biblical theology" in order better to perceive the foundations of his constructive system.

Before proceeding to the discussion of Ritschl's "biblical theology", it is important at this point to make a few comments on the two main sources for determining the content of that biblical theology. Chief among Ritschl's published works is volume II of Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung. Subtitled "Der biblische Stoff der Lehre", it contains the results of Ritschl's study of the biblical record in pursuit of exhaustively describing the doctrines of justification and reconciliation. RuV II went through three editions: 1st, 1874; 2nd, 1882, and 3rd, 1889. Between editions 1 and 2 Ritschl added a certain amount of

material designed either to bolster the case he was making or to include current scholarship where he thought it appropriate. The differences amount to the addition of new material, without however entailing substantial modifications of his position. The 3rd edition is little more than a reprint of edition 2. Citations in this thesis are from edition 2 (1882) as representing Ritschl's mature conclusions.

More importantly, the other major source for understanding the content of Ritschl's biblical theology is from among his unpublished work, and is used here for the first time in any study of Ritschl's theology. Entitled "Die Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments", they are transcripts of Ritschl's Göttingen lectures on the NT delivered in the Winter Semester of 1877/78 (Eck Naclass, no.10, University Library, Giessen). The lectures delivered in the Winter Semester of 1867/68 of the same title (from the University Library, Göttingen, Lange Theol.318^{a}:5) are substantially the same, and references in this thesis are to those of 1877/78, as they represent the latest stage of Ritschl's work with the text of the Bible and its critical study.

While Ritschl's published work in RuV II represents his considered conclusions about and work with the biblical material of the doctrines of justification and reconciliation, the "Biblische Theologie" lectures represent his fundamental understanding of the text of the NT and the basic critical questions. Where his published material is specific to the doctrines studied, the lectures are general, covering the whole range of biblical theology. The lectures, then, are of considerable methodological interest if Ritschl's biblical work is to be comprehensively, let

alone properly, understood. Without them, any pronouncement on Ritschl's work is certainly inadequate. This thesis, which sets out to correlate the study of Ritschl's theology in general with that of his biblical work in particular, makes specific use of the lecture material, especially to illuminate Ritschl's approach to the Bible. Fresh insight is thereby gained into the character of Ritschl's theology, and the study of 19th century theological understanding. While the manuscript lectures do not provide information that entails a massive reversal of thinking in Ritschl's theology, they do provide a wealth of new material specific to Ritschl's biblical work and allow a more adequate assessment of that work to be made. The importance of the lectures for the study of Ritschl's biblical theology cannot be overestimated.

1. It is neither a trivial remark nor a truism to say that for Ritschl the Bible was the ultimate referent in his theology, and that the Bible formed the basis for his programmatic definition of the task and method of "biblical theology". The Bible is important because it in itself embodies the constants that Ritschl saw as necessary to keep theology distinctively Christian. In the Bible is the first record of the teaching of Jesus and his activity as the Founder of the community, and the record of the experience of the first community of its Founder and founding. "Die identischen Beziehungen des Evangeliums werden von Christus als dem Stifter der Gemeinde, von den Aposteln als den Sprechern der gestifteten Gemeinde geltend gemacht."[25] They are related to one another as graduated authorities[26] for Christian faith and theology. The Bible also contains the Old Testament,

from whose chief ideas the main themes of Christ and the Apostles are to be interpreted:

> Die Gedankenbildung Christi und die der Apostel knüpft sich an eine authentische und originale Einsicht in die alttestmentlichen Religion und an die richtige Verständniss aller ihrer einzelnen Beziehungen. 27

A theology that begins without that Old Testament referent is wrong from the start and will not adequately represent the Christian religion.[28]

And finally, the Bible is a document of faith. And since God can be known only through his self-revelation in Christ, that is by faith, that knowledge can only be acquired and used by faith. As noted above,[29] every part of theological knowledge for Ritschl is apprehended only from the standpoint of the community and this knowledge is bound-up exclusively with Christ, Christ who is known only pro nobis. It is therefore the document of the first community that sets the standard by which faith is measured, and the documents that most clearly represent, without ecclesiastical intrusions, the content and authentic understanding of that faith[30]: the Bible is a "vollständigen Denkmals des Anfanges der Christenheit".[31]

> This principle refers explicitly to the original documents of Christianity gathered together in the New Testament, for the understanding of which the original documents of the Hebrew religion gathered together in the Old Testament serve as an indispensable aid. These books are the foundation of a competent understanding of the Christian religion from the point of view of the community, because the Gospels set forth in the work of its founder the immediate cause and final end of the community's religion, whereas the Epistles make known the original state of its common faith. The Epistles do this, moreover, in a form not yet affected by the influences which as early as the second century stamped Christianity as catholic. 32

Therefore, since the Bible is held as the form and content of every stage of the knowledge of salvation, it is also held as the form and

content of every theological step.[33]

2. "Biblical theology", then, for Ritschl, is an historical knowledge of the Bible which critically and historically interprets the Bible. "Biblical theology" is only concerned with the accurate historical representation of the content of the Bible. It is not, therefore, interested in allegorical methods of interpretation (as in scholastic theology) or in the Rationalist method where the "moral meaning" of a passage is produced without the necessary reference to the literal or historical meaning of the passage.

> Die Biblische Theologie im historische Sinne ist notwendig die Resultas die Einzelexegese, die nach unsern Grundsätzen eben auch historische sein muss und nicht allegorische sein darf. [34]

The historical character of "biblical theology" results, according to Ritschl, from the work and influence of Philipp Gabler: "dass die biblische Theologie zu einer historischen Discipline wird und das geschieht durch Ph. Gabler."[35] As noted above, it was part of Gabler's programme for "biblical theology" that it should be an exclusively historical-critical discipline. Gabler, according to Ritschl, worked to present "die rein historischen Darstellung der in die Heilige Schrift enthaltenen Reihenfolge von religiöse Gedanken."[36] Ritschl, however, could only go this far with Gabler. From Gabler's method developed the Rationalist method of reading from the text its "moral meaning" according to the criteria of reason, and it, according to Ritschl, therefore ignored the positive elements of a pure historical reading of the texts.

> Diese Schriften verfolgen die historischen Gesichtspunkt nicht rein, sondern in verscheidene Weise verfolgen sie

> zugleich die Zweck ihre rationalistliche Theologie zu sichern gegen den widerstrebenden Folgerung aus die positiven Elementen die Alt - und Neutestmentlichen Religion. 37

Ritschl was also unwilling to divorce dogmatics from "biblical theology" in quite the radical way that Gabler did. While Ritschl did insist that "biblical theology" be free from dogmatic constraints, he still thought it important, even necessary, for there to be some essential relation between them; for dogmatics, as in the period of the Reformation, must be "gegrundet durchaus nur auf die Bibel".[38] ("It stands as the fundamental principle of the protestant church that christian doctrine is to be obtained from the Bible alone").[39] But this much, at least, Ritschl accepted from the work of Gabler: "biblical theology" must be thoroughly and exhaustively an historical science.

Along with this insistance that dogmatics be grounded only on the Bible, Ritschl sought to ensure that "biblical theology" was completely free from dogmatic or ecclesiastical constraints. That is to say, that, unlike the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy when "biblical theology", or exegesis, was the servant of dogma, for Ritschl, ecclesiastical or dogmatic formulations are valid only insofar as they are congruent to the results of "biblical theology". In Pietism Ritschl saw the beginnings of a tension between dogmatic formulations and "biblical theology" in its "apostolic simplicity". But it was not until Büsching, according to Ritschl, that they were set in formal opposition to each other.

> "Einen Übergang bezeichnet die Schriften von Büsching insofern als den pietistische Gleichgültigkeit oder Abneigung gegen den Formalismus die Aufgabe nahelegt die Offenbarungs Wahrheit im ihrer ursprünglichen Form der scholastischen entgegenzusetzen." 40

In Büsching moreover Ritschl found an opposition to Formalism

(whether of the Scholastic kind or the Lutheran orthodox) that was not, unlike Gabler's, a thoroughly hostile opposition, nor an opposition that violated the essential relation Ritschl saw between "biblical theology" and dogmatics (see below). While Büsching's understanding was not far removed from (and was indeed influenced by) Spener's demand for a "biblical theology" that was a reform of dogmatics, he did insist that "biblical theology" could be done in independence even from the confessions of the Reformation.[41] With Büsching "biblical theology" began to exercise the kind of normative function over against dogmatics that Ritschl saw as essential to doing a dogmatics that was thoroughly based on the Bible.

This freedom from the contraints of traditional ecclesiastical dogmatics, for Ritschl, was itself demanded by the scientific method. This required that scientific enquiry be free from any limitation by laws that might control its activity except those laws that result from actually doing the activity itself. "Das wissenschaftliche Erkennen endlich bewährt seine allgemeine Gesetztlichkeit durch die Entdeckung von Gesetzen auf dem besondern Gebiete, dem es sich zuwendet."[42] This general qualification of science is, for Ritschl, impossible to one who conceives of theological study as: "eine solche Thätigkeit sich vorstellt, welche im Voraus durch ein kirchliches Rechtsgesetz mechanisch begränzt und endgültig gericht wäre."[43] The scientific method itself, and honest historical-critical study of the Bible, demands that "biblical theology" be free to pursue its results in independence from mechanically imposed ecclesiastical tradition. Only so can "biblical theology" be a completely historical discipline and a

science. And it is on just this point that Ritschl has one of his difficulties with Schleiermacher. Because Schleiermacher laid such a great emphasis on the community in his theology, the community's doctrine, that is, ecclesiastical doctrine, became for Schleiermacher, according to Ritschl, the "substance" of his theology.[44] To Ritschl, Schleiermacher brought together ecclesiastical doctrine and the "substance of the culture of the age" under the rubric of the "pious consciousness";[45] and Ritschl saw this as a submission of theological study to the dogmatic formulations of the church. This submission of theology to doctrine results, says Ritschl, from Schleiermacher's lack of a real historical sense and mitigates his great achievement.[46]

But in a similar way that Ritschl criticised Schleiermacher for submitting theology to doctrine as defined by the church, Ritschl himself was criticised for retaining the Canon by some of his younger contemporaries at Göttingen in the 1880s (who were later the so-called "religionsgeschichtliche Schule": Bousset, Gunkel, Troeltsch, Weiss, Wrede). While they saw in Ritschl a theology built on basically historical foundations, they also felt that he failed to carry through with his historical intentions because of his retention of the Canon, which they viewed as an illegitimate dogmatic intrusion into the study of Christian origins. "They believed that if historical methods are applied in theology (and it was agreed that this was inevitable), then they must be consistantly applied, even if this meant the destruction of the older dogmatic method of doing theology."[47] Ritschl could not, however, agree with this kind of approach to doing Christian theology. For Ritschl, on historical grounds, the Canon (especially of

the New Testament) was essential to a full and proper understanding of the origins of the first Christian community, and therefore for an authentic (i.e. historical) understanding of it. For Ritschl, it was these documents alone which form the true record of the founding of the community, the community's self-understanding, and its understanding of its Founder. And since,

> "direkt ist die Theologie berufen, zum Zwecke der Leitung des kirchlichen Unterrichtes die authentische Kenntniss der christlichen Religion und Offenbarung zu gewinnen", 48

the original documents of the "Stiftungsepoche" are the most important to that end. For Ritschl, this follows only naturally from the "law" which governs all ideas that go to form history:

> "dass der Inhalt eines Gemeinschaft gegründen Princips sich in voller Eigenthümlichkeit in dem Anfang der Entwickelung zu erkennen giebt." 49

Therefore, in presenting an authentic knowledge of Christian revelation, it is only acceptable to scientific and historical method, that the documents of the first community alone govern its presentation. To Ritschl, then, the retention of the Canon was essential for the historically authentic presentation of the Christian revelation. (This issue is discussed in more detail below in Chapters Four and Five). Ritschl's intentions in theology were essentially practical and Christian (and not those of presenting a history of religions and the place of christianity within that history); and for an authentic presentation of revelation the Canon was an essential feature.

III Theologia Positiva,

Ritschl's understanding of "biblical theology" as a completely historical discipline freed from the constraints of, and yet normative for, ecclesiastical dogma, brings up the related

question of the relation between "biblical theology", "dogmatic theology" and "ecclesiastical theology". As noted above, "biblical theology", for Ritschl, had to be done, as Büsching and Gabler demanded, free from the constraints of traditional dogmatic formulations. "Biblical theology" was no longer the servant of even a reformed dogmatics free from scholastic form. Indeed, "biblical theology" was a free and independent discipline following the scientific method. But for Ritschl, unlike Gabler, there still remained an integral relationship between the results of "biblical theology" and the dogmatic tradition of the church. And like Spener (but unlike Wrede) Ritschl refused to go beyond the boundaries of the Bible even if dogmatic tradition required it. Spener opposed "presumptous subtleties in matters in which we should not be wise beyond the Scriptures."[50] Ritschl, too, rejects the "fruitless clutching" after explanations that "transcend" the scope of free historical theological enquiry, where that which ecclesiastical tradition offers instead is "obscure ... (and) not fitted to make anything clear".[51] But, no matter how strong Ritschl's statements may seem concerning previous dogmatic or ecclesiastical formulations, they are so precisely because of the important and integral relationship which he sees between them. There is a necessary relation between them which forms the heart of the method of Ritschl's grand theological scheme, the theologia positiva.

The theologia positiva is, for Ritschl, the term he uses to express the broad methodological structure of his entire theological programme. It is the general Reformation term[52] which, to him, encompasses the full systematic presentation of the biblical and historical content of christian revelation, and it comprehends

all of the theological disciplines in their relation to one another. In this broad sense only, Ritschl also uses the term "dogmatics" to signify the same content as theologia positiva.[53]

A. Of the three constitutive parts of the theologia positiva ("biblical theology", "dogmatic theology" and "ecclesiastical theology"), the most fundamental is "biblical theology", as defined in its normative function above. It is fundamental because it supplies the "data"[54] upon which "dogmatic theology" is built and against which (in part) "ecclesiastical theology" is measured. "Biblical theology" is an "historische Erkenntniss"[55] which provides an historical-critical and therefore authentic interpretation of the received "data" contained in the biblical material. The Bible, then, as authentically interpreted in "biblical theology" is "die Quelle für die positive Theologie"[56] and its norm.

B. The second constitutive part of the theologia positiva is "ecclesiastical theology". In its broadest sense, "ecclesiastical theology", for Ritschl, compasses the whole range of dogma formulated by the church since the writing of the New Testament. Indeed, Ritschl sometimes uses "kirchliche Theologie" and "Dogmengeschichte" interchangeably.[57] "Ecclesiastical theology" in this sense is "theils die Kanon, theils die schon geordenete Materialsammlung" of the church.[58] On the one hand, "ecclesiastical theology" provides and maintains the Canon, which, as seen above, contains the authentic presentation of the origins of the church and the Christian revelation. Thus there is a fundamental link between "biblical theology" and "ecclesiastical theology" based on their mutual interest in the Canon. On the other hand, "ecclesiastical theology", as "Dogmengeschichte", provides an ordered collec-

tion of theological formulations with which each new generation of theologians must come to terms.[59] This interest of Ritschl's stems in part from his search for some measure of historical continuity between the Reformation and pre-Reformation church. This is not, of course, to say that the theologia positiva can in any sense be a recital of historically given dogma.[60] It is, rather, the material against which the dogmatic or positive theologian places the results of his biblico-exegetical work to determine what from that "ecclesiastical theology" corresponds to the "richtigen Darstellung der christlichen Religion"[61] and therefore provides that continuity. Ritschl therefore saw "biblical theology" and "ecclesiastical theology" as standing in an analytical and synthetic relationship,[62] so that a complete "Erkenntniss" of the Christian revelation is gained. Those espects of "ecclesiastical theology" that are incongruent to "biblical theology" are rejected and a more authentic and complete picture emerges. And, for Ritschl, there can be no dogmatic prejudging of the results of this analytic and synthetic interaction.[63]

For Ritschl, then, "ecclesiastical theology" or "Dogmengeschichte" is "nicht Anders als ... die Wissenschaft von dem Zusammenhange der Dogma als geschichtlichen Produkte."[64] As historically interpreted, ecclesiastical dogmatic pronouncements can be seen in their true Sitz im Leben and therefore understood. When so understood they become available to the positive or systematic theologian who may or may not bring them into his system depending on their coherence with the results of "biblical theology".[65] Because "ecclesiastical theology" is not the result of one "vorausschauenden Absicht" but was formulated in "fits and starts" according to the historical situation, it will not have reached definitive conclusions on all

aspects of theology, and so the theologian need not be constrained to include them in his theology.[66] Therefore, no dogmatics that takes "ecclesiastical theology" for its foundation could ever be complete because "ecclesiastical theology" is still developing.[67]

Ritschl had, of course, already determined that to a large degree the results of "biblical theology" and the theology of the Reformation would correspond (again, somewhat akin to Spener and the Pietists). But this, according to Ritschl may not always be the case. Instead, taking into account the present circumstances of the church and the state of the "Schriftauslegung", they happen largely to coincide. But,

> unter veränderten Umständen des kirchlichen Bewusstseins, der Schriftforschung und der allgemein Denkweisse wird also eine positive Theologie vorgestellt werden können, welche ein entferntenes Verhältniss der Übereinstimmung mit den kirchlichen Dogmen der Reformationsepoche einnimmt. [68]

Indeed, Ritschl accepts that Spener and the Pietists have shown a deficiency in the correspondence of Reformation dogmatics and "biblical theology" in the area of eschatology, and that other areas of New Testament thought will no doubt be seen to be wanting in the "lutherischen Lehrüberlieferung". Nevertheless, Ritschl concludes that:

> Es ist im Allgemeinen aussser Zweifel, dass der Hauptinhalt der melanchthonisch-lutherischen Lehrüberlieferung mit richtig denen Inhalte des Neuen Testament übereinstimmt. [69]

C. The place of the third constitutive part, "dogmatic theology" now becomes clear. "Dogmatic theology" is a "systematic" discipline which scientifically organises the results of "biblical theology" -- that is, the results of "Einzelexegese" as understood in relation to the general meaning of the "chief ideas" of the

Bible as a whole[70] -- and the results of the study of the congruence of "ecclesiastical theology" to that "biblical theology".[71]

"Dogmatic theology" is, in fact, the synthetic and analytic relation between "biblical theology" and "ecclesiastical theology" which together form the theologia positiva. The theologia positiva may, then, be called dogmatics if that is not understood as a recital of historically given dogma, but as the correspondence of the fundamental knowledge of revelation to orthodox dogma by means of "des Schriftbeweiss und der polemischen Reflexion";[72] that is, by the correspondence of the results of exegesis to Reformation doctrine ("ecclesiastical theology") by means of "biblical theology" and "dogmatic theology".

D. Theologia positiva, then, is the organised combination of historical-critical exegesis, "Dogmengeschichte" and the relation of these two by means of critical reflexion on their relation. For Ritschl, anything short of that represented an incomplete and imbalanced understanding of Christian revelation, and serves only to obscure rather than make clear the substance and meaning of Christian revelation.

The theologia positiva represents the grand overall methodological programme for theology which Ritschl undertook to carry through. He saw the plan as being true to both the scientific, historical-critical method, and to the tradition of Lutheran theology. He attempted to maintain a distinctively Christian view of the theological enterprise by his insistence, on historical grounds, of limiting "biblical theology" to the study of the traditional Canon of the Bible, and by his characteristically practical emphasis. In this respect Ritschl was very much

the "Vermittlungstheolog" (Hirsch).[73] For on the one hand, though breaking with Baur's historical method and its conclusions, Ritschl maintained his historical-critical training, remaining part of the "neuen positiv-historischen Boden"[74] in the study of the biblical material. And yet, on the other hand, Ritschl remained firmly commited to the centrality of the church and community; both as the locus of justification, and as the raison d'etre for doing theology at all. In that way, Ritschl juxtaposed himself methodologically and theologically to most of the major Lutheran theological movements of his day. Indeed Ritschl dissociates himself from Catholic theology, Anabaptism, and Socinianism in one phrase, stating that he has experienced "ihrer Incongruenz zu dem Worte Gottes".[75] Similarly the rationalist theologians who followed Gabler are criticised by Ritschl for not following a pure historical, and therefore proper "biblical-theological" method in theology, but instead pursued "die Zwecke ihre rationalistische Theologie"[76] by reading the same into the texts. And Ritschl criticised the orthodox and "repristinating" theologians for allowing their dogmatic concerns to cloud their reading of the Bible. Ritschl did indeed attempt a "Vertmittlungstheologie" based on historical-critical scientific method and on a firm commitment to practical and necessarily Christian ends; and both of these emphases stem from his commitment to the Bible as the source and norm for a positive and constructive theology.

lV. Summary and conclusion.

In attempting to assess Ritschl as a "biblical theologian" and to understand the nature and task of "biblical theology" as Ritschl understood it, it was first necessary to look briefly at

how Ritschl answered the important question of how man can have a knowledge of God. It was seen on the basis of Ritschl's own testimony, that he desired to be understood and heard as a faithful Lutheran, open to the testimony of his own confessions and their biblical source. This commitment was seen to have epistemological implications in that Ritschl placed the question of the knowledge of God within a discussion of neo-Platonic and Scholastic epistemology where he called upon his own particular reading of Kant to bolster his essentially Lutheran position. But it was also seen to be unhelpful in understanding Ritschl's theology to describe him in Kantian terms. It was seen, moreover, that the question of the knowledge of God was of the utmost importance to Ritschl's theology, and that the means of that knowledge of God for Ritschl was to be found in Christ as the revelation of God as apprehended by faith. It was also shown that there has been an almost unanimous testimony amongst recent Ritschl scholars that Ritschl's biblical work should be given more consideration in assessing his theology.

Therefore, a brief history of the use of the term "biblical theology" was drawn in broad strokes so that Ritschl's "place" in that history could be assessed. It was found that Ritschl's understanding of the term "biblical theology" owed something to three important figures in the history of the term. Like Spener, Ritschl was seen to show an unwillingness to go beyond the "data" of the Bible, in making theological judgements, and was seen to criticise traditional dogmatics from the standpoint of the Bible. Like Gabler, Ritschl saw "biblical theology" as an independent, purely historical-critical discipline. Though unlike Gabler, and similar to Büsching, Ritschl saw "biblical theology"

as necessarily linked to dogmatics, and not wholly divorced from it. Like Gabler and Büsching, however, Ritschl insisted that "biblical theology" must be free from any and all dogmatic constraints (except those, like the canon, that were necessary, on historical grounds, to keep theology essentially and practically Christian).

Ritschl's understanding of "biblical theology" was then shown in its relation to "ecclesiastical theology" and "dogmatic theology", under the wider methodological framework of the theologia positiva (which term itself was drawn from the early theology of the Reformation by Ritschl to express not only his theological/methodological plan, but also his self-understanding as a theologian of the Lutheran Reformation). "Biblical theology" was seen to be basic to theology, relating to "ecclesiastical theology" (or "Dogmengeschichte") in an analytical and synthetic interaction. This analytical and synthetical relation was seen as the "work" of "dogmatic theology". These three constitutive parts form together in their positive interaction the theologia positiva, which is the general and overall framework into which the various theological disciplines fit.

From what has been seen, then, it is apparent that Ritschl's understanding of the nature and task of "biblical theology" is crucial to his overall methodological framework, and that the results of "biblical theology" are normative for all other theological enquiry. In the chapter that follows the exact principles and methods employed in his exegesis and interpretation of the Bible are explored, and how the results of that exegesis are used and interpreted in formulating the theologia positiva.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. See above pp. 1-2.

2. David Lotz, Ritschl and Luther (New York: Abingdon Press, 1974), p.16.

3. James Richmond, Ritschl: A Reappraisal (London Collins, 1978), p.53.

4. See Paul Wrzecionko, Die Philosophischen Wurzeln der Theologie Albrecht Ritschls (Berlin: Töpelman,1964), pp. 112-120, 194-8; and above pp. 6-7

5. J&R III, paragraph 30.

6. ibid., p.19.

7. ibid., p.6.

8. Lotz, op.cit., pp.147,151.

9. Richmond, op.cit., p.46.

10. Rolf Schäfer, Ritschl (Tübingen: Mohr, 1968) pp.10-11.

11. Richmond, op.cit., p.61.

12. Otto Ritschl, Albrecht Ritschls Leben vol.II (Freiburg: JCB Mohr,1896), p.165.

13. See for example, Hans-Joachim Kraus, Die Biblische Theologie (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970); Gerhard Ebeling, "The Meaning of 'Biblical Theology'" in On the Authority of the Bible (London: SPCK, 1960); Hans Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

14. Ebeling, op.cit., p.54.

15. Translated by T.G.Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp.87-122.

16. ibid., p.110.

17. ibid.

18. Spener quotes from David Chytraeus in this context: "we show ourselves to be christians and theologians by our godly faith, holy living, and love of God and neighbours rather than by our our subtle and sophistical argumentation." ibid., p.112.

19. Philipp Gabler, Gableri Opuscula Academica II (1831).p.115 as quoted in Kraus, op.cit., p.53.

20. Kraus, op.cit., p.25.

21. Ebeling, op.cit., p.57

22. See Robert Morgan, The Nature of New Testament Theology (London: SCM, 1973), pp.1.-68.

23. See for example Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., Dogmatic vs. Biblical Theology (London: Burns & Oates, 1964).

24. The Ritschlian Theology (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897), p.30.

25. R&V II, p.20.

26. ibid.,

27. "Biblische Theologie", p.18.

28. ibid..

29. Above p.4.

30. "Biblische Theologie", pp.20-21.

31 R&V II, p.12

32. Albrecht Ritschl, "Instruction in the Christian Religion" translated by P.Hefner in Three Essays (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p.222.

33. R&V II, p.6.

34. "Biblische Theologie", p.15.

35. ibid, p.8. See diagram appended to the notes to this chapter for a schematic outline of Ritschl's antecedents in his understanding of biblical theology.

36. ibid., p.9.

37. ibid., p.11.

38. ibid., p.1.

39. Ritschl, "Instruction", in Hefner, Three Essays , p.222.Ritschl quotes in this connexion from the Smalcald Articles of 1537 (II,2), "The Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel." (p.265).

40. "Biblische Theologie", p.5f.

41. See above p.14; Kraus, op.cit., p.25; Ebeling,op.cit., p.57.

42. R&V II,p.1.

43. ibid., p.1f.

44. R&V II, p.4.

45. ibid..

46. ibid., p.5.

47. Morgan, op.cit., p.10.

48. R&V II, p.13.

49. ibid..

50. Pia Diesderia (ET), p.52

51. J&R III, p.451f.

52. "Biblische Theologie", p.1f; R&V II, p.2.

53. R&V II, pp. 2-5, especially p.2f.

54. J&R III, p.17.

55. "Biblische Theologie", p.13.

56. R&V II, p.18.

57. "Biblische Theologie", p.16.

58. ibid., p.14.

59. ibid..

60. R&V II, p.2.

61. "Biblische Theologie", p.14.

62. ibid., p.15.

63. ibid..

64. R&V II, p.3.

65. ibid..

66. ibid..

67. ibid., pp. 3-4.

68. ibid., pp. 2-3.

69. ibid., p.18.

70. "Biblische Theologie", p.15.

71. ibid., p.21.

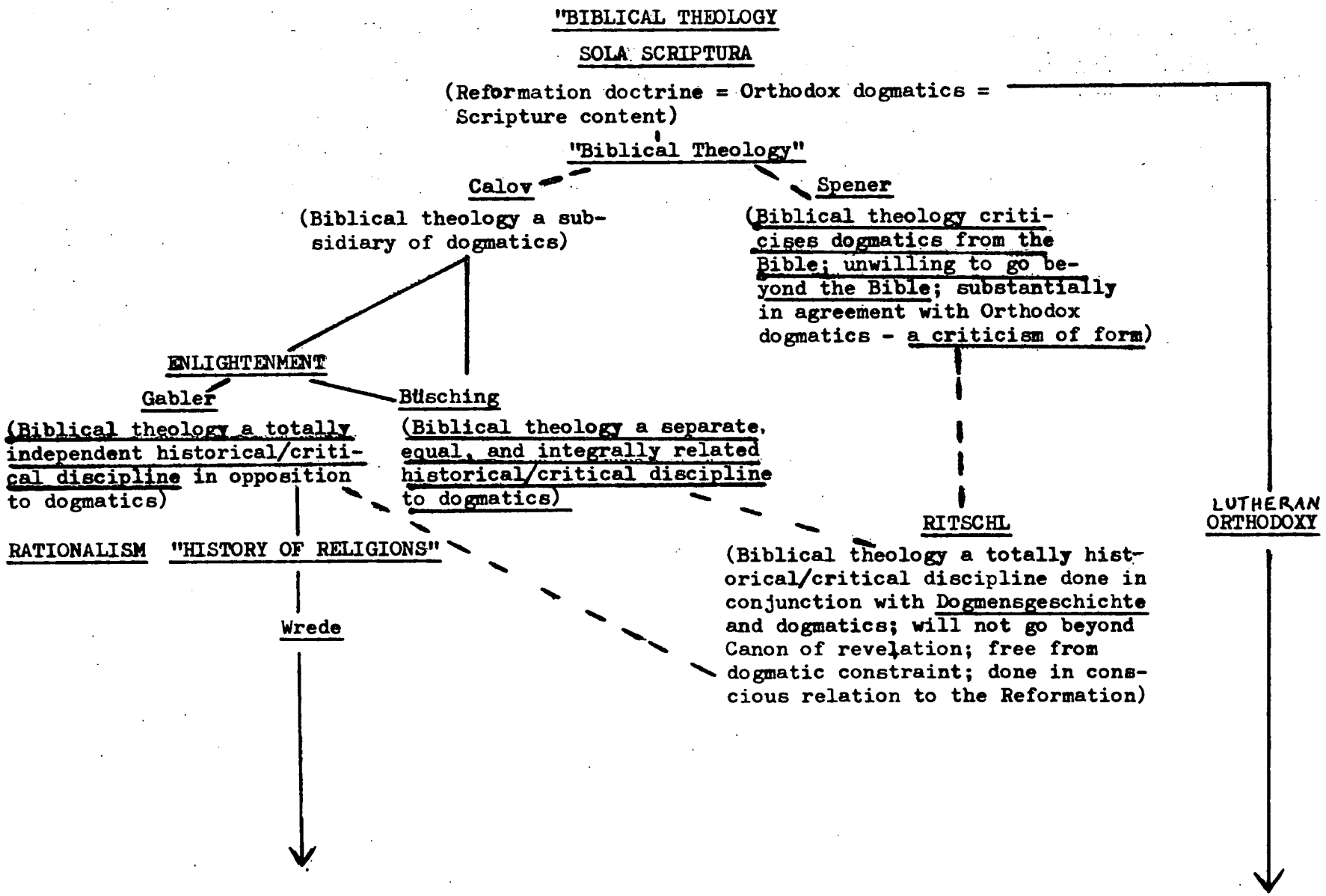
72. R&V II, p.2.

73. Emanuel Hirsch, Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie V (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1968),pp.557-560.

74. ibid., p.558.

75. R&V II, p.6.

76. "Biblische Theologie", p.11.


"BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
SOLA SCRIPTURA
(Reformation doctrine = Orthodox dogmatics = Scripture content)
"Biblical Theology"
Calov
(Biblical theology a subsidiary of dogmatics)
Spener
(Biblical theology criticises dogmatics from the Bible; unwilling to go beyond the Bible; substantially in agreement with Orthodox dogmatics - a criticism of form)
ENLIGHTENMENT
Gabler
(Biblical theology a totally independent historical/critical discipline in opposition to dogmatics)
Büsching
(Biblical theology a separate, equal, and integrally related historical/critical discipline to dogmatics)
RATIONALISM
"HISTORY OF RELIGIONS"
Wrede
RITSCHL
(Biblical theology a totally historical/critical discipline done in conjunction with Dogmensgeschichte and dogmatics; will not go beyond Canon of revelation; free from dogmatic constraint; done in conscious relation to the Reformation)
LUTHERAN ORTHODOXY

CHAPTER THREE

RITSCHL'S PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF EXEGESIS (THEORY)

1. Introduction

The perspective on Ritschl as a biblical theologian developed in the last chapter, prepares the way for a more detailed examination of the manner in which he used the Bible in his theology. However, to assess the importance of the Bible to Ritschl's theology, even to describe him in some fundamental sense as a biblical theologian, is not yet to be able to judge the full adequacy of his biblico-theological claims in respect of scripture. To facilitate that, it is necessary to examine in some detail the principles and methods he employed in his use of the Bible, both in theory and in practice. Only then will a full judgement be possible. In this chapter, then, Ritschl's explicit principles and methods of exegesis are set out fully as the theory which forms the background to his actual exegetical and interpretive practice. How well Ritschl may be judged to have carried out this theory is judged in the next chapter.

Before, however, proceeding to the discussion of Ritschl's principles and methods of exegesis and interpretation, two other, allied questions important for understanding the place of the Bible in his theology, and which control to some degree the way in which the Bible is used and functions in his theology, must be addressed: In what sense is Scripture the "authority" for Ritschl's theology, and in what way is the "mode of God's presence" in the community to be construed in Ritschl's theology?[1] The "mode of God's presence" in the community is part of this enquiry about scripture because scripture is "that set of writings whose proper

use serves as the occasion by God's grace for his presence" to the community.[2] One aspect of the reality of the Church is that God is present to the community either through the "Word" of scripture (the Reformation principle of sola scriptura)or through the teaching office of the Church (the Roman Catholic magisterium). How God's presence is understood (i.e. the mode of God's presence construed) plays a part in how scripture is used and understood and is therefore an important part of any enquiry into the use of scripture in theology. The answers to these two related questions will help to answer the larger question of what the point actually is in doing theology at all, and what the subject matter of theology actually is.[3] They also help to show some of the controlling factors in the use of the Bible in theology. Ritschl thought of himself as a biblical theologian of the Lutheran Reformation; to be fair to that self-understanding, and to further a more precise understanding of him as a biblical theologian, his views of what the authority of the Bible for theology is, and how to construe the mode of God's presence in the community must be considered.

A. The Authority of Scripture.

The question of determining in what way scripture is the "authority" for theology is notoriously problematic.[4] Is"proving" theology from scripture logically similar to "proving" a theory of curved space from calculations based on the general relativistic or Riemannian universe? Is there such a direct relation between scripture and theology that it is "as though they were the two ends of a chain and the only point at issue among doctrines of biblical authority were the number of links in the chain?"[5] If

theology is said to be done "on the basis of" scripture, is that the same as saying that the English translation is done "on the basis of" Homer's Iliad?[6] Is theology a "translation" of Bible doctrine into theological propositions? Does scripture bear on theology because of other considerations ("a mode of subjectivity, of the structure of history, or the structure of the cosmos", etc.)?[7] The precise way in which scripture is authority for theology will illuminate a great deal about a theological system.

Further, the question of authority must be approached on two levels. First, and most generally, on the level of canon: why use the books of the traditional Christian Bible and not others? This is primarily an historico-methodological question pertaining to the scope and kind of theology pursued (though as was seen in chapter two, it is also a theological-doctrinal question). Second, and more specifically, on the level of theological argument: "scripture may properly be said to be 'authority' for a theological proposal when appeal is made to it in the course of making a case for the proposal."[8] The first question of authority, the canon, is considered in this chapter, as a matter of "theory", and the second, the place of the Bible in theological argument, is considered in chapter four.

Canon as authority

As noted above (in chapter two), Ritschl's retention of the canon in his theology was viewed by the religionsgeschichtliche Schule as an inconsistency in his historical method. It was also noted that, for Ritschl, the reasons for retaining the canon were primarily historical. The question of the canon is now considered here in its relation to the doctrine of the

verbal inspiration of scripture, and the testimonium spiritus sancti, which form the background aginst which Ritschl formed his historical view of the canon.

It may be recalled that theology for Ritschl may only find its source in the canonical books of the New Testament because they represent most authentically (i.e. historically) the origins of the Christian community. The Gospels present a picture of Jesus' person and work in the founding of the Christian religion (and are therefore the product of the first generation of Christians), and the "Apostles" (the remaining books of the New Testament) appear as authoritative spokesmen for the community (in its self-understanding as the community of followers of Jesus, and in its Stiftungsverständniss, they represent the original and therefore authoritative experience of Jesus of the Christian community).[9] The New Testament is a "monument" to the foundation of the community[10], and it represents all of the various strands and contrasts in the development of Christianity in a way that demonstrates its superiority to later Christian writings.[11] The New Testament is also free from the ecclesiastical colouration that affects Christian books of later generations. And, indeed, Christian writings of subsequent generations of Christians refer back to the thought and experience of the first Christian community as preserved in the community's books, the New Testament, as normative for their own writings.[12] For Ritschl, then, these historical reasons are the ground for the normative use of the canon of the New Testament in theology. These provide the "historical sources and objective forms" that theology needs.[13] (Ritschl also maintains, however, that scripture also has a "spiritual" authority over theology and the life of the community which is as

decisive for Ritschl as the historical argument. More on this below; this chapter, I.B.3).

This historical view of the canon developed from Ritschl's dissatisfaction with the Lutheran orthodox doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and its corollary of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the believer.[14] Indeed, Ritschl begins his discussion of the authority of Holy Scripture for theology[15] by discussing the "old teaching" of the special verbal inspiration of the Bible. He asks the question: "Worauf die specifische Bevorzugung der biblischen Bücher vor allen anderen christlichen Schriften zum Zweck der Darstellung des theologischen Systems beruht?".[16]

According to Ritschl, the old teaching on inspiration developed out of an "unproved hypothesis of Irenaeus" that the Apostles "had" the Holy Spirit without measure, and that other Christians, by comparison, only "had" the Holy Spirit in a partial measure.[17] Thus the books of the New Testament were seen as being especially inspired by virtue of the special super-inspired status of the Apostles. Ritschl found this problematic, in that there are books in the New Testament canon that were written by non-Apostles which are of equal value to those of Apostolic origin, and, further, that most of the Apostles were lost without a trace of their work.[18] Therefore, because not all of the writings of the New Testament canon are of apostolic origin, and because not all of the Apostles left a written Nachlass, the theory of special verbal inspiration asserts in part too much and in part too little as grounds for acknowledging the authority of the books of the New Testament for theology.[19] Thus Ritschl feels that Lutheran orthodoxy does itself a disservice by postulating that the Bible is the direct and verb-

atim word of God through the specific activity of the Holy Spirit.[20]

Ritschl's position, however, is more ambiguous than this sounds. For he does refer to the New Testament as "inspired" in the sense that the Holy Spirit, who "produced" the Biblical books "down to the letter", while not residing in the letter, nevertheless effects through the New Testament an understanding of it in the hearer or reader of it which is "conducive to salvation".[21] What this means is not that the New Testament is inspired in any way that Lutheran orthodoxy (after the manner of Irenaeus) would understand, but that the New Testament is inspired in as much as the Holy Spirit works through it to secure an understanding (a Heilserkenntniss) of it that leads the worshipping hearer or reader of it to accept the salvation attested in it.

Ritschl calls this (somewhat confusingly) the testimonium spiritus sancti (which is not to be confused with the inspiration of the individual, as held by those who rely on their own experience as a guide and authority for interpretation and theology (see below)). Rather, Ritschl's understanding of the testimonium spiritus sancti is a plea for intellectual freedom in order to facilitate the work of the Holy Spirit "through the letter" of the text.

> Man alles vergass oder bei Seite setzte, was an intellectueller Thätigkeit in dem andächtigen Leser des 'Wortes Gottes' oder in dem theologischen Erforscher und systematischen Ordner seines Inhaltes vor sich ging. [22]

If the Holy Spirit is to be allowed to work through the biblical texts so that scripture can really be the "matter" and the "form" of every stage of the Christian knowledge of salvation (and therefore the form and content of every theological step)[23], then the reading and study of the text must be free from any externally imposed pre-understanding.[24] For Ritschl, the Lutheran orthodox un-

derstanding of the testimony of the Holy Spirit was a form of ecclesiastical restraint and pre-understanding imposed on the biblical theologian, and therefore an obstruction to a full and proper historical reading of the Bible.

For Ritschl, then, the Bible is inspired -- in the sense that through it the Holy Spirit works to effect an understanding of it that will lead to a Heilserkenntniss on the part of the reader. But this can only happen insofar as the testimonium spiritus sancti is seen as an attribute of scripture, whereby scripture is free from any ecclesiastical or dogmatic constraint that would hinder the work of the Spirit through it. Thus Ritschl somewhat ironically directs his criticism to seventeenth century Lutheran Orthodoxy.

> Wer nicht den Muth hat, auch die Behauptung des testimonium spiritus sancti als Attribut der heiligen Schrift auf sich zu nehmen, darf sich keinen Ruhm aus dem Bekenntniss der Verbalinspiration der heiligen Schrift machen! [25]

The theologian who cannot do so cannot write the doctrine of verbal inspiration "on the flag" of his theology.[26]

For Ritschl, further, the authority of scripture cannot be understood as the expression of a Lehrgesetz.[27] Nor can the authority of scripture be derived from a view of scripture which sees it as an "organ" of the "self-testifying Holy Spirit".[28] Rather, the authority of scripture (and therefore the retention of the canon) must, for Ritschl, proceed from the historical view of scripture as the record of the founding of the Christian community (and its self-understanding as a founded community) and the record of the person and work of Christ, its founder. The authority of scripture for theology rests, for Ritschl, on its historical position as those documents lying closest to the foundation of the community and which stem from

that community. All subsequent documents of the Christian church are to be judged in the light of those founding documents, and Christian experience is seen to have its normative expression in them. As Rolf Schäfer has put it:

> Im Neuen Testament überhaupt sind gerade auch die Schriften der Apostel gleichermassen Quelle für die Offenbarung, weil sie die Erfahrung der Gemeinde der wiedergeben, die Jesus durch Wort und Tat hervorgerufen hat. Und diese Erfahrung der Gemeinde wird wiederum massgeblich für die Erfahrung aller spätern Gemeinde; das Neue Testament ist damit Quelle und Norm für die Kirche und folgeweise für den Einzelnen in ihr. [29]

It is this historical and objective theory[30] which Ritschl set against the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of scripture as held by Lutheran orthodoxy. The canon of the New Testament was for Ritschl an imperative of the historical method itself.

B. The mode of God's presence in the Community.

Corollary to this understanding of the canon and its authority for theology is the question of the mode of God's presence in the community. This is an important enquiry because (so it will be argued, as mentioned above) the judgement about the mode of God's presence among the faithful is also a judgement about how the authority of scripture is to be construed, and is therefore important to an understanding of what kind of normative function that authority exercises over theology.[31]

1. In Kelsey's study of the kinds of use made of scripture in theological argument, he identifies three "families" of ways of construing the mode in which God is present to the faithful. He sees each of them as signifying a different way in which theological proposals are organised so that a theological "position" can be developed.[32] According to Kelsey, the way in which the mode of God's presence is construed says more, however, about how a theol-

ogical position is ordered than what that position "says".[33] A brief description of the three "families" of ways of construing the mode of God's presence in the community as Kelsey defines them will help to provide a conceptual framework within which the discussion of how Ritschl construes God's presence in the community can be carried out. (Kelsey makes the logical but worthwhile point that all of these are ways of understanding God's presence as pro nobis[34]).

The first "family" of ways of viewing God's presence is the "ideational" mode, where God is taken as being present "in and through the teaching and learning of the doctrine asserted by scripture, or the concepts proposed by scripture".[35] In this mode of viewing, God's presence is "like having personally appropriated a set of concepts" which either assert a basic truth about oneself and the world, or which "decisively shape" one's responses to the world. God is present to the community in and through the assertions of the Bible.

The second "family" of ways of construing God's presence is called by Kelsey the mode of "concrete actuality". In this, God is viewed as present in and through "an agent rendered present by scripture", or in and through a "cosmic process of re-creation".[36] According to this mode of viewing, God's presence is somewhat like "having the terms on which one lives set by the sheer fact that another agent is present", who can only be adequately described by the "very peculiar and paradoxical 'Chalcedonian' identity description".[37] Or, God's presence is somewhat like "having the terms on which one must live ... set by the cosmic fact that a process of transformation is going on in all realms of being."[38] The fact of the "agent"

rendered by scripture or rendered by the presence of "cosmic re-creation" determines the terms on which life is lived and understood.

The third "family" of ways of viewing God's presence is that of "ideal possibility", where God's presence is viewed through "existential events" occasioned by scripture's "kerygmatic statements". These statements either proclaim the possibility of "authentic existence", or are occasioned by the "biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ which mediates the power that makes new being possible".[39] God's presence is somewhat like "having present the possibility of that mode of subjectivity" which phenomenological or ontological analysis shows to be authentically and ideally "human".[40] The subjective possibility of that authentic and ideal form of human existence constitutes itself the presence of God to his people.

All of these ways of viewing the mode of God's presence to the faithful are ways of viewing God pro nobis, and are that which gives a theology its distinctive or characteristic features. Thus, the theologian who views God's presence in the "ideational mode" will see the fundamental theological task to be "the analysis of doctrine or concepts" in order to reform or emphasise certain current forms of language and belief in the church.[41] In the theology that ensues the emphasis will centre on what is to be believed and believing it. From the central concepts of belief will follow other theological topics in some form of logical order of dependence.[42] In the mode of "concrete actuality" the position will centre on an "identity description of the person and work of Jesus Christ", and all other topics will follow from that.[43] And in the mode of "ideal possibility" the emphasis will centre on "an account of what 'authentic existence' is like and how it is possible", and other theological topics will follow on from that.[44]

In all of these modes of viewing the presence of God in the community, the mode of viewing exerts a controlling influence on how a "theological position" is developed. All call for a reform of the church's understanding and language, and (this is the important point for present purposes) all reflect different ways of viewing the authority of scripture for the church's theology. The differences between the positions developed from these different modes of viewing God's presence are necessarily reflected in the order in which the position is developed, but not necessarily (but quite often none-the-less) in what the position states.

In summary, then, the way of construing the mode of God's presence in the community will determine both the way in which a theologian will present and develop his theological "position", and the way in which he will understand the authority of scripture for that theological position. Both of these factors together will determine the kind and nature of the results he will produce. In short, these factors are fundamental to a methodology in theology.

2. In determining the mode of God's presence in the community in Ritschl's theology, it will be necessary to distribute the enquiry over two main areas: one, what is God doing in the community; that is, what are God's intentions, his purpose, in the community? An understanding of this will facilitate, two, a discussion of the means by which God's intentions are carried through in the community.

a. As was noted above (in the section on authority) Ritschl understood the biblical books to be inspired (and so authoritative) in the sense that when they are read unencumbered by any ecclesiastical or dogmatic constraints, the Holy Spirit would effect

in the reader an understanding of them that would be conducive to salvation.[45] Another way of stating that would be to say that part of the authority of the Bible for Ritschl rests in its being a vehicle of salvation. Through the Bible the Holy Spirit "enables the community to appropriate (God's) self-revelation as Father through his son (I Cor. ii.12)."[46] The self-revelation of God through the son "is explained by saying that God manifests himself ... as loving will."[47] This "loving will", is, for Ritschl, a short-hand way of expressing God's intentional, purposive will-to-save, and his will to be in relationship with man. So, God is conceived of as love "through the relation of his will to his son and the community"[48]; or, "God is conceived as loving will, when we regard his will as set upon the forth-bringing of his son and the community of the Kingdom of God."[49] God's self-revelation as "loving will" is that which is witnessed to in the Bible, and through which the Holy Spirit conducts man to salvation. God's will-to-save is present in scripture (in Jesus Christ his self-revelation) for the appropriation of the community through the enabling work of the Holy Spirit. It is important for the present discussion, then, that Ritschl's description of God as "loving will" be made more clear so that God's intentions in the community, as Ritschl saw them, can be fully understood.

"Love" and "Will" (as the self-revelation of God) are, according to Ritschl, integral to one another. Unless "will" is informed by "love" it is merely an "indeterminate will"[50], for "will, like any other force, can be thought as the cause of effects only when acting in a definite direction."[51] Thus God as "loving will" is directed toward his "personal self-end" ("the end which he himself

is"[52]), that is to say, the "forth-bringing of his son and the community of the Kingdom of God."[53] And likewise, unless "love" is directed by "will" it will be purposeless. Thus will must also be informed by love.

Ritschl's most general understanding of love is as "the feeling of worth of an object for the self."[54] But this "feeling" always sets the will in motion, "either to appropriate the loved object or to enrich its existence."[55] Thus, "love, as feeling, fulfills its nature when it excites the will; and love, as will, includes the feeling of the same."[56] So love and will are bound up; love without will is valueless and purposeless, and will without love is at best indiscriminate, and at worst uncaring.

But in preparing the ground for a specifically Christian understanding of God as "loving will", Ritschl makes four special qualifications of his definition. One, that love is a specifically personal conception: "it is necessary that the objects which are loved should be of like nature to the subject which loves."[57] Love for animals or things merely degrades the concept. Two, that love must demonstrate an intention and purpose: "love implies a will which is constant in its aim. If the objects change, we may have fancies, but we cannot love."[58] Three, that love works toward the promotion of the "other's" personal end or ideal:

> Love desires either to promote, to maintain, and through sympathetic interest to enjoy the individuality of character acquired by the other, or to assist him in securing those blessings which are necessary to ensure the attainment of his personal ideal. [59]

And four, if love is to be a consistant posture of the will, and if the appropriation and promotion of the "other's" personal end are to coincide in all respects, "then the will of the lover must take up

the other's personal end and make it part of his own. That is, love continually strives to develop and to appropriate the individual self-end of the other personality, regarding this as a task necessary to the very nature of its own personal end."[60] Thus the will is directed to the closest fellowship with another and to a common end. All of which can be seen, according to Ritschl, in all of the "sub-species" of love, "such as friendship, conjugal affection, paternal affection, and love for one's parents."[61] Love, then, according to Ritschl, is personal, purposive, other-concerned and other-involved.

When these four aspects of love are applied by Ritschl to God, his understanding of God's intentions in the community become clear. Because love is personal, God's loving will is, first of all, directed toward that "multiplicity of persons" who together form the human race.[62] That is, that even though their very multiplicity means that they are not qua multiplicity akin to God[63], they are none-the-less akin to God as members of a race[64] and God's loving will is directed toward them.

> In order to prove its (the race's) kinship with God, it would be necessary to conceive the human race as a unity in spite of its natural multiplicity, a unity which is other than its natural generic unity. The conception we are in search of is given in the idea of the Christian community, which makes the Kingdom of God its task. [65]

Thus the Christian community represents a personal unity akin to the unity of God toward which God can direct his personal love.

Ritschl has also introduced here the purposive element of love. The Christian community, as a unity, is joined together with God in the task of the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God they gain a transcendent unity and a transcendent purpose: "the multitude of spirits who, for all their natural and generic affinity,

may yet, in the practical expression they give to their will, be utterly at variance, attain a supernatural unity through mutual and social action prompted by love; action which is no longer limited by considerations of family, class or nationality -- and this without abrogating the multiplicity given in experience."[66] Thus the Kingdom of God, which partly comprises the self-end of God, becomes the self-end of the community as united in the task of the Kingdom of God, and through which the relation of personal and purposive love is made possible.

The other-centred and other-involved aspects of love, however, are, for Ritschl, tied up with the founder and Lord of the community, Jesus Christ.

> The community, as the object to which God's love extends, cannot even be conceived apart from the presupposition that it is governed continually by its Founder as its Lord, and that its members go through the experience of being transformed into that peculiar character of which their Lord is the original, and which, through him, is communicated to them (II Cor. iii.18; Rom.viii.29). [67]

Thus Christ is the key to the mutuality of love possible between God and his community as they are both engaged in the task of the Kingdom of God.

According to Ritschl's understanding, then, God as "loving will" intends the salvation of man as offered through Christ, and intends for himself and the community the common task of the Kingdom of God. And further, that Jesus Christ is the key to the possibility of their mutual love.

b. For Ritschl, what God is doing in the community is seeking a relationship with man on two fronts: one, in saving him, and, two, in working with him toward their joint goal in the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ, as God's self-revelation, is the key to

both God's will-to-save, and to the Kingdom of God. It is therefore necessary to explore more fully the role that Christ plays in Ritschl's scheme in making possible the relationship between God and man.

Ritschl is very clear about the mediating role that Jesus had to play between God and man, the community. The community is utterly dependent on Christ for its relationship with God, and it is because of Christ's special relationship to God that the community is acceptable to God.

> The community of Christ, therefore, is the correlative of the love of God, only because the love in which God embraces his son and assures to him his unique position, comes through him to act upon those likewise who belong to him as his disciples or his community. [68]

At this point it is worth noting that Christ's special relationship to God is based on the kind and degree of knowledge Christ had of God.

> For since Christ was the first to possess complete and exhaustive knowledge of God, he is therefore also the first who was qualified in the true and final manner to exercise that fellowship with God which was the aim of every religion, and to experience in himself in its fulness the reciprocal and saving influence of God. [69]

Elsewhere Ritschl talks of Christ as being the "personal revelation of the will of God"[70], and as having a "unique consciousness" of his "relation of incomparable fellowship" with God.[71] Christ's unique knowledge of God is the basis for understanding him as the revelation of God.

This is also significant from the standpoint of the community's knowledge of and fellowship with God. For if the community's fellowship with God is wholly dependent on Christ's fellowship with God, so too is its knowledge of God dependent on Christ's knowledge of God. This is yet another way of approaching Ritschl's

general epistemological position.

Because, however, the relationship with God is first of all a spiritual relationship, man's natural position as a sinner before God must find some resolution. And because the "feeling of guilt and separation from God which arises from our own sin and our solidarity with the sin common to all men", man is in need of redemption.[72] According to Ritschl, in Christianity "redemption denotes the forgiveness of sins or pardon through which the guilt of sin which separates man from God is removed".[73] Forgiveness of sin is, for Ritschl, the point at which God and man meet in Jesus Christ. Through sins being forgiven (that is, through justification), "sinners are given by God the right to enter into communion with him."[74] The "validity" of that forgiveness "is linked to the peculiar work of Christ."[75]

So far, it has been seen that Ritschl viewed God's intentions for the community as centering on a two-pronged relationship with man: in salvation, and in the task of the Kingdom of God. In order to secure communion with God, however, and to enable the relationship to take place, the barrier between God and man caused by the guilt and presence of sin had to be removed. Thus Jesus Christ, as the son of God, whose intention is to found the Kingdom of God in God's name, proclaims and secures to man God's pardon or justification. So the intention of God for relationship with man is secured by Jesus' "peculiar work". And to Ritschl, Jesus' "peculiar work" is linked to "the fact of his death".[76]

But not only is the relationship to God made possible through the death of Christ, but through the death of Christ as understood as a priestly sacrifice: "The death of Christ has the

value of the covenant-offering and the universal sin-offering" as understood in terms of the Old Testament sacrifices.[77] For Ritschl the priestly sacrifice of Christ means not only that his obedience unto death is a gift to God, but also that he consecrated himself to God.[78] So that Christ's vocational obedience demonstrated the "special fellowship of reciprocal love between God and himself"[79], which (as noted above) was shown to be extended through Christ to the community. Thus Christ's priestly sacrifice was carried through "necessarily for the purpose of bringing mankind into the same relation toward God which he occupied."[80] The key, according to Ritschl, to mankind's relationship to God lies in Christ's priestly sacrifice:

> Therefore the sacrificial act of Christ's priestly completion of his life-work serves to equip the new community with the divine forgiveness of sins, because as their intentional representative he transforms this separation of man from God into fellowship with him as their Father. [81]

God and man are brought near in the priestly-sacrificial work of Christ: "men are thereby led to God"; God and man meet in the sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, the ground of the bringing near of man to God is the forgiveness of sins through the priestly sacrifice of Christ.[82]

It can be seen, therefore, that for Ritschl God's presence in the community is in his forgiving of their sins through the priestly sacrifice of Christ. To be a Christian (the obverse of God's presence in the community[83]), then, is to be a forgiven (justified and reconciled) member of the community. The on-going nature of God's presence in the community is to be seen in the joint commitment of both God and the community to pursuing the task of the Kingdom of God[84], and in the continued and necessary Lordship of Christ over the community. The Lordship of Christ is also the con-

dition for the community's relationship with God, and also, therefore, its guarantee of God's presence with them.[85]

The mode of God's presence, then, in Ritschl's theology is one wherein God's presence is viewed through the act of the forgiveness of sins as made valid through the prestly sacrifice of Christ, and as carried through in the pursuit of the Kingdom of God. This act and its continuance are made real to the community in the record of the sacrifice of Christ and in its on-going and historical commitment to the task of the Kingdom of God. These two together constitute the presence of God to his people in Ritschl's theology.

3. By thus understanding God's presence in the community in the historical act of the priestly sacrifice of Christ and the community's on-going pursuit of the Kingdom of God, the authority of scripture for Ritschl's theology becomes more clear. In the first instance, scripture is authoritative by virtue of its authentic record of the person, work and, especially, sacrifice of Christ. It was noted above that for Ritschl the New Testament was authoritative because it alone provided the historic (and therefore authentic) record of Christ and his work. Now it can also be seen that this record is of a spiritual as well as historical significance because it proclaims to the community the fact of the forgiveness of sins and of Jesus' initiating work in founding the Kingdom of God. Thus the Bible possesses a spiritual as well as an historical authority.

In the second instance, scripture is authoritative because it presents the authentic record of the experience of the first community of the justifying act of God in Christ, and also

because it records the "programme" for the Kingdom of God and its beginnings. As noted above, Ritschl saw the New Testament as normative precisely for this posture as the authentic record of the experience and self-understanding of the original community. It can now also be seen that this record is of spiritual as well as historical importance because it initiates the pursuit of the Kingdom of God in which the present generation of Christians participate and in which God is still present to his people. God is therefore continually present for Ritschl in both the record of forgiveness and in the present pursuit of the Kingdom.

This implies, further, that God is also present in the future of the community. Ritschl understood God's own self-end -- "which he himself is"[86] -- to be bound up with the transcendent Kingdom of God, the goal which he is, and that toward which the justified community works under the Lordship of Christ. The Kingdom of God -- as the joint pursuit of the community and God -- is "brought forth eternally in God's self-determination"[87], and "was decreed before the foundation of the world"[88], and is the "destiny" of mankind and the world through their "union with the community of their Lord Jesus Christ."[89] Therefore the continued and future presence of God in the community is assured because "amid all the changes of things, which also indicate variation in his working, he himself remains the same and maintains the same purpose and plan by which he creates and directs the world."[90]

In summary, then, the results of this enquiry have shown that for Ritschl God is present to his people in his intention for the community in his will-to-save and their (and God's) destiny in the Kingdom of God. God is therefore present in the

forgiveness of sin wrought by Christ's priestly sacrifice which enabled God to establish a relationship with the community, and which gave the community its task in the Kingdom of God. God is also present to the community in its pursuit with him of the Kingdom. And finally God is present to the community in its final goal of the Kingdom of God, as both the self-end which the community strives for, and the self-end which he himself is.

The enquiry has also shown that because of Ritschl's understanding of the presence of God in the community, the Bible takes on for Ritschl a spiritual as well as the historical authority Ritschl had already ascribed to it. Not only does scripture record the activity of Jesus in his vocation and the founding of the community, but it also demonstrates the fact of God's forgiving presence to the community in Christ's sacrificial death. And not only does the Bible record the experience of the founding of the community and its forgiven status, and the initiating of the task of the Kingdom of God, it also records the on-going presence of God in the continuing and joint pursuit of the Kingdom of God and the community. God is present in history, God is present in the community's present in their task of the Kingdom of God, and God is present in the future of the community as its goal in the Kingdom of God.

II. Principles and Methods of Interpretation and Exegesis (theory).

In order to gain a full understanding of Ritschl's principles and methods of exegesis and interpretation of scripture, it is necessary to break the investigation into two distinct but obviously closely related enquiries: one, exegesis itself (the mechanics, the priorities and the limits of exegetical study), and

two, interpretation (the criteria and approach to the interpretive study of scripture). Together exegesis and interpretation form the overall hermeneutical task for the biblical theologian. In the following pages, Ritschl's exegetical position is examined first, followed by an examination of his interpretive procedures. These are then combined to produce an overall picture of the structure and criteria Ritschl maintains to promote a correct use of the Bible in doing theology.

A. Exegesis

1. As was seen above (in chapter two), Ritschl's view of biblical theology was as an historical discipline which critically and historically reproduces the authentic content of the Bible.[91] As can be clearly seen in Ritschl's manuscript lectures on the New Testament, Biblical theology is historical-critical exegesis (or, Einzelexegese as Ritschl puts it[92]) tempered by a more general understanding on the main themes of the Bible, where each individual element of scripture is understood in its coherence with the whole.

> Die einzelne biblische Satz wird also nur dann gelten können, wenn der allgemein Sinn dies verwandten Begriffs nach biblischer Sprachgebrauch also nach biblischer-theologischer Methode irgendwie fest steht. [93]

Ritschl's stress on the historical in his understanding of biblical theology is carried through into his understanding of the exegetical task. Indeed Ritschl laid down quite strict exegetical guidelines about how his primary source for Christian theology, the New Testament, is to be approached. For Ritschl, this is done under the general rubric that "scripture interprets itself" ("die heilige Schrift sich selbst richtig auslege")[94].

Ritschl's principle that "scripture interprets itself"

carries with it a number of important meanings and implications. As was seen above (chapter two), Ritschl held that a theology that begins without the Old Testament as a chief referrent is wrong from the start and will therefore not adequately represent (i.e. authentically and historically) the Christian religion.[95]

> Die Gedankenbildung Christi und die der Apostel knüpft sich an eine authentische und originale Einsicht in die alttestamentlichen Religion und an die richtige Verständniss aller ihrer Einzelnen Beziehungen. [96]

The Old Testament provided for Ritschl the conceptual background for understanding the main themes of Christ's teaching and the Apostles' understanding and interpretation of them. The high valuation made of the Old Testament by Ritschl is of crucial importance to his programme for the proper exegesis of the New Testament. Indeed, one of the earliest assessments Ritschl made concerning the Old Testament makes his position abundantly clear: "Alle neutestamentlichen Ideen wurzeln im AT."[97]

Ritschl's stress on the Old Testament for a proper understanding of the New Testament reflects, in part, his commitment to the Lutheran exegetical tradition. The principle that "scripture interprets itself" led Ritschl to stress the notion that the Holy Spirit works through scripture to effect in the reader an understanding of it that leads to salvation.[98] Another way of putting that is to say that scripture deals with Christ. Indeed, salvation through Christ (and therefore Christ himself) is the basic assertion of the Bible for Ritschl. Therefore the exegesis of the whole of scripture must proceed on the basis of the centrality of Christ. Christ must be understood in the light of his relationship to and advance over the the religion of the Old Testament as the religious framework within which he worked. But Christ is also necessary to

understand the Old Testament. Ritschl saw in Christ an understanding of the Old Testament religion in its purest and highest form, and saw Christ's preaching and his interpretation of the Old Testament and his ministry as overagainst the understanding of the Old Testament put forward by the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes (that is, the Judaism contemporary to him).[99] Thus Ritschl saw Christ as presenting the authentic understanding of the religion of the Old Testament (the hope) of which he is the true content (the fulfilment)[100], and thereby he demonstrated his continuity with the past actions of God.[101]

The Old Testament, then, is read by Ritschl through only and specifically Christian eyes. To understand Christ and his life and teaching it is necessary to understand properly the religion of the Old Testament (especially that of the Prophets and Psalms[102]); but that understanding of the Old Testament takes as its starting point Jesus' own place in it and his own interpretation of it (though Jesus cannot be taken as being therefore subordinate to it). The place and significance of Jesus in the New Testament demands for Ritschl that the Old Testament (and Jesus' understanding of it) be given a high priority in exegesis as an important part of the principle that scripture interprets itself.

Because Jesus' understanding of the Old Testament represents for Ritschl both the culmination of the Old Testament religion and the superceding of it, he made a further distinction about the kinds of material that may be used in the clarifying of the religion of the Old Testament. While Ritschl was familiar with and made considerable use of the intertestamental literature of Judaism and the historians and philosophers of that age, as well as the

Rabbinic teaching in his biblical work[103], (about which more is said in Chapter Four in a discussion about Weiss and Ritschl), he does so mainly and almost exclusively to contrast their presentation of the messianic expectations with Jesus' and that of the Prophets, or to contrast their understanding Judaism and the significance of Christ, with that of the Old Testament.[104] Accordingly, Ritschl maintained that Jesus set himself against the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees, and recalled to their minds the true religion of God as found in the Prophets, and as, supremely, demonstrated in his person and work.[105] Therefore, since Jesus appealed to and used the language and symbolism of the religion of the Old Testament (as found in the canonical books of the Hebrew Bible) it is a pointless exercise to explain his person or his teaching from any other source.[106] Indeed, Ritschl criticises "gentile" theology in general for thinking that they could do without the "Old Testament key" to Christian theology[107], and for relying too much on extra-biblical sources.

It is also, in part, on this basis that Ritschl criticises "post-New Testament" ecclesiastical theology, and sees in it a clear distinction of quality from the books of the New Testament. Ritschl senses in the writings of post-New Testament Christians a striving after a kind of universal idea of religion and the world that Ritschl sees as being learned from the hellenistic cosmological speculations of Philo, rather than the religion of the Old Testament.[108] Clearly the implication is that if the early church had paid proper attention to the religion of the Old Testament, as learned from Christ and the Apostles, and less to the hellenistic thought of Philo and others of (especially) neo-platonic persuation,

then they would have understood more clearly the message of Jesus, and would have been less likely to wander off into the kind of speculative theology Ritschl so despised.[109] They would also have more properly understood the nature and task of the Kingdom of God, which concept Ritschl develops from Jesus' preaching and its Old Testament antecedents.[110]

The point, then, is that one part of the meaning of Ritschl's general exegetical principle that "scripture interprets itself" is that the main themes of the New Testament -- both the preaching and life of Jesus, and the understanding of that presented in the other New Testament books -- must be viewed from the historical-cultural and conceptual background in the Old Testament. Another part of the meaning of "scripture interprets itself", and a subsidiary through important principle itself, is that the Old Testament must be read in light of the New Testament, and especially in the light of Jesus' understanding of the Old Testament and his peculiar relation to the religion of the Old Testament. This set of principles is especially to be seen in Ritschl's exposition of the doctrines of God, the Kingdom of God and the nature and meaning of the sacrifice of Christ (though this is not to imply that it is limited to these doctrines).[111]

It can be seen, then, that Ritschl saw two distinct but related ways in which the Old Testament is mediated in Christian theology. One, the Old Testament is indispensible and necessary as a conceptual, linguistic and cultural framework within which the preaching and work of Jesus is to be understood. No other conceptual, linguistic or cultural framework is suitable for that task, be it contemporary Palastinian Judaism, hellenistic Judaism, or Rabbinic teaching. While all of these have their importance in re-

constructing the religious milieu of Jesus' day, they do not inform a proper understanding of the Old Testament and Jesus' relation to it.

The second way in which the Old Testament is mediated to Christian theology, is, first of all, through Jesus' own use and understanding of the Old Testament as presented in the record of his teaching and ministry. For Ritschl, Jesus had a dual relationship to the Old Testament. On the one hand he represents the fulfillment of the hope most profoundly expressed in the Prophets. And on the other hand he is viewed (in part because of his place as the fulfillment of that hope) as the supreme interpreter of the Old Testament religion. In this sense, then, the Old Testament is subordinate to the New Testament.

Along with this comes the use and understanding of the Old Testament found in the other writers of the New Testament. Their mediation of the Old Testament to Christian theology is also a complex affair. Not only did they personally participate in the contemporary Jewish culture and religion (expressed most forcefully in Paul), but they also participated in Jesus' understanding of the Old Testament and his own implications for its religion. Thus their own experience of Judaism was tempered and interpreted for them (and, by implication, for Christian theology) through their experience of Jesus.

Therefore that view of the Old Testament which is of use to and necessary for Christian theology (which for Ritschl means any theology after the New Testament) is mediated through the interpretation of Jesus, and in the interpretation of the "Apostles" as tempered by their own experience of Jewish culture and religion and

of Jesus, and without the intrusion, as Ritschl saw it, of later exegetical tradition. Ritschl summed up this aspect of the exegetical task in this way:

> For in part exegesis must view the particular in the light of its relationship to everything which resembles it, in part it has to fill up the chasm between our way of thinking and the Israelites symbolical manner of speech, in part its task is to clear away false ideas forced upon certain biblical symbols by exegetical tradition. [112]

2. In the first part of the last quotation, Ritschl enunciates an exegetical principle which is particularly important to the exegesis of the New Testament: the particular must be viewed in term of the whole. This is not only an exegetical principle, but also one that governs the analytic and synthetic activity described in chapter two as the theologia positiva. "Each definition (rendered useful by exegesis) can only be made complete as it receives its place in a system of theology, for the truth of the particular can be understood only through its connection with the whole."[113] Part of Ritschl's reason for stressing this point of principle is to prevent theological propositions which are mutually contradictory from being stated in what should be a unified and logical system.[114] But as far as exegesis is concerned, there is another and more important reason for Ritschl's stress. This is Ritschl's desire to see in scripture as a whole, and in the New Testament in particular, a unified voice about the action of God in Jesus Christ.

Analogous to the way in which Ritschl saw a gradation of authority between the Old and New Testaments, with the Old being subordinate to the New, Ritschl also saw gradations of authority in the New Testament. But however many gradations Ritschl may have seen in the New Testament, even in the whole Bible, salvation through Christ remained as the central clarifying and unifying principle.

Indeed Ritschl quotes Schleiermacher in making the point: "everything is referred to the redemption wrought by Jesus."[115] The Old Testament expresses the hope of the covenant people for the one who will come to deliver them from bondage and sin and exercise real Lordship over God's people[116]; the Gospels tell the story of the long awaited Messiah, the salvation he offers and the Lordship he shows to mankind; and the "Apostles" relate their experience of the salvation and Lordship of Christ and begin the task of the Kingdom of God under the Lordship of Christ.[117]

In thinking however of the various books of the New Testament as if speaking with a unified voice centred on the "redemption wrought by Jesus", Ritschl does not mean to imply that there are neither differences among the various writers as to the style of approach and/or the content of their picture of the Christian life and experience, nor differences between the points of view from which the various writers come. Rather than that, Ritschl saw, in the broad distinction he made between the "Gospels" and the "Apostles", the contents of the New Testament standing togther in "an antithesis."

> Als Quellen für die christliche Religion nehmen also die Evangelien und die Briefe des Neuen Testament das Verhältniss der Abstufung so ein, dass sie zugleich in einem Gegensatz stehen.[118]

For Ritschl the identifying characteristic of the Gospels is Christ as the founder of the community, while for the Apostles it is as spokesmen for the first historical community.[119] Therefore one does not look for either a unity of the presentations in the Gospels and the Apostles, nor necessarily a unity of content, even when talking about Jesus: the purposes and perspectives of the Gospels and Apostles are different, and this is reflected in both the form and the

content of their approach. Ritschl stresses that the "views" of Jesus "stand in unison" with the formally opposite thought-forms of the Apostles.[120] Everything in them, therefore, which is found to conform to the general content of the New Testament is to be authoritative for theology. And no matter the variations of the Old Testament support, nor the distinct views of the individual New Testament authors, they are not opponents, they represent an incomplete though unified picture.[121] Thus, the Gospels and Apostles are used antithetically to produce a general and more complete picture of the content of the New Testament which centres on the redemption wrought by Christ, and into which the peculiarities of the individual authors may be fitted or discarded.

3. The reasons behind Ritschl's stress on the identifying characteristics of the Gospels and Apostles centre on his continued and underlying stress on the historical approach to biblical theology. The Gospels record the persons and events surrounding the founding of the community: the Apostles record the persons, events and experiences surrounding the community and its life and task, and act as its spokesmen. This approach to and understanding of this set of antithetical relationships in the New Testament keeps, according to Ritschl, the exegetical study of the New Testament from the ever-present "creeping error" of viewing the statements of Christ and the Apostles as if they were theological.

> Erst diese Beobachtung sichert auch die biblische Theologie vor dem immer noch fortschleichenden Irrthum, als sei die Lehre Christi und der Apostel, die man rein historisch ermitteln will, mehr oder weniger gleichartig der theologischen Lehre. [122]

The "error" of viewing biblical statements as theological doctrine prevents, in Ritschl's view, a properly historical understanding of the text from being gained.

This "creeping error" will be prevented, states Ritschl, according to the degree to which one perceives the differing perspectives from which Christ and the Apostles "speak". For Christ, that perspective means his specific calling and his relationship with God: and for the Apostles (in particular Paul) the consciousness of the religious community.

> Dieser Verwechselung ist man in dem Masse weniger ausgestzt, als man erkennt, dass Christus alles, wovon er redet, in die Wechselbeziehung zwischen seinem Lebensberuf und seiner eigenthümlichen Stellung zu Gott einschliesst, und dass die Briefe, namentlich die des Paulus, nicht blos um des Zierrathes willen mit Danksagen und Fürbitte beginnen, sondern dass sie dadurch als religiöse Rede aus dem Bewustsein der religiösen Gemeinschaft heraus bezeichnet sind. 123

Thus, when viewed according to their proper form and content --- that is, as fundamentally works of a religious rather than theological or "scientific" nature --- they can undergo a legitimate exegesis.

Ritschl singles out Paul for special treatment in demonstrating this particular exegetical principle. Because of the fact that even in Paul's "didactical" moments he only uses "argumentation" in an irregular way, and, more to the point, because he begins with prayer and ends with admonitions, the religious character of his work is demonstrated. That does not mean that Paul does not at times show the capacity for or evidence of a properly theological (that is, scientific) method in his letters. But these theological "moments" in his work are only present when he is trying to refute ideas that veer away from the true nature of Christian life and experience. Ritschl sees Paul's basic emphasis as practical.

> Die religiöse Rede also ist die Grundform der Gedankenbildung in den Briefen des Neuen Testament, weil dieselben regelmässig mit Danksagen und Fürbitte beginnen und mit Ermahnungen schliessen; hingegen bildet nicht eine Theologie d.h. wissenschaftliche Absicht die Grundform der apostolischen Gedankenreihen,

> wenn auch in der Argumentation zur Widerlegung abweichender Meinungen ein Element wissenschaftlicher Art sich herbeifindet. [124]

Ritschl then takes his case a step further with reference to the way in which the Apostles present Christ in their writings. First Ritschl makes the polemical point that one would assume that if the Apostles were really presenting theology, then the letters of the New Testament would bear the marks of a dogmatics. According to the criteria that Ritschl has set up for judging what is scientific theology, they obviously do not bear those marks (see above, chapter two), and are, therefore, not theological. Second, Ritschl states that if one proceeds on the (often "mistaken"[125]) assumption that the predominating presentation of Christ in the Epistles is of his present situation (i.e., exhalted to the right hand of God), then one would expect that Christ's earthly life would be treated from that same point of view.[126] Despite what Ritschl sees as the fact that no such uniform treatment of Christ, or uniform point of view exists in the New Testament, he complains that some theologians have proceeded ("from the certainty of faith"[127]) to treat the earthly life and present Lordship of Christ as if it all stemmed from a doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ. However, since the Apostles do not, according to Ritschl, proceed in a systematic fashion in dealing with the life of Christ from his pre-existence to his post-existence in their christology (sic!)[128], these theologians are wrong to treat the New Testament as theological literature. In treating the New Testament as theological rather than "religious discourse", these theologians undermine the power of their theology, and "spoil" their biblical theology by imposing a structure on it that does not exist in the texts.[129]

This point is also seen by Ritschl in the lack of definitions in the New Testament of almost all important subjects. Even where there is a step taken toward definition, it often proves less than satisfactory. "The writers of the New Testament are not in the least guided by the wish to define their ideas; and when, as in Heb.xi.1. we have for once a tendency to definition, yet the definition is not complete".[130] The sheer lack of precision and clarity -- precision and clarity, that is, as is necessary for the systematic, scientific theologian -- of the New Testament writers, demonstrates for Ritschl the non-theological nature of their work. Thus exegesis has an extremely important part to play in making "the ideas of Christianity" useful for theology.

> The ideas of Christ and the Apostles, which we regard offhand as substantially in agreement, often enough employ divergent means of expression, or link themselves to different Old Testament symbols. Now exegesis itself, certainly, deals with many particular passages in such a way as to reduce the cognate symbolical expressions they contain to one conception of the greatest possible clearness. [131]

This links up with the exegetical principle made earlier in this chapter that the particular in scripture must be viewed in terms of the whole. According to Ritschl, each and every definition reached in clarifying the ideas presented in the Bible must be linked to a proper system of theology before it is complete. "Each definition can only be made complete as it receives its place in a system of theology, for the truth of the particular can be understood only through its connection with the whole."[132] This will provide the system with a safeguard against mutually contradictory theological propositions.[133]

Ritschl, then, proposed for the purposes of exegesis that the New Testament should be read as religious and not theological

literature on three grounds: one, the works begin with prayers and end with admonitions, and argumentation is rarely used (eg., Paul's Epistle to the Romans); two, the form of the presentation is not systematic (eg., the Apostles' presentation of Christ); and three the lack of definition on the part of the writers of the New Testament.

Leaving aside the three grounds mentioned above, it is important to know why Ritschl insisted, as an exegetical principle, that the New Testament, and even the Pauline material, should be read as religious rather than theological material. That there has been some debate as to the theological nature of the New Testament material, and is not just a position Ritschl assumed for his own purpose, is amply demonstrated by even a cursory glance at the commentaries on, for example, Romans.[134] They cover the range from viewing Romans as almost wholly theological, to viewing it as almost wholly non-theological, though the majority seem to see in Paul's multiplicity of aims sufficient reason to view part of it, at least, as theological, and part as ethical, or personal, or admonitory. It ought to be stated, however, that during the period of the so-called Liberal Theology it was supposed "that no consistant theological thinking was present in Paul; that his religious ideas at any rate do not receive adequate expression in his theology."[135] Whether Ritschl in holding his position was merely participating in a general feeling amongst New Testament scholars that this was the case, or whether he contributed by his position to generating that widespread feeling is difficult to determine. Certainly part of the impetus in forming this position seems to lie in his celebrated break with F.C.Baur in the 1850's. Baur stressed

very much the theological nature of Paul's thought and sought to interpret it along Hegelian lines.[136] No doubt Ritschl's general reaction against Baur and his Hegelian view of interpretation included in it a reaction against reading Paul in this strictly theological way. Ritschl's son and biographer, Otto Ritschl, indicates that at the time of his break with Baur, Ritschl had begun to lecture on Romans at Bonn, and was thinking about the problem of how to interpret Paul's thought.[137] In any case, Ritschl came to assume the position outlined above, and made it an important principle of his exegesis.

It may be, however, that there are other reasons for Ritschl's position which are partly historical amd partly theological. Historically, Ritschl, as has been noted above, saw a distinction of quality between the books of the New Testament and post-New Testament writings. This distinction was important because it partly defined the canon of the New Testament, and hence partly defined its authority, and partly because Ritschl saw in the post-New Testament Christian writings the stamp of ecclesiastically determined interpretation of the New Testament books. Therefore, theologically, because it was important that all theology should be based on the New Testament, and because Ritschl disputed the idea of drawing theology fully-developed, as it were, out of the Bible without subjecting it to some logical and systematic scrutiny, the writings of the New Testament must be religious rather than theological. The New Testament must be the record (the "memory" of the first community[138]) of the deeds, events, experiences and personalities and ideas that comprise the raw material from which theology can develop. From the synthetic and analytic procedures

of the theologia positiva alone can theology possibly be made from the biblical material.

There is, of course, some irony in Ritschl's position. Ritschl clearly states that the New Testament is the product and property of the church, and that it contains her record of her Lord and her experience of her Lord. One could say that for Ritschl the New Testament is the conscious ordering and recording by the community of the events surrounding their Lord and their experience of Him, and is therefore the community's self-conscious reflection on those events and experiences, and is, even if crudely, theological. Even if that theology is neither systematic nor scientific, it is hard to see no theology at all in the New Testament, even on Ritschl's terms.

But Ritschl's distinction between religious and theological really turns on the precise definition of the terms religious and theological. The religious has to do with the personal involvement of the individual (or the community) with God through Christ.[139] It is the experience of forgiveness, the events of the life of faith. The theological, on the other hand, has to do with the systematic ordering of the religious from a single point of view, in a complete and rounded exposition.[140] In effect, for Ritschl, the religious concerns statements of faith, (the immediate) while the theological concerns statements about faith (the reflective). "The immediate object of theological cognition is the community's faith that it stands to God in a relation essentially conditioned by the forgiveness of sins."[141] While even on this basis it is still difficult not to view parts at least of the New Testament as approaching the theological, it is yet even harder to view the New Testament as

a complete and rounded exposition of the Christian faith.

4. It must be stated as a final point in relating Ritschl's principles of exegesis, that prior to all of the others stands the absolute necessity that the exegete be a member of the Christian community. Only so can the theologian properly and personally understand the significance of Jesus and "discover the full compass of his historical actuality".[142]

> We are able to know and understand God, sin, conversion, eternal life, in the Christian sense, only so far as we consciously and intentionally reckon ourselves members of the community which Christ has founded. [143]

This principle of involvement secures its place for Ritschl not so much because it promotes an essentially Christian theology, but even more so because it supplies the theologian and exegete with a single point of view from which exegesis, interpretation and theology can proceed in harmony. "In order to comprehend the content of Christianity, as a totality composed of rightly ordered particular data, we must occupy one and the same standpoint throughout."[144] That standpoint is the "community of believers", "since only so can the worth of Christ as redeemer be employed throughout as the basis of knowledge in solving all of the problems of the theology."[145]

B. Interpretation

1. The final exegetical principle enunciated above, that Ritschl saw it as necessary that one reckons oneself a member of the Christian community, forms a natural link between the principles of exegesis and the principles of interpretation, for it equally applies to both. For Ritschl, there can be no "disinterested" knowledge of God (or Christ or sin or eternal life, etc.), no "neutral idea" of God that does not result "solely in contempt or hatred of him."[146]

The theologian has, indeed ought to have, an "interest" to declare when doing his theology. "Reference here is made to the fact that Luther admits no 'disinterested' knowledge of God, but recognises as a religious datum only such knowledge of Him as takes the form of unconditional trust. This knowledge, however, is ... exclusively bound up with Christ."[147] Thus, for Ritschl the central clarifying and unifying principle of the interpretive task, is the same as that of the exegetical task; that is, the redemption wrought in Christ. David Lotz aptly summarises this position:

> Access to the revelatory soteriological significance of Jesus Christ, and so to the Jesus of history, comes only through conscious personal inclusion in the believing community, and that, in turn, means solely through the medium of the apostolic writers. The New Testament writings are the product of communal faith, providing the original and normative link to the revelatory-salvatory event of Jesus Christ ... only that individual who self-consciously stands within the believing community can rightly interpret the scriptural testimony and thus rightly comprehend the historical Jesus. [148]

For Ritschl, this self-conscious inclusion of the interpreter of the Bible in the community secured a homogeneity of viewpoint which in turn secured a rounded and complete picture of the content of Christianity, free from the contradiction and fragmentation which results from having multiple viewpoints in writing theology.[149]

It must not be assumed from this, however, that Ritschl is elevating the personal experience of the individual theologian to the level of a formal criterion for exegesis or interpretation. This is very far indeed from the case with Ritschl, and while this point is discussed in some detail below, brief mention is called for here. The personal experience of the theologian is not, by its very nature, "scientific" (in the sense of fully comprehending the fullness of Christian life and understanding), and his own experience must be viewed as part of a larger and more general exper-

ience of the community at large. Therefore, for Ritschl, the most comprehensive and general and authoritative expression of the community's experience is the apostolic record contained in the New Testament.[150] Thus, while the theologian must be a part of the community in order properly to understand the matter of Christianity, it is not his personal experience that regulates his thought, but that of the community as expressed in the community's own books the New Testament.

2. Ritschl's stress on the necessity that the interpreter of scripture be a member of the believing, forgiven community, and that the personal experience of the interpreter must be regulated by the normative Christian experience as set out in the documents of the New Testament, did not, for him, mean either that the church, in the form of a tradition of ecclesiastical doctrine, should provide the criteria for interpretation, or that, there can be any infallible criteria by which the Bible can be interpreted. It was noted above that rather than viewing the interpretation of scripture from the position of an ecclesiastical tradition, Ritschl would submit ecclesiastical tradition to the bar of a properly interpreted scripture.[151] And as for an infallible criterion for either exegesis or interpretation, or decisions about doctrine, this is the desire of "weak minds" or those who aren't intelligent enough for scientific study.[152] To search for a "mistake-free understanding" of scripture is, according to Ritschl, to search for an "illusion".[153] Even in the Roman Catholic church Ritschl sees no uniform tradition of interpretation, while in the Lutheran and Reformed churches, the interpretative edifice has its cracks: important points of doctrine are as much in dispute as they are assured positions based on scripture.

> Denn wie es in der katholischen Kirche keine einhellige Überlieferung giebt, so ist auch der symbolische Lehrbegriff in der lutherischen und in der reformierten Kirche nicht ohne Brüche, und wichtige Punkte desselben sind von ebenso streitiger Auslegung, wie gewisse Stellen der heiligen Schrift. 154

Ritschl's point in stating this seems not so much to be that there are open questions in any system of doctrine or interpretation, or that all systems of doctrine must be continually reassessed in the light of the continuing hermeneutical task (though he certainly does mean these). The real point seems to concern how exegesis and interpretation are done, and is therefore really a question of method.

As was noted above, Ritschl insisted that theology be free from any restraints (whether dogmatic or ecclesiastical) in its pursuit of its results. For Ritschl, this freedom was demanded by the scientific method where the "scientist" experiments with the data, and the results, as it were, produce themselves. Thus in theology, the particular data of the New Testament were viewed against their Old Testament background, compared to the greater whole of Christian ideas, and brought together into a logical and coherent system. Concerning the criteria of exegesis and interpretation, Ritschl calls this method the "aesthetic application" (die ästhetische Application [155]). The aesthetic application, as method, is to reproduce the content of the biblical material by gaining a proper understanding of the Old Testament background, in order to establish a conceptual circumference, sifting and relating the various strands to conceive a whole, and placing the body of the New Testament material within that circumference and those relations so that a coherent and creative picture of Christianity is produced. To this "art" must be added the mandatory tools of critical scholarship, "grammatical skill"

and "logical dexterity".[156] For Ritschl this provides much of the method behind the principle that scripture interprets itself.

> Hiebei kommt es nun nicht blos auf die grammatische Kenntniss und die logische Fertigkeit, das Einzelne im Zusammenhange des Ganzen zu verstehen, sondern insbesondere auf die ästhetische Application, nämlich die Kunst an, den Umfang, die Beziehungen, die Höhenlage der Religion des A.T. in richtiger Anschauung zu reproduccieren, um demgemäss auch die Urkunden des Christenthums in ihrem ursprünglichen und geschichtlichen Sinne zu verstehen. [157]

And like the experimental nature of the scientific method, the results of the aesthetic application cannot be demonstrated in advance, only in the product.

> Die einzelnen Bedingungen dieses Verfahrens lassen sich im Voraus nicht demonstrieren, sondern nur an dem Product, nämlich der biblischen Theologie zur Erfahrung bringen. [158]

Thus only "weak minds", whose main interest is in demonstrating from scripture their particular doctrinal or ecclesiastical positions (rather than producing those positions from scripture), seek assured criteria for exegesis and interpretation -- they are not capable of the rigours of the scientific method, or of the art of the aesthetic application.

3. Having once established that the application of the scientific method in theology requires that there be no dogmatic or ecclesiastical restraints placed in the way of the pursuit of its results, and that the method of the aesthetic application requires the freedom to create new understandings of Christianity based on the unhindered study of the texts of the New Testament, Ritschl proceeds to outline his objections to three kinds of external determinative criteria active in his day.[159] The Catholic church is discussed as holding tradition as a co-equal arbiter of interpretation with scripture (a category within which Ritschl also places the Lutheran orthodoxy of the 17th and 18th centuries); The Ana-

baptists for stressing the experience and inspiration of the individual; and the Socinians as representing the rationalist alternative.

The general point that Ritschl has made in discussing the scientific method and the aesthetic application, that the interpretative study of scripture must be free from the constraints of ecclesiastical tradition, is made as a specific complaint against the Roman Catholic church. Ritschl saw the Catholic church asserting a tradition of the apostles that stood as an equal to the Word of God, and that that tradition was handed down through the clergy as teachers representing Christ to the church.

> In dieser Rücksicht macht der Katholizismus die in der Kirche sich fortsetzende, dem Worte Gottes gleichartige Ueberlieferung der Apostel geltend ... Bekanntlich stellt die Katholische Ansicht die Apostel ebenso unbedingt über die Gemeinde, wie den Stifter derselben, und deshalb auch die Nachfolger der Apostel, die Bischöfe und die Priester. [160]

Ritschl states that the criterion of tradition (like the other external criteria) is "incongruent to the Word of God", and circumvents a proper historical exegesis and interpretation of scripture.[161]

Likewise with the Anabaptists (and others, like the Benglian school, who assert a pneumatische Exegese[162]), Ritschl rejects their stress on the inspiration of the individual interpreter as a real criterion for interpretation. This too Ritschl found to be incongruent to the Bible and the historical method. Ritschl saw it as nothing more than adding to the technical tools of exegesis and interpretation the unquantifiable claims of personal inspiration.

> Nämlich in der Orthodoxie legte man die Schrift nach der kirchlichen Ueberlieferung (aus) ... und der Anspruch auf pneumatische Exegese, welcher in der Bengel'schen Schule umgeht, bezieht sich doch auf nichts anderes, als dass die technischen Mittel der Auslegung durch eine unmessbare individuelle Inspiration gekrönt werden sollen. [163]

This individual inspiration, like a stress on personal experience (as discussed below), is only, for Ritschl, the substitution of a personal preference or prejudice for that of an ecclesiastical tradition, and is therefore as unsatisfactory as the latter. (Perhaps more unsatisfactory: at least Ritschl found the "formal freedom" of following a law of tradition more acceptable than the unpredictable and erratic nature of following personal whim).

The Socinians, who here represent all purely rationalist approaches to theology, are condemned for treating everything solely from the criterion of human reason. Indeed, it is worth noting the dissatisfaction Ritschl shows generally with those who treat theology according to general rationalist principles. This dissatisfaction is seen in his doctrine of God, where Ritschl rejects all attempts to "prove" the existence of God, and in his general understanding of Christianity wherein everything stems from a knowledge of Christ's person and work. Only from that standpoint can theology develop in a properly positive way: any other method, "predominantly inspired by purely rational ideas of God and sin and redemption is not the positive theology which we need, and (cannot) be defended against the objections of general rationalism."[164] The rationalist approach to interpretation, too, limits the scope of exegetical and interpretive study by ignoring the religious elements in favour of the merely moral or intellectual, and therefore imposes a set of criteria on the hermeneutical task which Ritschl finds unacceptable.[165]

4. By far, however, the greatest objections Ritschl had to external criteria for interpretation and exegesis are saved for those concerning the personal experience of the theologian. Ritschl saw experience as a "movement" whose subject was the human ego (<u>das</u>

Ich), where the ego and its experience of salvation and its conviction of the truth are the central points.[166] As a formal principle of religious and theological understanding Ritschl found it useless; while for scientific theological knowledge he found it unbearable.[167] Indeed, Ritschl saw it as primarily a "mystical" principle wholly unsuitable for properly scientific and historical exegesis and interpretation.[168] And when this "mystical postulate" (geheimnissvolles Postulat) is made a practical working principle of interpretation, the truths understood by faith (that is, as understood by epistemological value-judgements) become "facts", and this, in turn, leads to a materialistic epistemology that stands in opposition to Christian theology.

> Soll aber in den Zeugniss des heiligen Geistes nicht blos ein geheimnissvolles Postulat, sondern ein praktische Prinzip bezeichnet sein, so verkehrt es sich in eine durchaus materialistische Erkenntnisstheorie, wovon man sich in der berüchtigten, 'Theologie der Thatsachen' überzeugen kann. [169]

And because of this materialistic epistemology, where statements of faith are viewed as statements of fact, a general confusion develops, according to Ritschl, between a general religious knowledge of salvation and theological science: for at the stage represented by this experiential focus, one, according to Ritschl, is hardly able to distinguish between religion and theology.[170]

Ritschl also discussed several examples of theologians who used experience as a criteria for exegesis and interpretation. Thomasius is criticised for "producing" every doctrine out of experience, and for asserting the truth of doctrine based on its coherence with the subjective life of faith.[171] Hofmann is criticised for saying that as a theologian he is the most proper subject matter of his theological science.[172] And Lipsius is criticised for

holding that theological science has to do with "internal spiritual experience" which proceeds from the "internal data" of the life of faith.[173] In all of these cases, Ritschl claims, the experience of the theologian as such would, before it became useable, have to be tested for its agreement with scripture and the general principles of the knowledge of God, etc., [174] But Ritschl's main objection to the criterion of personal experience in exegesis and interpretation is that it removes theology from the sphere of the historical and objective, and into the subjective.

> Der Stoff der systematischen Theologie wird also nicht aus der geschichtlichen Quelle und in objectiver Gestalt nachgewiesen, sondern in der Gestalt des subjectiven religiösen Bewusstseins des einzelnen Theologen. 175

And as a personal and subjective form of theology it fails to meet another of Ritschl's requirements, namely, that theology must attempt to portray Christianity in general and universal terms.[176] In the end, Ritschl saw that experience as a theological criterion led to a false standard being set up.

> Ich fürchte dass ein Theolog, der diesen Weg einschlägt, eben seine Persönlichkeit als den Masstab wird vordrängen müssen, wonach er die gesunden religiösen Erfahrung als solche feststellt, ohne dass er dafür Gewähr leisten kann, dass er alle richtigen religiösen Erfahrungen vollständig und in geordneten Zusammenhange gegenwärtig hat. 177

And insofar as to any single theologian this is impossible, and because that experience would in any case still have to pass the bar of scripture, Ritschl found no point in proceeding along experiential lines at all.

> Aber, wie gesagt, freie Wissenschaft kann auf dem Wege nicht zu stande kommen, welche vor allem Uebrigen aus der Absicht auf Vollständigkeit und Deutlichkeit und auf Richtigkeit der gemeinsamen Anschauung der Gegenstandes hervorgehen muss. 178

Ritschl's positive approach to interpretation, then, is one based on an historical approach. Not through a philosophy of

history (and especially not the Hegelian philosophy of history), which would subordinate the object of historical enquiry to other, external criteria[179], but through a "positivism" of history where the whole idiom and way of thinking of the period in question is considered in interpretation.[180] This is the approach to biblical theology as outlined in chapter two, and the approach to exegesis and interpretation outlined above in this chapter.

III SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

A. The purpose of this chapter has been to detail the principles and methods that Ritschl employed in his exegesis and interpretation of Scripture. In pursuing this line of enquiry several related concerns have been examined which together provide a more complete understanding of Ritschl as a biblical theologian, and which also furnish a clearer insight into the hermeneutical and theological task as Ritschl understood it. The discussion of principles and methods of exegesis and interpretation was also undertaken as a preliminary study to the detailed examination of Ritschl's actual exegetical practice.

The question of history loomed large in the results of the enquiry into Ritschl's understanding of the way scripture is the authority for theology: a question to which more space and discussion is devoted in later chapters. But in discussing the question of authority, it emerged from the study that the Canon is authority for Ritschl precisely because the New Testament is the record of the founding of the Christian community (and its self-understanding as a founded community) and the record of the person and work of Christ, its founder. Scripture, according to Ritschl's understanding, contains the normative record and the experience of the community of

its founding and all subsequent Christian documents are viewed as derivitive from scripture and therefore lesser authorities.

But along with this, it was seen as necessary to establish how Ritschl understood God to be present to the community (the "mode of God's presence") because, it was argued, following Kelsey, the judgement about the mode of God's presence is also a judgement about how the authority of scripture is to be construed, and therefore what kind of normative function scripture exercises over theology. In order to carry out this enquiry fully, it was extended over two related areas: one, what are God's intentions in the community for Ritschl?; and, two, how, for Ritschl, are God's intentions carried out in the community?

For Ritschl, God's intentions for man are summed up by describing God as "Loving Will".[181] "Loving Will" is for Ritschl a shorthand way of describing God's will-to-save and therefore to be in relationship to man, and God's embarking with man in their joint task of the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom being God's self-end ("which He himself is")[182] and the goal toward which man strives. It emerged from this that the key to both God's will-to-save and his desire to be in relationship with man, as well as their joint task of the Kingdom of God, is found in the person and work of Christ. Because of the priestly-sacrificial work of Christ, God and man are brought near in the act of forgiveness. It is also Christ who founds the community and commissioned it. Christ is the continuing Lord of the community, and who, as its condition for its relationship to God, is also the guarantee of God's continuing presence. As the goal of the community in its pursuit of the Kingdom, God is also present in the community's future.

The result of this enquiry is that the authority of scripture, for Ritschl, rests in part on its being the authoritative and authentic record (both historical and spiritual) of the priestly-sacrificial work of Christ in which God and man are brought near in the forgiveness of sins. Scripture is also the authentic record of the experience of the first community of the justifying act of God in Christ, and its commissioning to the task of the Kingdom of God. The spiritual authority of scripture, further, rests, for Ritschl, on its demonstration of the fact of God's forgiving presence to the community in Christ's sacrificial death, and of the continuing presence of God in the joint task of the Kingdom. God is also present in the future of the community as the goal of the Kingdom.

B. Following this enquiry into how scripture is the authority for theology and its related concerns, Ritschl's principles and methods of exegesis were examined under the two related headings of exegesis and interpretation, which together form the hermeneutical task. Briefly, the chief results of the enquiry show Ritschl's real and significant commitment to the Lutheran exegetical tradition (lending further support to the thesis of Lotz as seen in Chapter I) especially with regard to the centrality of Christ as an exegetical and interpretive principle. Subsidiary to that is the graduated authority within scripture and the place of the extra-canonical writings. The New Testament, for Ritschl, is decisive for interpreting the Old Testament (because of Christ), and the Old Testament is decisive for understanding and clarifying the teaching of Jesus and the main themes of the New Testament.

It also emerged that for Ritschl the particular in

scripture must be understood in relation to the whole[183]. Beyond its obvious import for exegesis and interpretation, for Ritschl this also meant, significantly, that the findings of exegesis and interpretation are complete only when they take their place in a properly ordered system of theology, This intimate relation between biblical theology and dogmatic theology, as a hermeneutical principle, reemphasises what was seen in Chapter Two of Ritschl's understanding of the theologia positiva. Along with this, Ritschl stressed the necessity for the hermeneutical task to be done unhindered by any dogmatic or ecclesiastical restraints and with the tools of the historical-critical method (this is the subject of further consideration and discussion in Chapter Five with regard to the adequacy and integrity of Ritschl's application of the historical-critical method).

C. These, and other points raised from this enquiry into Ritschl's principles and methods of exegesis, serve to broaden the understanding gained in Chapter Two of Ritschl's commitment to biblical theology and clarify his position on the hermeneutical task. They also serve as a prolegomenon to the detailed study of Ritschl's hermeneutical practice in Chapter Four, where his actual exegetical performance is examined for its place in the formulation of his theological positions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. These questions, and much of the immediately following discussion (as well as in chapter four) stem from the critical examination of the use of the Bible in theology by David Kelsey (The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology. London:SCM,1975). Kelsey's study provides among the most sophisticated tools available for assessing the place of the Bible in theological argument, and for making more precise statements about concepts such as "authority", what it means to "prove" a doctrine from Scripture, and indeed, even what Scripture is.

2. Kelsey, op. cit., p.96.

3. ibid., pp. 159 ff.

4. See, e.g., D.E.Nineham, "Wherein lies the authority of the Bible", in On the Authority of the Bible (London: SPCK, 1960), pp.81 ff; C.H.Dodd, The Authority of the Bible (London: Fontana, 1956); R.C.Johnson, Authority in Protestant Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959).

5. Kelsey, p.122.

6. ibid., p.123.

7. ibid..

8. ibid., p.125.

9. RuV II, p.20; "Biblische Theologie", p.18; above, p.54f.; cf. also Leben II, p.170.

10. RuV II, p.12; "Biblische Theologie", pp.234-6.

11. RuV II, p.12; cf. Leben II, p.169.

12. RuV II, p.13.

13. RuV II, p.8; "Biblische Theologie", pp. 9, 15.

14. See RuV II, pp. 5 ff.

15. RuV II, pp. 10-18; "Biblische Theologie", pp. 9-10, 17.

16. RuV II, p.11.

17. ibid..

18. ibid..

19. ibid..

20. RuV II, p.5.

21. ibid., p.6.

22. RuV II, p.6.

23. ibid..

24. By this Ritschl does not naively assume that there is any such thing as a "presuppositionless" reading or interpreting of the text (cf.J&R III, pp. 2-3). Indeed, Ritschl demands certain presuppositions (eg., being a member of the community, having the proper personal understanding of the person of Christ (faith)) in order to pursue a valid theology. Ritschl declares, "We can discover the full compass of His historical activity solely from the faith of the christian community" (J&R III, p.3). See also R.Bultmann, "Is a presuppositionless exegesis possible" in Faith and Understanding (London: SPCK, 1966).

25. RuV II,p.6.

26. ibid..

27. ibid., p.10.

28. ibid..

29. Schäfer, Bibelauslegung, p.140.

30. ibid., p.141

31. Kelsey, Scripture, pp. 158-160.

32. ibid., p.162.

33. ibid., p.163.

34. ibid., p.161.

35. ibid..

36. ibid..

37. ibid..

38. ibid..

39. ibid..

40. ibid..

41. ibid., p.162.

42. Kelsey, Scripture, p.162.

43. ibid..

44. ibid..

45. RuV II, p.6.

46. J&R III, p.273.

47. ibid. (Ritschl's emphasis); cf. also RuV II, p.97.

48. J&R III, p.282.

49. ibid., p.283.

50. ibid., p.276.

51. ibid., p.275.

52. ibid..

53. ibid., p.283.

54. ibid., p.276

55. ibid., pp.276-7.

56. ibid., p.277.

57. ibid..

58. ibid..

59. ibid..

60. ibid., pp.277-8.

61. ibid., p.278.

62. ibid., p.279.

63. ibid., p.278.

64. ibid., pp. 278-9.

65. ibid., p.280.

66. ibid., pp. 280-1.

67. ibid., p.281.

68. ibid., p.281; cf. also Inst. para.3,13,14 (Hefner).

69. J&R III, p.475.

70. ibid., p.466.

71. ibid., p.476.

72. Inst. para. 34 (Hefner).

73. ibid., para. 35 (note: not feeling of guilt, but guilt itself).

74. ibid., para. 36.

75. ibid., para. 39.

76. ibid., para. 40.

77. ibid., para. 40-1.

78. ibid., para. 42.

79. ibid..

80. ibid., para. 42; cf. also para. 43, n.115.

81. ibid., para. 43.

82. ibid., para. 43,n.115. See also G.W.McCulloh "Christ's Person and Work in The Theology of A. Ritschl: with special attention to the munus triplex " (Univ. of Chicago: Unpublished PhD Dissertation, March 1973) for a full discussion of Ritschl's understanding of Christ's priestly office.

83. Kelsey, Scripture, p.166

84. J&R III, p.280.

85. ibid., p.281.

86. ibid., p.275.

87. ibid., p.284.

88. Inst., para. 14. (Hefner)

89. ibid., para. 13.

90. ibid., para. 14; This "now" and "also then" understanding of the Kingdom of God bears a striking resemblance to the kind of proleptic understanding of the Kingdom in the preaching of Jesus found in Jeremias' New Testatement Theology (vol.1, pp. 96-108). Jeremias writes that "the basileia is always and everywhere understood in eschatological terms; it denotes the time of salvation, the consumation of the world, the restoration of the disrupted communion between God and man ... When Jesus announces ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ , his meaning is virtually 'God is near' ... 'He is already there'." (p.102). This linking of salvation and the Kingdom of God, the coming salvation of God and its presence here and now, have a strong affinity with what has been seen above of Ritschl's position. It is also worth noting that Jeremias sees part of the significance of this understanding of the Kingdom of God to lie in its being of the earliest tradition and free from "the stamp of the christology of the early church" (p. 108); a position with which Ritschl would have had hearty agreement.

91. see above, pp.52f.; also "Biblische Theologie", pp.9,15.

92. "Biblische Theologie", p.15.

93. "Biblische Theologie", p.16; cp. RuV II, p.6.

94. ibid..

95. "Biblische Theologie", p.18; cf also RuV II, p.15; Leben II, p.169.

96. "Biblische Theologie", p.18.

97. AKK, p.52.

98. RuV II, p.6; also "Biblische Theologie", p.19 where Ritschl describes the Old Testament as the Key to the New Testament.

99. RuV II, p.15; "Biblische Theologie", pp. 18-19.

100. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 29,30; also pp. 67-75 re. prophetic expectations, and pp. 118-120 re. Jesus' understanding and fullfilment of the prophetic expectations.

101. "Biblische Theologie", p.19; pp. 22-3.

102. Cf. RuV II, para.8. Ritschl understood the "high position" of the Old Testament religion to be summed up in the prophets (in their moral and religious demands and hopes) and in the Psalms (in their piety). As a minor part of his principle that the Old Testament must be used in interpreting the New, Ritschl makes a distinction between the Law, and the Prophets and Writings. In the Prophets Ritschl found the highest expression of the Old Testament religion. In the Law Ritschl found only the dead weight of tradition that had accumulated around the true Old Testament religion. For Ritschl the prophets embodied the Kern of the Old Testament religion, especially in their understanding of the hope of the covenant people. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 28-32, esp.p.29. Also Leben II p.169.

103. For example, in "Biblische Theologie" para. 5,p.37 reference to Hillel in Ritschl's exposition of Pharisaism; para.5, p.47 and passim, reference to Josephus; para.7, p.53f., and esp. para.10, pp.98-106 reference to Philo; para. 9, pp. 76-88, reference to intertestamental literature; para.10, pp. 89-106, reference to the main philosophies (-ers), Platonism, Stoicism, Pythagorianism, Aristobulus, etc..

104. Cf. "Biblische Theologie", para.4, on Judaism to the time of Christ; See also Ritschl's statement in RuV II, pp.23-4, that the necessity of Paul's teaching on justification by faith is developed in contrast to the Pharisaical teaching of justification through fulfilling the Law. Ritschl also sees the Judaism contemporary with Jesus as presenting a "faulty impression" of the Old Testament religion. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 18-19.

105. "Biblische Theologie", p.19.

106. ibid.,; also, pp. 28-31.

107. ibid., p.19.

108. ibid., pp. 19-20.

109. ibid., pp. 99ff.

110. Cf. "Biblische Theologie", para.3,13, and J&R III, passim. It has been noted by a number of interpreters that Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God has a highly moral or ethical flavour to it. This has led some to therefore read it as Kantian. There is no doubt that for Ritschl the Kingdom of God as the task of the community of believers is a moral task. Indeed, in the first edition of the Inst. the first division of section one was headed:"Das Reich Gottes als sittlicher Grundgedanke", while in the second edition it bore the heading: "Das Reich Gottes als höchstes Gut und Aufgabe der christlichen Gemeinde", and the "ethical" material is placed later under the heading of: "Die Lehre vom christlichen Leben" (Cf. Cajus Fabricius, Die Entwicklung in Albrecht Ritschls Theologie von 1874 bis 1889 nach der Verscheidenen Auflagen seine Hauptwerke dargestellt und beurteilt. Tubingen: JCB Mohr, 1909; see also the remarks of Mueller, op.cit., p. 50f). As was seen above, the Kingdom of God for Ritschl was both gift and task -- the gift of God in the forgiveness of sins wherein God draws near to man, and the task of the community (and its joint goal with God). Thus, while it is a moral task (which it obviously must be by nature of the community), it is also a religious gift, in that its originator is God in Christ and its goal is God Himself. There is, therefore, no reason to over Kantianise Ritschl's view of the Kingdom of God. After all, when it came to teaching about faith -- which is for Ritschl the starting point of the Kingdom of God -- Ritschl criticised Kant for making religion "a kind of appendix to morals" (J&R III, p.401). And Ritschl also goes to some pains to point out that "were we to determine the unique quality of Christianity merely by its teleological element, namely, its relation to the moral Kingdom of God, we should do injustice to its character as a religion" (J&R III, p.13). Also J&R III,p.226,n.1.

111. See "Biblische Theologie", pp. 21-32,pp.118-130, pp.130-143; RuV II, pp.26-34.pp. 69-81, pp. 118-130, pp. 157-195; J&R III, pp.193-318 passim.

112. J&R III, p.15; cf. also "Biblische Theologie", pp. 18-19,p.10.

113. J&R III, p.15; "Biblische Theologie", p.10,pp.15-16.

114. J&R III, p.15.

115. ibid., p.13.

116. "Biblische Theologie", para. 3, esp. pp.28-9.

117. RuV II, pp.19-20; also "Biblische Theologie", p.9.

118. RuV II, p.20; also "Biblische Theologie", pp.232-3.

119. RuV II, p.20; also "Biblische Theologie", pp.235-6, where Ritschl describes the Gospels as the memory of the church of her founder. A similar (though not identical) view of the New Testament as the community's memory of Jesus and the acts of God is found in Dietrich Ritschl, Memory and Hope, New York: Macmillan, 1967, cf.p.23. (Gemeindeerinherung).

120. RuV II, p.21; also "Biblische Theologie", p.234.

121. RuV II, pp.21-22. Ritschl also allows on this basis that any material in the New Testament found to be of an "apocryphal" nature (i.e. at variance with the general sense of the New Testament) may be disregarded and is not held as binding for theology.RuV II,p.16.

122. RuV II,p.20; "Biblische Theologie", pp.20,9; also p.235 where Ritschl describes them as never talking "excathedra" about doctrine.

123. RuV.II,p.20.

124. ibid. pp. 20-21; "Biblische Theologie", p.20; see also "Einleitung", pp.3-16 of Ritschl's lectures "Brief Pauli an der Römer" (WS 1879/80).

125. RuV II, p.21.

126. ibid..

127. ibid.; "Biblische Theologie", p.235.

128. RuV II, p.21.

129. ibid., pp.20-21.

130. J&R III, pp. 14-15.

131. ibid., p.15.

132. ibid..

133. ibid..

134. See eg., C.Gore St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (London:John Murray, 1900), vol.I, "it has beyond any other of St. Paul's epistles the character of an ordered theological treatise",p.3; K.Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans (London:SCM,1959), "it has been compared to ... a handbook of dogmatics ... (but) its particular aim" is a summary of Christian doctrine and to provide access to the Old Testament, pp.11-12; CEB Cranfield, The

134. Epistle to the Romans (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), "the most systematic and complete exposition of the Gospel that the New Testament contains", p.31 (see also his exposition on the history of the exegesis of Romans, pp.30-45); H.Ridderbos, Paul (ET London: SPCK, 1977), pp.13-44.

135. Ridderbos, Paul, p.19; cp. "Biblische Theologie", pp.234-6.

136. See F.C.Baur, Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ, ET 1876; The Church History of the First Three Centuries, ET 1878. See also Barth, Protestant Theology, pp.499-507 on Baur; also, Ridderbos, Paul, pp. 16-17.

137. Leben I, pp. 263-270, esp.pp.269-270; also "Biblische Theologie", p.17. It may even be that Ritschl was influenced by Schleiermacher's "Types of Speech" in his thinking (The Christian Faith, ET Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976, pp.76-78), though Ritschl makes no direct reference to Schleiermacher on this point.

138. "Biblische Theologie", p.235.

139. J&R III, p.2, cf.p.199

140. ibid., p.2.

141. ibid., p.3.

142. ibid..

143. ibid., p.4.

144. ibid..

145. ibid., pp.5-6.

146. ibid., p.6. It should be noted at this point that Ritschl never allows any interpretative method such as the allegorical. This sort of interpretative scheme was so out of question to him that he never discusses except to dismiss it. "Biblische Theologie", p.15.

147. J&R III, p.6.

148. David Lotz, Ritschl and Luther, p.45

149. J&R III, pp.4-6. Nor does this mean having to "display" one's personal Christianity, which Ritschl views as a crude form of the "theology of experience" (RuV II, p.8).

150. RuV II, pp.7-9.

151. ibid., p.10; above, p.59; "Biblische Theologie", p.10. pp.16ff, p.21.

152. RuV II, p.18.

153. RuV II, pp. 18-19.

154. ibid., p.19.

155. ibid..

156. ibid.; "Biblische Theologie", pp.18-19.

157. RuV II, p.19.

158. ibid., re. experimental nature of biblical theology: also p.23: "Vielleicht lässt sich jene Regel überhaupt nicht im Voraus feststellen, sondern es wird darauf ankommen, die gegenseitige Ausgleichung der allgemeinen und der individuellen Züge der biblischen Theologie erst durch das Experiment zu erreichen." c.f. also p.24.

159. The three kinds of external determinative criteria that Ritschl discusses (scripture and tradition, individual experience or inspiration, and reason) could fairly describe three perennial approaches to the interpretation of scripture. Ritschl's warning that none of these should be allowed to predominate in the hermeneutical task is a timely in all theological generations. It should also be noted that Ritschl, while not wishing to impose any external criteria for exegesis and interpretation, did expect that protestant theology would establish at least a "distant relation" to the symbols and theology of the Reformation, though even there he will not bind himself to them. RuV II, p.18.

160. RuV II, pp.5,19; "Biblische Theologie", p.234.

161. RuV II, p.6; also "Biblische Theologie", p.18 for discussion of Scripture and Tradition.

162. RuV II, p.11, 6.

163. ibid., p.11.

164. J&R III, p.5. and passim; "Biblische Theologie", pp.6-8,11.

165. RuV II, p.11. In making some cautious and limited comments of approval on Kant's moral argument for the existence of God, Ritschl appends the following note to the discussion: "The line of thought set forth here has been met by the contemptuous objection that it bases christianity upon morality. The sapient persons who thus prefer the charge that I, like Kant in his Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason, make religion a subordinate appendix of morals, though my mode of doctrine shows the very opposite, would do better to acquire a thorough knowledge of the elementary distinction between the ratio essendi and the ratio cognoscendi, instead of sitting in judgement on me" (J&R III, p.226,n.1.).

166. RuV II, p.6.

167. RuV II, p.7.

168. ibid., p.6.

169. ibid., p.7.

170. ibid..

171. ibid.; cf. "Biblische Theologie", p.12.

172. RuV II, p.7.

173. ibid, pp. 7-8; cf. p.9f.

174. ibid., p.8; see also Ritschl's remarks on the "synthetic and analytic" nature of theological method of comparing the particular to the general, "Biblische Theologie", pp.15-16.

175. Ruv II, p.8.

176. ibid., p.8-9.

177. ibid., p.9.

178. ibid., p.10.

179. RuV II, p.11; "Biblische Theologie", pp.9, 15-16, and passim.

180. Cf. introduction to RuV II, pp1-23. The positivism of this approach is that Ritschl meant to view the Bible only from its own historical position (as far as that could be ascertained).

181. J&R III, p.273; RuV II, p.97.

182. J&R III, p.275; "Biblische Theologie", pp. 26-30.

183. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 10,15-16.

CHAPTER FOUR

RITSCHL'S PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF EXEGESIS (PRACTICE)

1. Introduction.

As T.S.Eliot observed about the literary enterprise, to avoid a "dissociated sensibility" one must pay proper attention to both the form and content of literature, in both writing and in criticism. Having paid close attention to the form of Ritschl's understanding of both the general theological method and the hermeneutical task, proper attention must now be paid to the actual content of that method and the execution of the task.

To facilitate a critical examination of Ritschl's exegetical performance, an outline of the critical tools and methods employed in the examination needs first to be presented, along with an account of their adequacy and appropriateness to the task. The following pages are, therefore, a more detailed discussion than hitherto offered of the critical and analytical tools provided by David Kelsey in his recent book on the use of scripture in theology.[1]

Kelsey's method has been chosen because it stems from a most thorough and sophisticated study of the structure of theological argument, and the place of scripture in theological argument.[2] Kelsey's tools for "dissecting" theological argument (after the study of argument made by Stephen Toulmin[3]) are very precise and provide a means of going directly to the heart of the problem of scripture and theology; that is, in what way is scripture used "when appeal is made to it in the course of making a case for (a theological) proposal."[4] The precise nature of this enquiry allows for specific examination of how Ritschl in practice followed his own exegetical guidelines, as set down in chapter three. And, as Kelsey puts it,

the pattern that arises out of the analysis of a theologian's use of the Bible "provides us with a chart on which to plot the various places in theological arguments where an appeal to scripture might be entered."[5] This will enable a decision to be made on how well, in this case Ritschl, maintained the proper balance between "form" and "content" in his biblical work and on how well and to what extent Ritschl may be said to have avoided a "dissociated" exegetical "sensibility".

The first section of this chapter is given over to a discussion and presentation of Kelsey's tools as used here to analyse Ritschl's theological argument. Following that, in the second section, two of Ritschl's arguments, one from his christology and the Kingdom of God, are analysed to see in what precise way scripture is a part of them. These results are then summarised as a prolegomenon to a critical discussion of them in Chapter Five.

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To say that scripture is the authority for theology is first of all to say that at the very least there must be a relation between scripture and theological proposals. That is, "to say that theology must be authorised or 'proved' by scripture is to say that scripture must be <u>brought to bear on</u> theological proposals in such a way as to authorise them."[6] In trying to make that relation more specific, Kelsey rejects the metaphor of "translation" as not comprehensive of the variety of relations possible between scripture and theology. The "translation" metaphor is only representative of one of many ways in which scripture is "brought to bear on" theology. Instead of "translation" Kelsey considers it more illuminating to "consider a theologian's appeal to scripture as part of an argument."[7] The theologian has appealed to scripture

in making a case for his proposal, in order to justify or authorise the claim he is making.[8]

For Kelsey, that appeal to scripture to authorise a theological claim is formally analogous to an appeal by an historian to certain diplomatic documents in making a claim about Emperor Hirohito's involvement in World War II.[9] It is formally analogous to an appeal by a lawyer to certain statutes in making a claim about voting rights.[10] It is formally analogous to an appeal by a critic to listener's responses to a play in making a claim about how well the director understood it.[11] It is formally analogous to an appeal by a scientist to controlled experiments in making a claim about the efficacy of a drug.[12] They are formally analogous because no matter the significant differences among them, "they all exhibit the same pattern of argument."[13]

> Stephen Toulmin has shown how this pattern can be laid out in a "candid" form that exhibits the different 'functions of the different propositions invoked in the course of the argument and the relevance of different sorts of criticisms which can be directed against it.'[14]

Thus, by using Toulin's "candid" form of exhibiting an argument, Kelsey provides a way to chart how scripture is brought to bear on theological claims. Kelsey then proceeds to outline the elements of that "candid" form of the pattern of argument, and that outline is briefly reproduced here.[15]

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The claim or proposal that an argument is used to establish is called by Kelsey the conclusion (C). In making a case for that conclusion some kind of data (D) is appealed to, to answer the question "what have you got to go on?"[16] Thus the move from the data (D) to the conclusion (C) would appear to be a straightline. So the claim (C) that "Harry is a British subject" is justified by appeal

to the data (D), "Harry was born in Bermuda". Kelsey sets out the move diagramatically so:

D (Harry was born in Bermuda) _____ So, C (Harry is a British subject).

If, however, (C) is challenged by the question "how did you get there (to C) from here (D)?", material additional to the data (D) is required. In this instance the appeal is not to more data (D), but to a "rule or inference-licence" or warrant (W). The warrant (W) serves to authorise the move from (D) to (C). And while the data (D) are facts, a warrant (W) is a "general hypothetical" statement which is logically prior to the appeal to data (D) because it constitutes the "principle of selection" of the relevant data. Warrants (W) also vary in strength, from those that authorise a claim without qualification, to those that are subject to certain conditions, or qualifiers (Q).

Thus, the move from (D) to (C) may not be a straightline move. It may demand a warrant (W) and perhaps qualifiers (Q) as well. This set of moves is also set out diagramatically by Kelsey:

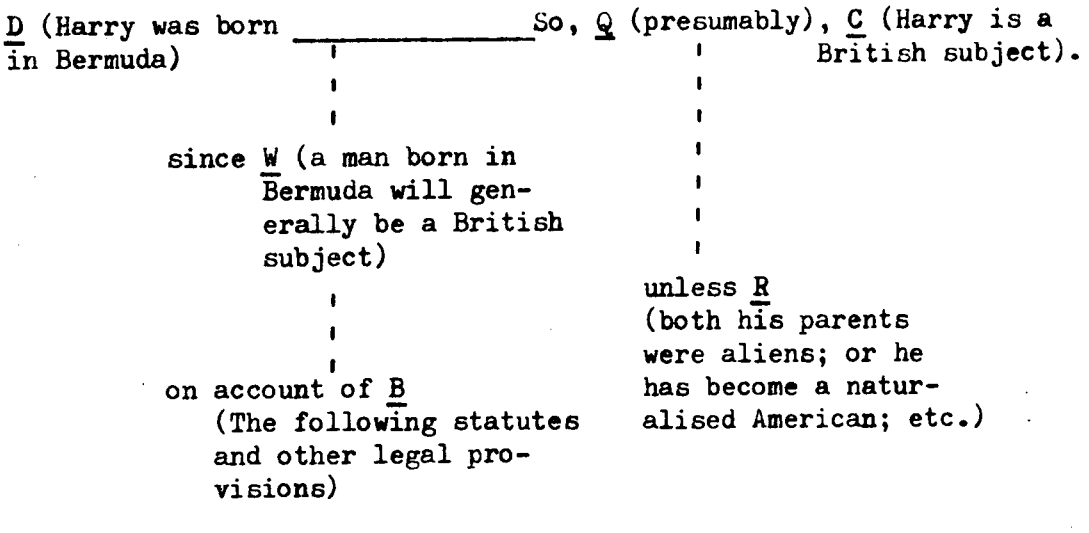
D (Harry was born in Bermuda) _____ So, Q (presumably), C (Harry is a British subject)

Since W (A man born in Bermuda will generally be a British subject)

This move may be further challenged in two other ways. The warrant (W) may not apply to the claim in question, or the truth of the warrant (W) may be challenged. To answer the first question, conditions must be set for a rebuttal (R) of the warrant (W). (R) indicates "the circumstances in which the authority of (W) would have to be set aside." In order to answer the chall-

enge to the truth of the warrant (W) it is necessary to find backing (B) for it. Backing (B) are "assurances" standing behind the warrant (W) which secure its (W's) currency or authority. A warrant (W) which is either trivial or analytical needs no backing (B). If a backing (B) is challenged, then the original argument for the claim (C) must be set aside and a subsidiary argument mounted for the backing (B), which then becomes a claim (C) in its own right. Kelsey observes at this point that "obviously, some warrant must at some point be accepted by all parties to a dispute" or no argument will be possible.

Backing (B) and the conditions of rebuttal (R) may be "categorical statements of fact" (which would make them then logically indistinguishable from data (D); they could only be distinguished by their roles in the argument). Thus the argument is further brokendown and diagramatically set out by Kelsey:



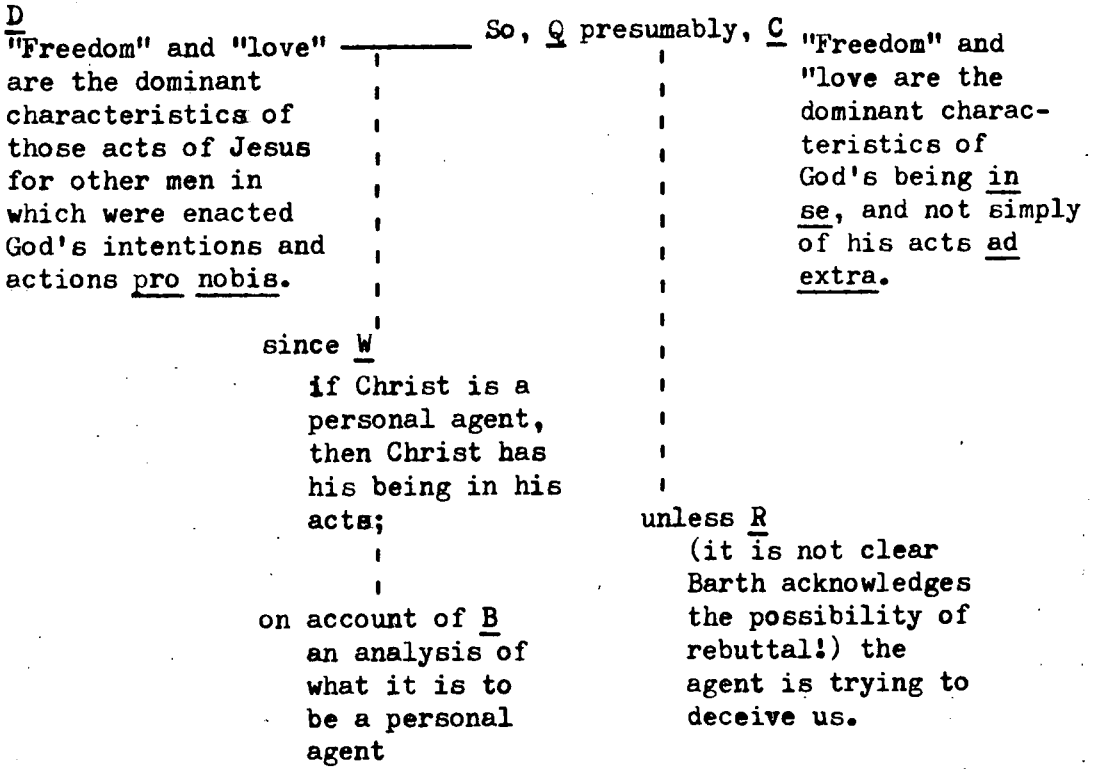
"All of this brings sharply into focus how little like a direct, straight-line move it is to get a claim 'authorised'."[17] There are, therefore, a large number of interrelated ways in which a claim can be authorised.

Kelsey points out that in this "standard pattern" of

informal argument, a variety of "'fields of argument' may turn up in a theological position." "'Fields of argument' are specified by the logical type of the propositions constituting the data and conclusions of arguments in the field."[18] And a theological position is a "comprehensive exposition of the whole body of christian divinity ... (developed) with an eye to their logical interconnections."[19] Arguments within the discussion of a particular theological *locus* within a theological position may belong to different "fields of argument" depending on the logical types of the backing and conclusions.

To illustrate his point and to show how this proceedure works for theological argument, Kelsey analyses several theological "macro-arguments". One is reproduced here in order to demonstrate how this method is employed in this chapter to analyse the place scripture has in Ritschl's theological argument.

Kelsey makes a selection from Barth's discussion of the perfections of God in volume II/1 of the *Church Dogmatics* and sets it out in candid form:[20]



From the "candid" form of the argument, Kelsey makes the following analysis. (C) is a theological claim about the being of God as he is in himself. (D) are claims about the actions of Jesus: one, an historical claim that Jesus' actions with other men were marked by "freedom" and "love"; two, the theological claim that Jesus' acts showed not only the intentions of the man Jesus, but that they were also the intentions of God. (W) is an "hypothetical generalisation" about the relationship between "acts" and "being" in personal agency. While (B) for this warrant is a "rudimentary ontology of personal agency" developed in another argument in the Church Dogmatics.

From this "anatomy" of argument, Kelsey proceeds to make a "diagnosis".[21] First, Kelsey observes that theological arguments are "field encompassing". This means that in developing the case for a theological claim, arguments are brought forward from many different "fields of argument". According to Kelsey this means that there "is no one distinctively 'theological method' ", if that means a specifically theological field of arguments. This means further that there is no specifically theological way to argue or think that could imply a peculiarly theological structure to an argument.

> Accordingly, analysis and criticism of theological 'systems' are not likely to be illuminating if undertaken on the tacit assumption that they may be measured by an ideal or standard mode of 'theological thinking', 'Theological method' or 'Thelogical way of arguing'. Arguments in theology have the same pattern as arguments used in connection with any other subject matter ... . [22]

Second, Kelsey observes that statements of several different logical types all serve to help authorise a conclusion. Thus there are also different senses in which the claim is "auth-

orised". One kind of authorisation is provided by the data, though the statements providing the data may be of different logical types. Another kind of authorisation is provided by the warrant, which, with its backing, may be yet again of different logical types.

> Thus, a conclusion that is authorised by data which consist of direct biblical quotations may also be authorised by backing consisting in a section of an ontology. It is at least logically possible that a theological proposal might be authorised by data provided by an ontological analysis and also authorised by warrants backed by direct quotations from scripture. [23]

Kelsey adds to this observation that, because of the necessarily arbitrary nature of the case, it would be meaningless to ask which of the two (in the quotation above) was more genuinely authorised by appeal to scripture. It is also pointless to "contrast 'authorising a theological proposal by appeal to scripture' to 'authorising it by appeal to an ontology' (or to a phenomenology or to historical research)" as if authorised one way it would not also be authorised in another way in the same argument.[24]

Third, Kelsey observes that many familiar ways of criticising a theological position or system are inappropriate. The criticism that begins by asking "where does this position begin?" assumes that "if a theology 'begins' at the wrong place it will inevitably and systematically distort the Christian message it seeks to elucidate."[25] This, of course, presumes that a prior judgement has been made about where a theology <u>ought</u> to begin. Kelsey finds this proceedure to be inappropriate because it stems from an inadequate understanding of how theological positions are organised. According to Kelsey, it assumes that a theological position "is held together by, or indeed consists in, one long overarching argument,"[26] where all <u>loci</u> of theology are controlled by the open-

ing locus "either because they are analytically contained in it or because they may be inferred from it on the basis of a few unacknowledged inference licenses."[27]

Kelsey, however, sees theological positions, when viewed as wholes, no matter how many arguments they may consist in, not as one overarching argument, but more like a constellation of connected and related, though at least partially independent, arguments. Kelsey advocates that a theological position taken as a whole is more aptly discussed "in quasi-aesthetic terms as the expression of a particular vision of the basic character or 'essence' of Christian faith and not in logical terms as though it were one long argument."[28] Kelsey's suggestion is that it would be more appropriate in analysing a theological position to ask, instead of where it "begins", a) what roles are played in the whole by the discussions of the various theological loci; and b) what roles are played by the various kinds of intellectual activity, "such as historical research (including biblical scholarship, phenomenology of religious experience, metaphysical schemes, etc.), asking what they do, i.e., what they are used for in the 'system' as a whole."[29] It would, therefore, seem appropriate to attempt this kind of analysis on Ritschl's work, especially since the vast majority (if not all) of the secondary literature on Ritschl (as seen in Chapter One) has proceeded on the basis of asking "Where does Ritschl's position begin" and criticising it from that stance. Kelsey's method, then, may succeed where other methods have failed to understand and interpret Ritschl's positions more accurately.

To summarise, then, Kelsey identifies five major components to the pattern of a theological argument. First is the propo-

sal or claim (C) itself. The other four components are the steps of the argument, all of which together go to authorise the conclusion, though all "answer" different questions in the course of making the case for the proposal and all may (or may not be) of different logical types or "fields of argument". The data (D) serve to answer the question "What have you got to go on?" in making the proposal (C). The warrant (W) answers the question "How did you get from there (D) to here (C)?" and authorises the move from (D) to (C). The backing (B) answers the question of the truth of the warrant (W) and authorises its use in making the move from (D) to (C). And finally, the conditions of rebuttal (R) answer the question about the applicability of the warrant (W) and, depending on its satisfying the conditions of rebuttal (that is, Q), it authorises the use of (W) to authorise the move from (D) to (C).

From the above presentation of Kelsey's tools for analysing what part scripture plays in formulating a theological position, or in mounting an argument to make a case for a theological proposal, it can be seen that the place of scripture in Ritschl's theological argument ought to be able to be charted with considerable precision. Indeed, inasmuch as Kelsey's seem to be the most sophisticated tools available for this analytical procedure, and inasmuch as they have never been used before to assess Ritschl's biblical-theological work, it should emerge that, together with the results gained in Chapters Two and Three concerning Ritschl as a biblical theologian and his principles and methods of exegesis, the results of this analysis of Ritschl's theological argument will provide a more comprehensive picture of Ritschl's theological effort. That picture is further clarified in the third section of this chapter

by asking of those results some important question about the kinds of decisions Ritschl made about the use of scripture, and by suggesting some implications for the "authority of scripture" in Ritschl's theology, and what those mean for the over-all picture gained of the place of scripture in Ritschl's theology and what it means to call him a "biblical theologian".

II. Analysis of Ritschl's Theological Argument

The procedure followed in this last section of the chapter is as follows. In the first heading (A) a theological "macro-argument" of Ritschl's from his Christology is set out in "candid" form, together with a brief explanation of its various parts (section 1). Following that (section 2), one of the major points of the "macro-argument" of section L is abstracted and set out in candid form as a theological "micro-argument". In the following this procedure the place scripture actually occupies in Ritschl's theological argument will be brought into a sharper focus. Further, this procedure, following through both a "macro-argument" and a "micro-argument", allows the full impact of Kelsey's methods of analysis to be felt.

In the second heading (B), Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God is analysed for its scriptural origin, and its place in Ritschl's theological system. As is explained in section (B) in some detail, because of the different function the understanding of the Kingdom of God has in Ritschl's theological system, a different method of analysis is employed, where comparison is made in some detail with the work of Johannes Weiss. It is hoped that these two procedures of analysis of two functionally different parts of Ritschl's theological system, will provide a broader base

from which to understand and criticise Ritschl's biblical work. And finally, Ritschl's Christology and his understanding of the Kingdom of God are of such importance to his theological system that the inclusion and analysis of them both is justified on that basis alone.

Detailed criticism of the results of the analysis of this chapter is undertaken in Chapter Five.

A. Christology.[30]

Because of the centrality to Ritschl's system of theology of his Christology, an analysis of a major component of his overall christological argument will serve as a useful representative argument for showing how scripture actually figures in Ritschl's Theology. Ritschl's Christology, no matter how critically viewed, has generally been accepted by recent scholarship on Ritschl to be of fundamental importance to his theology, and as a major key to his theological endeavour.[31] Christology is also, in general terms, fundamental to systems of Christian theology.

Even given, however, that most modern commentators find Ritschl's Christology central to understanding his system, analyses of Ritschl's Christology have generally approached it from a philosophical/dogmatic angle, concentrating primarily on questions about the "natures" of Christ, or the epistemological implications of Ritschl's christology, etc.. Only Schäfer's study pays any significant attention to Ritschl's biblical Ansatzpunkt in formulating his Christology.[32] But even there, the main emphasis is not for long on the biblical material. The analysis in this chapter, then, of the biblical sources of a major component of Ritschl's christological argument from J&R III by means of Kelsey's analytical tools, along

with the more detailed work done by Ritschl as shown in the manuscript lectures, is warranted and necessary by virtue of the new perspective it will provide on the nature and significance of Ritschl's use of the Bible.

1. "Macro-argument": The Godhead of Christ.[33]

In this section, Ritschl's argument for the Godhead of Christ is presented in its candid form (as outlined above). The argument as here presented follows on from Ritschl's discussion of the "Ethical Estimate" of Christ according to his vocation and the recognition of him as the Revealer of God[34], and preceeds the discussion of Christ's execution of the Priestly office for himself.[35]

*

As Kelsey has remarked, each of the arguments set out below "is a complex and extended argument which in fact subsumes many shorter arguments. To use Toulmin's image, they are like organisms that have 'a gross, anatomical structure and a finer as it were physiological one'."[36] In this section the "gross anatomy" of the argument for the Godhead of Christ is presented (the "macro-argument"), and is followed by a "physiological" study (the"micro-argument") of a part of Ritschl's argument for the Godhead of Christ, namely, the Lordship of Christ. Below, Ritschl's argument for the Godhead of Christ is set out in the candid form (as discussed above in section I):

A.L. MACRO-ARGUMENT

THE GODHEAD OF CHRIST

(J&R III, paragraph 49)

D The biblical picture of Christ as a person demonstrating through his Lordship over the world "grace and truth".

so, **Q**

since, **W** every expression of independence is an evidence of supremacy in one particular department of life: for the Christian that independence is spiritual; the highest independence from the world is God, whom the Old Testament describes as grace and truth.

on account of **B** the events of supremacy of Christ's life, ie. his patience under suffering whereby he has overcome the world (John 16.33); Christ's vocational self-understanding that his personal end is also God's: the unique mutual knowledge existing between God and Christ.

unless **R** one demands of Christ a natural or political supremacy over the world; or Christ's lordship is not experienced and acknowledged by the community; or it is proved that this is only proof of the divinity of the will of Christ.

, **C** The grace and truth manifest in Christ's Lordship constitute his deity.

In this argument, (D) is an exegetical claim that Ritschl makes about the New Testament presentation of Christ's exercise of Lordship over the world. The key, technical expressions Ritschl uses are "Lordship" and the terms "grace and truth". It is obvious that the exegetical claim itself in this argument could be challenged, and if so challenged, would be provided with its own pattern of data, warrants and backing (this is the argument presented below, II.A.2. as the"micro-argument"). In this particular case, scripture itself is not the datum, but a generalisation drawn from throughout the canon of the New Testament is.

(W) in the argument represents two generalised statements. The first is the hypothetical generalisation about the relation between an expression of personal independence and supremacy in life, and that for the Christian that independence (and therefore supremacy) vis à vis the world is spiritual. The second is an exegetical generalisation about one of the characteristic descriptions of God in the Old Testament and its further use in the New Testament about Jesus, as concerns their independence (and therefore supremacy) vis à vis the world.

The (B) for this (W) is a detailed exegetical account of the life of Christ which highlights the events which demonstrate his spiritual supremacy and hence his lordship over the world. Much of the (B) is summary material which is more fully developed elsewhere and collated here for the purposes of the argument.[37]

The conditions for rebuttal (R) are, as presented by Ritschl, mainly the oppositeparts to the (B) and stated in rhetorical fashion. If it can be proved that a political supremacy over the world is the true demonstration of Lordship over the world, then

the argument collapses; if Christ's Lordship is not experienced and acknowledged by the community, then it is an empty and useless Lordship and the argument becomes pointless; or, if it is proved that Ritschl has only demonstrated a divinity of the will of Christ and not, therefore, of the "nature" or "essence" of Christ, then the argument is invalid.

Thus, the original claim, that "grace" and "truth", as those Old Testament terms applicable to God alone, express the essential characteristics of the Godhead of Christ and summarise him as the complete revelation of God, is, to Ritschl's satisfaction, proved. Even though, however, his original data for this claim is a generalisation of the scriptural picture of Christ (rather than direct quotations from scripture), the points at which scripture actually serves to authorise the claim vary in logical type and force. The implications of this for Ritschl's theological and exegetical claims are drawn out in part three of this chapter and so may be passed over at this point.

2. "Micro-argument": The Lordship of Christ.[38]

An important part of the argument in section 1. above centred around the concept of the Lordship of Christ. Indeed, the biblical picture of Christ's exercise of Lordship was the data upon which Ritschl based his argument for the Godhead of Christ. In this "micro-argument" the data from A.1. is the conclusion or claim (C) for the argument in A.2.:

A.2. MICRO ARGUMENT

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

(J&R III, paragraph 49)

D — so, Q presumably, — C

The biblical record of Christ's life of spiritual supremacy over the world.

The biblical picture of Christ's exercise of spiritual supremacy over the world demonstrates his effective Lordship over the world in terms only applicable to God.

Since W

if one demonstrates in Christ's life a spiritual independence over against the world, one has shown his spiritual lordship over the world, which is a predicate reserved for God.

On account of B

a phenomenology of the independence of the religious consciousness which asserts that spiritual independence means spiritual Lordship; a phenomenology of the acts of God which asserts the characteristics of his Lordship from the biblical texts.

unless R

one refuses to be bound to historical evidence and activity and considers speculation on the unobservable "nature" of Christ acceptable; or, if the Lordship of Christ is not experienced and acknowledged by the community.

In this argument the (D) is a more detailed exegetical claim (presented here, again, in summary form), from the biblical texts that show in Christ's life his spiritual supremacy over the world. Again, this claim could be challenged, and this would demand an even finer examination of its data, warrants and backing.[39] In this argument the datum has become more specific, and should this datum be challenged, the further data produced would be more specific still. Whereas in A.1. the data base (if it may be so put) was broadly a picture of Christ gained from the whole New Testament, in A.2. it comes from the more specific data base of the Gospels, where the events of the life of Christ are recorded (which is still a large and diverse section of scripture).

(W) for this (D) is a modified restatement of the (W) in A.1., modified in the sense that it has become more specific. Rather than the very broad hypothetical generalisation about the relation between an expression of personal independence and supremacy in life, it has become a more specific and personal hypothetical generalisation about the life of Christ. If it can be demonstrated in the life of Christ that he showed a personal independence over against the world, then one has shown his personal spiritual Lordship over the world, and that is a predicate reserved for God.

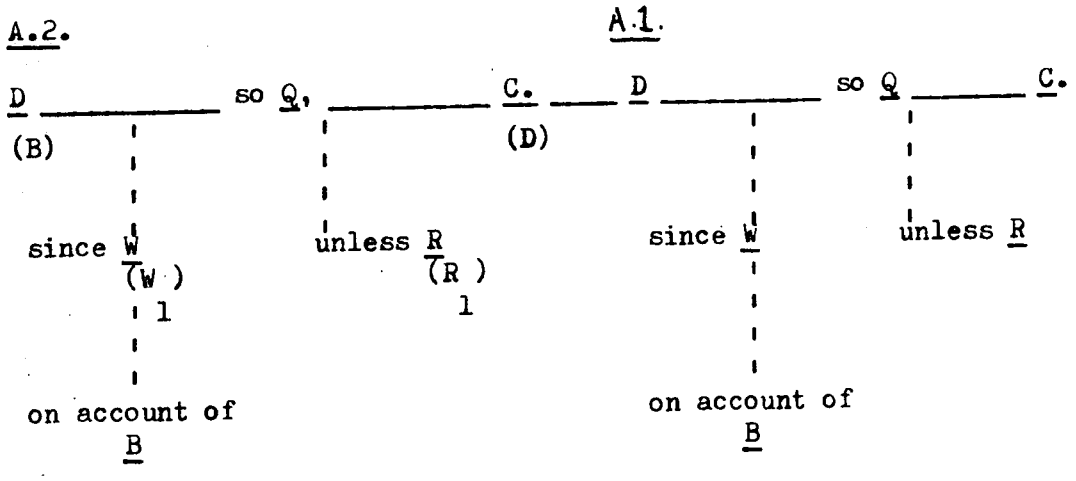
The (B) for the (W) consists of two related and synthesised phenomenologies. One, a phenomenology of the independence of the religious consciousness which asserts that spiritual independence means spiritual Lordship. And, two, a phenomenology of the acts of God which asserts the characteristics of his Lordship from the biblical texts. Again, much of the material for this (B) is summary material collated from different sources of detailed work.

Like the (W) for A.2., the (R) is also a modification of the (R) for A.1. As in A.1., the (R) in A.2. stresses that if the Lordship of Christ is not experienced and acknowledged by the community, then the whole argument is pointless. The modification to the (R) of A.2. is a statement that, if one refuses to be bound only to the historical evidence about, and activity of Jesus, and considers that speculation on the unobservable inner divine "nature" of Christ is acceptable, then the argument is invalid. (It would seem that Ritschl, like Barth (see above) fails really to recognise the possibility of rebuttal and therefore only postulates what is, to him, the unacceptable as a condition of rebuttal. Ritschl would no more have speculated about the unobservable "nature" of Christ than he would have written a defense of pietism or mysticism! The point is, then, that Ritschl has only rhetorical not actual conditions of rebuttal).

If, however, a condition of rebuttal is seen as an openness to the possibility of falsification, then it may be fairly said that Ritschl did allow for falsification, if not formally within the structure of his argument, then more fundamentally in his understanding of biblical theology. As noted in Chaper Two (and as is seen again in Chapter Five), for Ritschl, a theological position must always be open to biblical examination and correction. If Ritschl could be shown that a theological position be held was genuinely in error when biblically examined, then he would (in theory at least) correct his position accordingly. This is a genuine condition of rebuttal (and, as far as it goes, a genuine principle of falsification), even though it is fundamentally linked only to the Canon of scripture. Provided that the first happens and the second

doesn't, then, as far as Ritschl is concerned, the argument holds.

3. Collation



By presenting these two arguments in their "candid" form, it has been noted that there is some overlap between them. This is not unexpected since they are both part of the same "macro-argument". What is interesting to note, however, is that statements which remain of the same logical type in both arguments play different roles. For example, in A.1. the (D), while remaining the same statement, becomes the (C) in A.2. So too with the (B) of A.1. which becomes the (D) in A.2. What this shows is that the statements themselves remain of the same logical type in both arguments, and can only be distinguished by the roles they play. And, if they are of different logical types, then they belong to different "fields of argument", while remaining parts of the same "field of study".[40]

It can also be seen that scripture, to a more or less detailed degree, figures prominantly in various parts of both arguments. In A.1. scripture is significant in both (D) and (B), while in A.2. scripture plays an important role in (D), (W) and (B).

4. Exegetical Argument.

Attention must now be directed to Ritschl's exegetical

and interpretive performance in his theological argument. Because of the importance Ritschl attached to scripture in theology (as noted above in Chapters Two and Three) and because of the significant role scripture or scriptural generalisations plays in his theological argument, an evaluation of his exegetical practice and its adequacy is in order. As with the results of A.1. and 2. criticism is reserved until part III of this chapter and to Chapter Five.

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In setting out Ritschl's argument for the Godhead of Christ and for the Lordship of Christ, reference was made in both arguments (A.1.,(B); A.2., (D)) to the biblical picture of the events of the life of Christ that demonstrates his spiritual supremacy (and therefore his Lordship) over the world. Those exegetical claims are now examined in order to assess how far Ritschl followed his own and general exegetical guidelines, and how well they support the claim he is making.

In the chapter of J&R III from which the arguments in A.1. and 2. are taken, Ritschl makes two kinds of use of scripture to support his claims about the Lordship of Christ. On the one hand he briefly demonstrates from scripture the kind of Lordship that it is <u>not</u> appropriate to ascribe to Christ; while on the other hand, that being demonstrated, he shows from scripture the kind of Lordship that <u>is</u> appropriate.

a. In demonstrating from scripture the kind of Lordship it is not appropriate to ascribe to Christ, Ritschl first states the proposition, that Christ's Lordship over the world is not such that he had the whole fixed system of things at his arbitrary disposal.[41] The proposition is demonstrated by two sets of data.

One, Ritschl generalises from the Gospel records that Jesus was dependent for physical support (i.e, food and shelter, etc.) on the fixed conditions of human life.[42] Jesus' Lordship did not mean that he was free from the material and physical dependence common to all mankind. Therefore, Jesus' Lordship does not refer to the natural order. Two, and more specifically, even in Jesus' power of miracle, he never, according to Ritschl, made an alteration of the "mechanisms" of the world.[43] This alteration Ritschl finds as an expectation of the prophets when the Kingdom of God should be established on earth (here Ritschl cites Mt.16. 1-4 to prove his statement about the prophets).[44] Ritschl's understanding of the biblical miracles, as summarised in this passage, meant that in changing water into wine, for instance, Jesus did nothing that violated the natural mechanisms by which water naturally becomes wine: Jesus' was a use of the mechanism and not an alteration of it.[45] Ritschl notes that Jesus was conscious of having miraculous power (and cites Mk.6,5,6 to prove it), and that Jesus understood that power to be "part of his equipment for his vocation" (and cites Mt.12.28 to prove it).[46] Ritschl views the kinds of ways in which Jesus exercised his power of miracle as forming a very limited sphere of activity; none of which violate the mechanism of the natural world.[47]

All of the above being said, however, Ritschl adduces a final argument against viewing Jesus' Lordship over the world in terms of his power of miracle. This argument stems from his (Ritschl's) exegetical-dogmatic guideline that the theologian should not speculate beyond the bounds of that which is contained in the biblical record. Ritschl argues that even if it were not as obvious as it is that Jesus was dependent, as are other human beings, on the fixed condi-

tions of human life for his material support, and that Jesus' power of miracle did not violate the natural mechanism of the world, and was only of a limited nature on any reading; even if all that was not so obvious, the Gospel narratives "are not of the kind to allow us to discover any rule as to how far the supremacy of Christ's will over external nature actually extended."[48] Not only that, but since it is impossible to repeat any of these experiences to investigate miracle, there are no means available to open up the "psychical and physical grounds" of Christ's power of miracle.[49] Thus, not because of the nature of the problem of miracle itself, but because of the "enforced lack of the means of explanation", the question of Christ's power of miracle "does not lend itself" to proper scientific theological explanation.[50]

In this short explanation of how it is inappropriate to describe Christ's Lordship over the world, Ritschl is seen to refer to scripture in two different ways which play different roles in his argument. First he is seen to use generalisations from scripture. As a datum on which to rest his claim, Ritschl uses a generalisation about the fact that Jesus, like other men, was dependent on the natural order for his material existence. Detailed exegetical work and argument are unnecessary to support the generalisation because the point is not one of any great controversy. At the end of the argument, Ritschl makes a second generalisation, this time about the nature of the Gospel narratives themselves, stating that the kind of information they provide for assessing the extent of Jesus' power of miracle is inappropriate to a scientific study of that power. So Ritschl uses two kinds of generalisations concerning scripture: one whereby a general picture of Jesus' natural life is

taken from scripture, and one whereby a general assessment is made about the nature of the scriptural narratives about Jesus.

Second, Ritschl is seen to make reference to specific passages of scripture which serve to "prove" his claims about Jesus. Ritschl cites Mt.16.1-4 to "prove" that the prophetic expectations about the kind of power to be exercised over nature at the inauguration of the kingdom of God were not the kind of power that Jesus exhibited. Ritschl then cites two other passages (from Mt. and Mk.) to "prove" his statements about the kind of awareness Jesus had of his own power of miracle, and the understanding Jesus had of it in terms of the performance of his vocational task. Of course, the way in which Ritschl cites a passage of scripture here to "prove" a statement about Christ makes two rather large assumptions (what Kelsey would call "inference licenses"). One, that the New Testament stories of the life of Christ actually do say something factual and historically true about the life of Christ (a position Ritschl did in fact hold, as seen above). And two, that a statement from scripture is a sufficient datum to prove a conclusion about the life of Christ without any further backing or warrants in this case. As was seen above, this is not always the case with Ritschl.

Thus Ritschl's overall generalisation from scripture that Christ's Lordship over the world was not such that he had the whole fixed system of things at his arbitrary disposal, rests on three kinds of use of scripture. A general understanding about the nature of the narratives themselves; a general understanding based on the narratives about the life of Christ; and, specific references to specific passages to demonstrate specific points that support his general proposal.

b. Ritschl's main argument in this section, however, concerns his exposition of what is appropriate in describing Christ's Lordship over the world. This argument is summarised in the conclusion that Christ's "patience under suffering" most effectively demonstrates his Lordship. Since a great deal of the argument in this section was seen in the section above (A.2.) about the biblical picture of Christ's exercise of his Lordship over the world, attention here will centre on one significant exegetical portion of the argument.

Ritschl argues in this section on the Lordship of Christ, that Christ's patience under suffering is the effective demonstration of his Lordship, as defined by his spiritual independence from and therefore spiritual supremacy over the world (see above A.2.). Rather than viewing Christ's Lordship under such terms as "might" and "right" (that is, in terms of his "nature"), Ritschl prefers to view it from the point of view of Christ's activity and how his Lordship is seen through that activity. According to Ritschl, this obviates the necessity of having to produce explanations of why, if Jesus possessed unlimited Lordship as of "right" and by "nature", he failed to exercise it in his earthly life, and why it should have been postponed to Christ's exalted future. According to Ritschl's understanding, Christ's exercise of supremacy in his exalted state is only intelligible if "we prove the existence of such attributes ... by some corresponding activity of the earthly Christ."[51]

So, Ritschl sees in Christ's exercise of his vocation the marks of spiritual independence which demonstrate his spiritual supremacy and therefore Lordship over the world. Thus,

even though Christ was bound to fulfill his vocation amongst the Jewish people (Mk.7.27;23.37), yet, by the universality of his vision (Mt.8.11,12; 21.43) and his own self-understanding, he was able to rise above the limitations of the bounds of his vocation. Christ also demonstrated an independence from the political expectations of the Jews and their religion (while at the same time fulfilling it), and showed himself independent from the constraints of the ceremonial law (while fulfilling its spirit; Mt.17.25-27). Christ also showed an independence from the support that he could have expected from his natural family (Mk.3.33-35), which independence was an incidence of his wider independence from the claims of physical and social self-preservation that he showed in fulfilling his vocation (John 16.33). All of this leads Ritschl to the conclusion that Christ's supremacy and Lordship over the world are best summarised by his "patience under suffering".

Ritschl found a "valuable confirmation of this result" in Mt. 11.28-30, and it is Ritschl's exegesis of this passage that commands attention here.[52]

The first move that Ritschl makes in the exegesis of this passage is to set it in its wider context, that is, in its relation to the declaration of Jesus that "all things have been delivered to me by my Father" (v.27). According to Ritschl the central point of the passage as a whole is "the description of Jesus as one who, despite his inherent righteousness, is, like the righteous men of the Old Testament, in a state of oppression and suffering, but who willingly accepts the same." Because in Ritschl's view the point of the passage is not "as a rule" rightly understood, he proceeds to examine the passage in some detail.

The predicates in v.29, πραΰς καὶ ταπεινός (translated in English as "gentle" and "lowly" or "humble" RSV) are, according to Ritschl, the "conventional designation of the righteous man in view of the consistent oppression which he has to endure at the hands of the godless", as seen in the Old Testament. This is what Jesus means when he compares himself to those who labour and are heavy laden (v.28). (That is, being independent of vocational constraints, political expectations, ceremonial law and the claims of physical and social self-preservation). Ritschl found the justification for this understanding in the Hebrew and Aramaic words that stand behind the Greek. According to Ritschl, πραΰς καὶ ταπεινός appears in the LXX as the equivalent to the Hebrew עָנִי , which word, or rather its Aramaic equivalent עֲנִיָּא , is the "only word Jesus could have used". Jesus' addition of τῇ καρδίᾳ (being the equivalent to לֵב), "is not inconsistant with a state of external oppression, but represents the latter as that in which, because of his righteousness, Jesus acquiesces." In this addition Ritschl found a difference between Jesus and the righteous man of the Old Testament; which difference was also an advancement. In Ritschl's view, the righteous men of the Old Testament "always regard their oppressed condition with complaint and longing for deliverance", while Jesus, "by acquiescing in the obstructions of the world as a dispensation of God ... subordinates to himself the relation between himself and the world". In acquiescing, that is, by accepting with patience the consequences of his righteousness and his vocation, Jesus demonstrated his supremacy by subordinating his relation to the world - that is, his sufferings at the hands of the world - to the greater end of his fidelity to his vocation. Thus

because of the mutual knowledge between the Father and the Son (v.27), Jesus is able to account these sufferings as "the yoke by which he is led of God", and therefore as the dispensation of God. So, when Jesus appeals to those who labour in life because of the oppression of the world, and who are over-burdened by their sufferings to come to him and to take on his yoke, "his aim is to lead them to see in their burdens the dispensation of God".

> On these terms the said burdens will become light, because, by the patience which springs from the religious motive, men lift themselves above their misfortunes and the world. From this point of view their sufferings even become for them a helpful yoke, which brings them experience of the guiding of God.

And this, concludes Ritschl, is the proof which Jesus offers to mankind of the supremacy over the world which he exercised through the mutual knowledge existing between the Father and the Son. To further bolster his cause, Ritschl states that this is also the view of St. Bernard in the predicates superans fortunam and passus indigna "as the distinctive marks of the world-controlling Divinity of Christ".

From this exposition of Ritschl's argument from Mt.11 in support of his claim that Jesus' Lordship over the world is best summarised in his "patience under suffering", a fuller picture of how Ritschl actually handled the texts has come to light. Five points need to be made by way of interpretation.

First, the place that this exegetical passage has in the argument should be noted. Ritschl uses this passage as a confirmation of the result he has already obtained by other means, that is, the material from the exegesis of Mt. 11 is additional to the main argument and plays a general supportive role (rather than the specific supporting role that a backing (B) would play in an argument).

This use of the passage as confirmation is similar to the way in which a scientist may call upon the results of an independent set of experiements that help to confirm his own results without actually being a part of his own experiment. Or, indeed, it is similar to the way in which Ritschl appeals to St. Bernard at the end of the study to confirm the results he has gained. Ritschl's appeal to Mt. 11 to confirm his findings is formally analogous to the way in which he appeals to St. Bernard to confirm the results of his exegesis.

The second point concerns the actual exegesis of the passage. Ritschl's first act with the text in question is to place it in its wider context. This facilitates the preliminary procedure of making a generalisation about the passage as a whole into which the detailed results can be placed. Therefore Ritschl makes a statement of what the "central point of the utterance" is before examining the passage in detail.

Third, Ritschl examines the Old Testament background to the text at hand in order to appreciate the significance of what Jesus is saying. For Ritschl, this is a two part procedure. First, by detailed linguistic work he explains the meaning of the Greek predicates of the passage; first by examining the Hebrew behind it (by way of the LXX) and then to the Aramaic which Jesus must have used. The second part of the procedure, when the literal meaning of the words has been established, is a move away from linguistic detail to a general statement about the conventional Hebrew literary designation of the Righteous Man, in which designation the detailed linguistic results of the first part participate.

Having established the general Old Testament background

to the passage, Ritschl, fourth, returns to the linguistic detail of the passage in order to make a further point to advance his argument. Ritschl wants to demonstrate through this further detail both Jesus' continuity with the religion and understanding of the Old Testament and Jesus' advance over it.

Finally, fifth, Ritschl collates all of the more detailed information he has introduced with the general point of the passage. From this Ritschl makes a general statement about the meaning of the passage which he fits into the main theological point he is making about Christ's supremacy over the world, thereby making the meaning of the passage complete.

Before closing this section of the analysis, mention must be made again of the importance for the present study of the manuscript sources of Ritschl's exegetical-biblical work. In the study of the exegetical passage above from J&R III, Ritschl really only presents a summary of his exegetical work which he views as sufficient for the present argument. In the manuscript lectures on "Die biblische Theologie des neuen Testaments", however, Ritschl devotes considerable space to developing the points made in J&R III, and these, (along with material from RuV II), in the critique that follows, in Chapter Five, will present a much more complete and satisfactory picture of the detailed kind of exegesis that Ritschl executed in his research. Therefore, lest any hasty judgements be made over Ritschl's exegetical performance, the full weight of these manuscript sources and the biblical work of RuV II must be taken into consideration. Indeed, a reiteration of Ritschl's warning in the preface to the third edition of J&R III about reading volume III in isolation is not out of order here with reference to both volumes I

and II and the manuscript sources:

> I cannot help saying that anyone who thinks he can dispense with a knowledge of the first and second volumes of this work increases his own difficulty in understanding the third. 53

B. The Kingdom of God

So far in this chapter the analysis of Ritschl's theological and exegetical argument, using Kelsey's tools, has been concerned with theological proposals and their constituent parts. Another way of stating that is to say that it has been an analysis of theological loci. The various loci form together a theological system, which, for the purpose of the analysis, is defined as, a "comprehensive exposition of the whole body of Christian divinity that not only makes many proposals about different theological loci (God, man, church, etc.) but self-consciously develops these proposals with an eye to their logical interconnections."[54] In section A. of this chapter the analytical concern was with one of the major theological loci of Ritschl's system, that is, with his doctrine of the Godhead of Christ. In dealing with Ritschl's exposition of the Kingdom of God in this section, it is not so much with a theological locus that the analysis is concerned, but with one of the major means of "logical interconnectedness" by which Ritschl's system is maintained.

That the doctrine of the Kingdom of God plays this kind of role in Ritschl's theology has long been recognised. A.E.Garvie (writing in 1899) wrote of the "regulative principle" of the Kingdom of God in the Ritschlian theology, which Garvie describes as "the truth that is to bind all its (Christian dogmatics') parts into one whole."[55] This is also the understanding of Professor Richmond,

who writes of Ritschl's "unprecedented stress on the regulative and normative function of the Kingdom of God in his work as a whole."[56] As that kind of regulative principle, however, Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God does not lend itself to the same kind of analysis which has been applied above to the *locus* of the Godhead of Christ.

This is partly to be seen in the structure of both volume three of J&R, and in the *Instruction*. In J&R III, while Ritschl devotes considerable space to each of the main theological *loci*, in their relations to the doctrines of justification and reconciliation, the Kingdom of God, while of extensive use in the section on the doctrine of God, does not receive the same type of individual attention that the *loci* do. On the other hand, there is also scarcely a section of any part of J&R III that is not informed directly or indirectly by Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom. It performs, rather, the function of binding together the various parts of Ritschl's system, and of assuring that, in Richmond's words, "if it is made dogmatically supreme there can be no question of separating faith from ethics."[57]

In the *Instruction* this regulative function is clearly seen from the exhaustive variety of theological *loci* which are in evidence in Ritschl's discussion of the Kingdom. In this discussion Ritschl not only develops his understanding of the kind of moral involvement demanded as part of the *task* of the Kingdom of God, he also develops his "theology of the Name", where the doctrine of God is understood in terms of God's full "Christian name" - the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both God's and mankind's self-ends are identified in terms of their joint pursuit of the

kingdom of God. Jesus' central importance for the salvation of man, the knowledge of God, the relation of the Christian to the world - all of these important doctrines are either developed or adumbrated in Ritschl's discussion of the Kingdom of God (which is the obverse of the way in which the Kingdom is used in J&R III).

By understanding the kind of role the Kingdom of God plays in Ritschl's theology (that is, as differentiated from the role of a theological locus), it becomes clear that a different kind of analysis is required to show the role that scripture plays in the understanding of this regulative principle. In demonstrating the role of scripture in the development of the Kingdom of God, because it is such an important overall principle in Ritschl's dogmatic system, a clearer picture is gained of the overall role and regulative use that Ritschl makes of scripture, and in a more fundamental way than the analysis of any number of theological loci could do.

1. The analysis.

It will be recalled that Kelsey criticised the analysis of a theological system that viewed it as one long over-arching argument that "begins" with some particular locus and is controlled by that locus to its logical "conclusion".[58] Kelsey prefers images of theological systems such as "organisms" or, in aesthetic terms, as "sculptures".[59] In these images, the theological loci are arranged and related in a variety of ways, so that the "connections among them may be loose in various degrees"[60], or more tight, depending on the kind and nature of the connections. Therefore Kelsey sees the importance in analysing a theological position of what roles are played in the overall structure by the various loci, and

of what roles are played within the loci of the various kinds of intellectual inquiry, including biblical work. In this section of the chapter, the analytical interest is in the connection between the various loci. Or, to put it another way, the analytical interest is in the "regulative principle" which binds the theological loci into one whole.

The analysis of the connections between the various theological loci speaks to a point that Kelsey has made in a recent article on the Bible and theology.[61] In describing the activity called "theology" or "doing theology", Kelsey stresses that one aspect of "doing theology" is its intentionality; that is, that "doing theology" has a point.[62] Thus, because theology has a "point", it has something which binds the loci of theology together, that is, which provides the "logical interconnectedness" that is necessary to a proper system of theology. While Kelsey sees the "point" of theology in terms of the church's faithfulness to its defining mission, he also stresses that:

> The "point" of doing theology is not necessarily the subject matter with which theology deals at every moment; but it is that in regard to which every subject matter taken up is considered. [63]

For Ritschl, clearly the "that" in regard to which every subject discussed is considered is the Lutheran church's faithfulness to its historical and biblical heritage.[64] Equally clearly, for Ritschl, the central theological focus to which every other theological locus is related is the doctrine of justification, which summarises the essential distinctive core of the Lutheran historical and theological heritage.[65] Indeed, in the preface to the first edition of J&R III, Ritschl explains that in order to do justice to the "central doctrine

of Christianity", that is, justification and reconciliation, he has had to present "an almost complete outline of systematic theology."[66]

Correlative to that, however, is Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God. To comprehend a complete picture of Christianity, according to Ritschl, (or, to know what the "essence" of Christianity is for Ritschl), to justification must be added the Kingdom of God. To put it another way, justification and reconciliation must go hand in hand. God's gracious act of forgiveness must result in active participation in the community in love-prompted action in the Kingdom of God. This is the function of Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God that Richmond described above as tying faith to ethics, and as the regulative principle of Ritschl's theology. It is also what Ritschl meant by his famous image of Christianity as an "ellipse which is determined by two foci."[67] Christianity is the "perfected spiritual and moral religion."[68] That understanding is dogmatically expressed in the doctrines of justification and the Kingdom of God. And for Ritschl, "there can be no doubt that these two characteristics condition each other mutually."[69] Therefore, in speaking of "that in regard to which every subject matter taken up is considered" in Ritschl's system, to speak of the Kingdom of God is to speak in summary terms about the "point" of doing theology, and of the logical interconnector between the theological loci.[70]

a. To have said that the Kingdom of God plays the role in Ritschl's theology of a connector (to use Kelsey's term) or a regulative principle (to use Garvie's and Richmond's term), is in fact to have already said something significant about Ritschl's understanding and use of the Kingdom of God. That the Kingdom plays this con-

necting role is to have indicated its position, with regard to his system; that is, to have seen that the kinds of decisions Ritschl made in using his understanding of the Kingdom in his theology precede the development of the loci. That is to say that Ritschl formed a general understanding of what Christianity is "all about" before he developed in detail the finer points of his system. As Kelsey puts it:

> At the root of a theological position there is an imaginative act in which a theologian tries to catch up in a single metaphorical judgement the full complexity of God's presence in, through, and over against the activities comprising the church's common life. 71

This imaginative and metaphorical judgement about Christianity determines the "shape" of the theological position as it is developed. Thus, in Ritschl's system, his central focus on justification by faith with its inextricably linked understanding of the moral task of the Kingdom of God - that is, the conception of the perfected spiritual and moral religion-determines the shape of his system (literally, in Ritschl's case, the elliptical shape of his system). In discovering the place of scripture in Ritschl's formulation of the imaginative act and metaphorical judgement concerning the Kingdom of God, a fundamental understanding will be gained as to the basic place of scripture in Ritschl's theology.

Because, therefore, of the emphasis that Ritschl placed on the formation of his understanding of the Kingdom of God from its Old Testament sources and the preaching of Jesus, the analysis begins there.

b. The Old Testament Sources.

i. In building his structure of the Kingdom of God in the life and ministry of Jesus, Ritschl presents a generalised view

of the Old Testament into which he places the person and work of Jesus. The Kingdom of God, according to Ritschl's understanding, is das Ziel of the preaching ministry of Jesus, and it is for the foundation of which that he pursued his priestly-sacrificial vocation. As such, the Kingdom of God is viewed by Ritschl as, yet again, the fulfilling and surpassing of the Old Testament religion. Jesus and his Kingdom of God are viewed as that which forms the substance of the prophetic hope, and, in view of the way in which that hope was fulfilled and transformed by Jesus, is also the transcendence of that hope. Indeed, the message of Jesus and much (if not all) of his activity is directed to the end of, and is summed up by Ritschl as, the Kingdom of God.

In developing this understanding of Jesus and the Kingdom of God, Ritschl draws a picture of the Old Testament religion with its understanding of God and its salvific hope. First, Jesus is cast in the role of a prophet with his ministry directed exclusively to the covenant people, the Jews.[72]

> Der Satz, dass die Zeit für die Verwirklichung des Reiches Gottes erfüllt ist, hat den Sinn, dass Jesus als Prophet sich in den von Gott geleiteten Geschichtszusammenhang gestellt weiss, der dem Volke des Alten Bundes zukommt. [73]

Jesus is cast in this role because of Ritschl's understanding of what God was "up to" in the history of Israel and his relationship to the covenant people. The God of the Old Testament, who is all-mighty and good, the free-willing creator and sustainer of all creatures[74], has, of his creative free will, chosen the Israelite people to be a people of priests so that they might approach God and have relationship with him.[75] Through the worship of God, their King, the Israelites were to have fulfilled their goal of community with God.[76] And in spite of the way in which they "narrowed" and "limited"

that covenant relationship to God by making the relationship one of "technical service" and ceremony, this covenant relationship is still the "sphere" from which Jesus came and within which he worked.[77]

This understanding of the Old Testament covenant people existing under the divine Lordship of God is important to the development of Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus. Not only because (as seen above A.2.) of the implications it has for Ritschl's understanding of the Lordship of Christ (though certainly also that), but also for the important role it plays in "setting the stage" for Christ. As he surveyed the history of the covenant relationship between Israel and God, Ritschl sensed a shift in Israel's understanding of what that Lordship was to mean. As the prospect of the restoration of the earthly Davidic Lordship over the people was pushed yet further into the future, and especially as the covenant people found themselves under oppressive <u>foreign</u> Lordship, a different kind of understanding of the Lordship of God developed.[76] Thus, the prophets teach of God chastising his people in an effort to purify them in preparation for their own freedom under the full Lordship of God.[79] Ritschl saw this promise of the full Lordship of God and the freeing of the covenant people from foreign Lordship, to be <u>der Kern</u> of the prophetic hope.[80] And Ritschl also saw this hope taking on a particularly religious sense, where the hope is tied up with the conversion of the people back to YHWH and the restoration of the cult.[81] And the desire for <u>justice</u> remains as one of the chief points of the prophetic hope.[82] Thus, as the religion of the Old Testament covenant people developed toward the time of Christ, through the influence of the Babylonian exile and the hope expressed by the prophets, the expectation of the

people took the shape of the Messiah who would exercise the Lordship of God (as a king in David's line) and who would, to a significant degree, proximate to the presentation of God himself.[83] Ritschl summarises his findings from the Old Testament concerning the messiah so:

> Indessen weist doch gerade der Auffassung des Messias als einer weltgeschichtlichen Person unter der Voraussetzung der übergeschichtlichen Gerichtserscheinung Gottes über den Gesichtskreis der Israelitlichen Religion hinaus. Der Mensch, welcher Gottes Herrschaft auf der Erde im Zusammenhang die Weltgeschichte führt, wird sich vielleicht in einen anderen Sinne, als die Propheten meinen, als übernatürliches und überweltliches Wesen erweisen lassen. [84]

In short, Ritschl saw in the Old Testament prophetic hope that the Messiah would exercise a spiritual supremacy over the world that would be a demonstration of the Lordship of God over his people.

Thus, Jesus is, for Ritschl, the prophet who comes to lead the covenant people into the Kingdom of God (Mk.12.26,27; Jn. 2.16).[85] It is also by means of this view of the Old Testament that Jesus' knowledge of God as Father is to be understood.[86] And further, it is by this means that Jesus' "life task" is characterised, and shows that Jesus' own vocational activity is limited to the Jewish people (Mt.5.17; Mk.7.27; cf.Mt.15.24).[87] This is also the explanation of why Jesus first sent his disciples only to the Jews (Mt.10. 5,6).[88] And finally, it is only from the scripture of the Old Testament that Jesus "authenticates" his own person and calling (Mk.4.11, 12;7.6,7;10.7,8;11.17;12.10ff,35-37; Lk.4.16ff; Jn.5.39), and from which John the Baptist witnesses to Jesus' messiahship (Mk.9.12,13; 11.30; Mt.11.12-14; 21.32; Jn.5.33).[89] And by thereby associating himself with the "old covenant" and distinguishing himself from it, Jesus shows himself to be the Son of God (Mt.17.24-27).[90]

This is, then, the background against which Ritschl's

understanding of the position of Jesus and the Kingdom of God are developed. It should be noted that a large part of the above presentation depends on generalisations taken from Ritschl's understanding of what God was "up to" in the history of the Israelites. It should also be noted, however, that these generalisations do rest on substantial detailed work on large passages of the Old Testament.[91]

ii. Having thus established the general background for stating that the Kingdom of God is das Ziel of the preaching of Jesus, and why it is, Ritschl goes into the subject in more detail. Whereas in the more general presentation above Ritschl viewed the people of Israel as called by election to be a Kingdom of priests, Ritschl now explicates this further by stating that this means that they are a religious community ruled over by God, and having a moral task.

> Das Israelitish Volk wird durch seine Erwählung von Gott zu einem Königreich von Priesten bestimmt, d.h. zu einer religiösen Gemeinde die zugleich Sittliche Aufgaben und rechtliche Formen haben soll, über die Gott selbst als König herrsche (Deut.33.5; I Sam.8.7; Is.33.22). [92]

Ritschl sees this as the more pertinent of the two main streams of prophetic thought on the Lordship of the messiah. The other, the "political independence and termination of the servitude" of the people, Jesus did not reckon as important; indeed he is, according to Ritschl, decidedly indifferent to the idea (Mk.12.17).[93]

Again, having shown in his general presentation that Jesus understood his ministry of the Kingdom of God to be limited to the Jewish people, Ritschl shows now that the spread of the Kingdom to the Gentiles is consonant with the prophetic expectation (Mt.8.11,12;21.43).[94] This inclusion of the Gentiles in the scope of the prophetic hope is demonstrated in Matthew by a vocabulary shift

from his rare use of βασιλεια του θεου (Mt.6.10,33;12.28;13.43;21.31,43;26.29) to his more common use of βασιλεια του ουρανου (eg., 5.19). This demonstrates to Ritschl a universalisation of the message and meaning of the Kingdom which, again, transcends the expectations of the prophets and yet which is consonant with them.[95] Indeed it shows that, where God is, he exercises his Lordship of heaven.[96] That this is consonant with the prophetic teaching s seen by Ritschl in comparison with Daniel 2.18 and 4.23, where the "God of Heaven" and "the holder of the power is in heaven" show the Old Testament roots of the expression.

Ritschl saw in the proclamation of the Lordship of God by Jesus (which is the obverse and equal of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God) the original message of Jesus[97], which, only after "certain circumstances" in the life and ministry of Jesus was transferred to Jesus himself.[98] But, according to Ritschl, this declaration of the Lordship of Christ is never directly made by Jesus himself ("aus dem Munde Jesus direkt"), except in Luke 22.30 at the instigation of Pilate.[99] On the whole the Lordship of Christ is proclaimed by others about Jesus. In Ritschl's view, Jesus preached the coming of the Kingdom and the Lordship of God, and left unsaid anything (direct) about his own Lordship over the community.[100] Thus, Ritschl concludes that Jesus did not begin by proclaiming his messiahship, but rather went about his activities of teaching and salvation, summoning his disciples to him, so that they, from their experience of him, would perceive that he was the messiah.[101] As the disciples perceived Jesus as the messiah, so too Jesus was more explicit about the present presence of the Kingdom of God[102], as a demonstration of which he pointed to his power to

heal and his power over evil (Mt.11.11-13; Lk.17.20,21).[103]

Jesus' demonstration of his messiahship as the present realisation of the Lordship of God is linked by Ritschl to Jesus' understanding of the "worth" of the community of disciples. The community of disciples became for Jesus, according to Ritschl, his family (Mr.3.13,14) which was marked by its knowledge of the Kingdom of God (Mk.4.11) and their knowledge of Jesus as the messiah of God (Mk.8.29), which "family membership" with Jesus was maintained through good works.[104] Thus Ritschl drew a distinction between the community of disciples as the community of the Kingdom of God and the community of Israel (Mt.17.25).[105]

In making this distinction, Ritschl has brought two parallel lines of development together. The first line was the transition in the New Testament from Jesus proclaiming the coming Lordship of God in the Kingdom to the proclamation by the disciples of the Lordship of Christ in the Kingdom of God. The second line was the transition from and distinction between the religious community of Israel and the community of disciples as the community of the Kingdom of God. In bringing these two lines of development together, Ritschl produced his complete picture of the Lordship of Christ over the newly founded Kingdom of God. He also tried to show the continuity between his picture of the Lordship of Christ over the new community of the Kingdom of God with that of the Lordship of God over the religious community of Israel, again trying to show Christ's fulfillment and surpassing of the religion and religious expectations of the Old Testament.

The transitions represented here are seen by Ritschl to be summarised in the leitenden Parabeln of Jesus in Mark 4. 26ff, 30ff (with its parallel in Mt.13.31-33), the scattering of seed, and

the grain of mustard seed.[106] Ritschl's explanation of these two parables centres on the perception of the realisation of the present Lordship of God in the activity of Jesus, and its completion in the future.[107] The "completion" is associated with an appearance of Jesus ἐν δοξῇ (as in Mk.8.28;9.1; 10.37;13.26), which also corresponds to the "reward" for those for whom the Kingdom of God is an "attainment" (as in Mt.20.1-16).[108] Further, Ritschl takes ("indirectly") from the second parable the view that the Kingdom of God is not merely a matter of moral task and work, but is also in part (Mk.4 and Mt.13) the "highest good" (höchste Gut) that God can bestow on man under the conditions of his moral activity.[109] The content of this "highest good" which underlies their moral activity consists in justification, the enjoyment of divine forgiveness, the knowledge of God's world-government, and the dignity of being children of God which one comes to know by following God's way in the Kingdom of God (cf.Mt.5.4-9; and to v.6, cf.Gal.5.4-6).[110] These altogether combine to form the content of the idea of ζωή as found in Mk.9.43,45; Mt.9.14, and this is the "destiny" or "vocation" of man that allows the analogy to be drawn between man and the living God (cf.Jn.6.57).[111] While the full realisation of this ζωή lies in the future (αἰώνιος ὁ ἐρχόμενος), this full ζωή as corresponding to the life of the Kingdom of God, demands the moral activity of the faithful (and so therefore one finds eine Reihe von Aussprüchen - declarations or maxims-in the Gospel of John) so that they can claim and lay hold of the present Kingdom of God in Christ (Jn.5.24;10.28;17.3).[112]

iii. By this means, Ritschl has summarised the whole Christian life and experience under the heading of the Kingdom of

God. He first laid the foundation from the Old Testament expectations and hopes of the prophets and people of the Lordship of God over a free and independent nation. With the coming of Jesus, Ritschl saw the fulfillment and transformation of those hopes and expectations and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God under the Lordship of Christ. And, as the community relaised the life (the ζωή) possible in the future of the Kingdom of God, they set about the moral task of the Kingdom of God in order that they could lay claim to its present realisation. Therefore, because of its comprehensive nature, Ritschl saw the Kingdom of God as the central message of Jesus as seen in his preaching and life-work. Not because it was the central concept that Jesus preached (as one among many concepts), but because it comprehended the whole of Jesus' preaching (as the many included in the one). For Ritschl, to say that the Kingdom of God was the central core of the preaching of Jesus is to say that all of Christian life and experience is summarised in that one phrase.

In seeing, then, that the content of the Kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus is for Ritschl a comprehensive summary of the whole of Christian life and experience, encompassing as it does the Old Testament religious background, the life and ministry of Christ, the justification of the community, the founding and equipping of the community for the moral task of the Kingdom of God, and the future of the community in the future of God, it is then also clear that this biblical picture plays an almost identical role to that played by the Kingdom in Ritschl's dogmatic work. As the Kingdom of God binds together the various parts of Ritschl's system of theology, encompassing all of the theological loci within it, so too, the Kingdom of God binds together and summarises all of the various parts of

the ministry of Jesus. By understanding the Kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus as das Ziel of that ministry, and by using the Kingdom of God in a regulative way to bind together his developed theological system, Ritschl showed, at the least, a high degree of internal logical consistency in his entire theological effort, which is of considerable importance in understanding and interpreting his thought.

2. Assessment.

In assessing Ritschl's exegesis in developing his interpretation of the life and ministry of Jesus in terms of the Kingdom of God, it is instructive to compare Ritschl's effort with that of Johannes Weiss. The grounds for this comparison are as follows: firstly, Weiss did his work on the notion of the Kingdom of God as a direct response to and rebuttal of that of Ritschl; Weiss' work is virtually contemporary with Ritschl's. Secondly, Weiss and Ritschl also had the same critical tools to work with, and the same amount of biblical-historical-archaeological information to hand on which to base their judgements. Therefore, this comparison, more than any other, will provide a real insight into the way in which Ritschl made use of the biblical material in viewing the Kingdom of God as the centre-piece of the preaching of Jesus.

a. It must first be stated that both Weiss and Ritschl agreed on the fundamental point that the Kingdom of God is central to the preaching of Jesus. Weiss expresses his gratefulness to recent theology "for the new emphasis upon this central idea of Jesus'."[113] Indeed, in reemphasising the centrality of the Kingdom of God to the teaching of Jesus, Weiss states that he had been

troubled by the feeling that what Ritschl understood to be the Kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus, and what Jesus understood by the Kingdom of God in his preaching, were two radically different things.[114] So, while not having a disagreement that the Kingdom was central to Jesus' preaching, Weiss and Ritschl differed sharply on its content and meaning.[115]

In comparing Ritschl and Weiss on the Kingdom of God, it is instructive to notice the way in which each developed his interepretation, including the kinds of material each thought appropriate to the task. Should some significant differences have been found on this methodological level, they would help to explain some of the differences on content between their views. Since, however, they approach the subject in almost identical ways, the reason for the differences must lie elsewhere.

First, both Weiss and Ritschl approach the Old Testament with a view to summarising the Old Testament understanding of the Kingdom of God and the rule of God.[116] Weiss, like Ritschl, draws a picture in more or less broad strokes of the religion of the Old Testament and the hopes and expectations ofthat religion as a means of interpreting the New Testament. Weiss, however, unlike Ritschl, drew on a large number of extra-canonical sources in presenting the Old Testament background to Jesus, sources which Ritschl considered inappropriate to understanding the Old Testament hopes and expectations as a background to Jesus. Thus, Weiss has sections on "The Lordship of God and the Lordship of Satan" (where the material is drawn from books like the Assumption of Moses[117]), and on the establishment of the Lordship of God in the apocalyptic literature (where the material is drawn from books like Esra and Baruch[118]). Weiss concludes his

summary of the Old Testament sources by making comparison with Persian and Zoroastrian sources (which, somewhat confusingly he calls Parsismus[119]).

This represents one major, and ultimately decisive, difference between the methods and material employed by Ritschl and Weiss in preparing their accounts of Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God. As was noted above[120], while Ritschl was familiar with the material Weiss incorporates here to form the background to Jesus, Ritschl considered it to be inconsistant with Jesus' use and understanding of the Old Testament material. It was seen above that Ritschl saw Jesus as deliberately setting himself against the religion of the Jews as contemporary to him (the Pharisees, Saducees, Essenes, etc.[121]), while demonstrating in his preaching a deliberate affinity with the prophetic understanding of the religion of the Hebrews.[122] Thus Ritschl set Jesus in an antithetical position with regard to the kind of apocalyptic material Weiss used to explain Jesus. Therefore, since for Ritschl that material could only be used as a way of contrasting with what Jesus thought and spoke, it could not inform Ritschl's understanding of Jesus' view of the Kingdom of God, as it could for Weiss.

This, then, accounts for one of the major criticisms that Weiss levelled at Ritschl in the course of his work, that is, that Ritschl failed to take into account and make use of the antithesis between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan.[123] While the casting out of demons was an activity of Jesus that formed a part of his ministry in carrying through his vocation (eg., Mt.12.25-28), it was not something that Ritschl saw as fundamental to that vocation, in much the same way that Ritschl did not see the power

of miracle as fundamental.[124] Thus, having once formed this framework within which to interpret Jesus, Weiss found a continuing series of problems with Ritschl's interpretation.

Second, after the dominant interest of the Old Testament with regard to the Kingdom of God is settled, both Ritschl and Weiss related the various strands of Jesus' teaching and preaching to the Old Testament background in interpreting Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God.[125] Jesus' relationship to that Old Testament background and his understanding and use of it in his preaching was developed and explained so that a fuller interpretation of Jesus could take place.

When that relationship between Jesus and the Old Testament background is developed, third, Ritschl and Weiss both went on to explain the significance of Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom in terms of ethics[126] and Jesus' Messiasbewusstsein.[127] In both of these areas, Ritschl and Weiss come into some conflict. Because Weiss saw the Kingdom of God as solely the work of God wherein no work of man can contribute to its furtherance[128], Weiss criticised Ritschl for viewing the Kingdom of God as in part the moral task of mankind, and a joint task with God.[129] So, too, because Weiss saw that in Jesus' view he (Jesus) stood at the end of the world and of history where only the judgement remained,[130] Weiss criticised Ritschl for seeing the Kingdom of God as the beginning of a new age, one wherein the community of the Kingdom of God would work under the Lordship of Christ for the full realisation of the Kingdom in God's future.[131]

So, while there are a large number of points on which Ritschl and Weiss disagreed, the way in which they went about developing their positions was markedly similar. Thus, a substantial part

of their disagreement stems from the inclusion by Weiss of the apocalyptic material from the intertestamental period, and Ritschl's refusal to use it. This led to fundamental differences in their understanding of Jesus' preaching and, ultimately, to their view of the meaning of the Kingdom of God and its use for ethics.

b. Bearing in mind the kind of differences indicated above between Ritschl and Weiss on the meaning of the Kingdom in Jesus' preaching, it is, as a final look at Ritschl's exegetical work, instructive to compare Ritschl and Weiss' interpretations of the two parables seen above which Ritschl points to as expressing his understanding of Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom (Mk.4.26ff, 30ff).

As was seen above (B.1.b.ii.), Ritschl used the two parables in Mark 4 to represent the transitions in the New Testament from Jesus' proclamation of the coming Lordship of God in the Kingdom, to the proclamation by the disciples of the Lordship of Christ in the community of the Kingdom of God, and the transition from (and distinction between) the religious community of Israel and the community of disciples as the community of the Kingdom of God. These two transitions were seen by Ritschl as showing Christ's fulfillment and surpassing of the religion and religious expectations of the Old Testament. For Ritschl, these transitions are summarised and amplified in the Kingdom parables in Mk.4.[132] As noted above, Ritschl's explanation of these parables centres on the perception of the realisation of the present Lordship of God in the activity of Jesus and its future "completion". This completion (der Vollendung[133]) is associated with an appearance of Jesus ἐν δόξῃ (as in Mk.8.28;9.1; 10.37;13.26), which also corresponds to the

"reward" (der Lohn) for those for whom the Kingdom of God is a "corresponding performance" (as in Mt.20.1-16).[134] Ritschl also took ("indirectly") from the second parable the view that the Kingdom of God is not merely a matter of moral task and work, but is also in part the "highest good" that God can bestow on man under the conditions of his moral activity.[135] The "highest good" which preceeds their moral activity consists in justification, the enjoyment of forgiveness, the knowledge of God's world-government, and the dignity of being children of God which one comes to know by following God's way in the Kingdom.[136] Ritschl amplifies this further by stating that the content of the "highest good" as described above forms the content of the idea of ζωή as found in Mark 9 and Matthew 9, and that this is the destiny or vocation of man which allows the analogy to be drawn between man and the living God.[137] While for Ritschl, the full realisation of this ζωή lies in the future, full ζωή , as corresponding to the life of the Kingdom of God, includes and demands the moral activity of the faithful (and so, therefore, there are commandments or maxims in the Gospel of John) so that they can claim and lay hold of the present Kingdom of God in Christ.[138]

Weiss' understanding and use of these Kingdom parables in Mark 4 differs dramatically from that of Ritschl. Where Ritschl was able to use them to summarise and amplify his understanding of Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God, Weiss was scarcely able to find any meaning in them concerning the Kingdom, and what meaning there was present for the Kingdom in these parables pointed toward things yet to come.[139]

Weiss employs several means to move the interpreta-

tion of these parables away from their more common Kingdom interpretation. First, he admits that the evangelists themselves without doubt understood (allegorically) that the field of grain and the mustard tree refer to the contemporary church and the "outwardly visible and expanding Kingdom" respectively.[140] Weiss questions, however, that this was the meaning that Jesus gave to the parables. Because of the context in which they appear, that is, their close proximity to the parable of the sower, they are more appropriately and accurately, according to Weiss, understood as applying to the "fate of the proclaimed word".[141] Thus Weiss sees the introductory formula about the Kingdom in Mark 4.11 as "misleading", and suggests instead that some formula such as " ὑμῖν ἐστι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (or ὁ λόγος)" would be more appropriate and accurate as to its content and meaning.[142] Weiss sees this introductory formula in Mark 4.11 as so misleading, that it misled the other evangelists into "attaching" this formula to a "wide range of other parables", thus further muddying the waters of their interpretation.[143] On that basis, Weiss draws two observations: one, "a great many parables which are introduced in this manner have nothing at all to do with the Kingdom of God or can be related to it only with difficulty"; and two, in many cases the evangelists themselves drop the formula and the Kingdom of God viewpoint as to the meaning of the parables.[144] Therefore Weiss concludes that:

> Because of this situation and because of the often extremely clumsy style of the introduction, we are obliged to disregard this interpretation entirely and to explain these parables, first of all, without regard to the Kingdom of God, and, conversely, the idea of the Kingdom of God without regard to these parables.[145]

Weiss then broadens the scope of his interpretation by commenting on the parable of the tares (which Weiss says can be

"reconstructed" from Mt. and Mk.), where there too the "basic idea (is) that an obstructed and seemingly unsuccessful preaching will at last, through God's intervention, have its reward and result."[146] The point Weiss made by introducing this comment on the parable of the tares is to strengthen his basic assertion that not only do these parables have nothing to do with the Kingdom of God, but they also, and most importantly, "do not give one the right to identify the Kingdom of God in any sense with the group of disciples, or to think of it as being actualised in them."[147] Weiss also, on these grounds, disallows an interpretation of Luke 17.21 which expresses the realisation of the Kingdom. According to Weiss, when Jesus says that the βασιλεία του θεοῦ is realised in the midst of the Pharisees "this does not give any occasion for seeing here an allusion to the actualisation of the Kingdom of God within the group of disciples."[148] Rather, Weiss sees the realisation of the Kingdom of God interpretation as "improbable" because Jesus' words "in some way or other, contain a paradox."[149] What Jesus' words "can only be understood to mean" is that <u>without</u> the Pharisees knowing it, "the βασιλεία has been realised in some mysterious manner."[150] Therefore, according to Weiss, it must refer to "mysterious events" visible only to the eye of faith.[151]

But the main plank on which Weiss rests his case is the first petition of the Lord's prayer: ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου. Weiss will not permit any meaning such as "may thy Kingdom grow" or "may thy Kingdom be perfected", only "may thy Kingdom <u>come</u>".[152] Therefore, <u>for the disciples</u>, the βασιλεία is not yet come, "not even in its beginnings; therefore Jesus bids them ζητεῖτε τὴν βασιλείαν (Lk.12.31)."[153] Weiss continues by stating unequivocally

that there are no stages of the Kingdom's coming, "either the βασιλεία is here, or it is not yet here."[154] The Kingdom is the one great prophecy and promise that has yet to be fulfilled.[155]

In this way, Weiss set up his understanding of the meaning of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' preaching in contrast to Ritschl's understanding. Weiss' interpretation went on to find wide acceptance (especially as popularised by A.Schweitzer and his konsequente Eschatologie[156]), while Ritschl's languished, only approximated in C.H.Dodd's "realised eschatology".[157] The contrast between the two interpretations provides a measure of insight into the manner in which the texts were handled in preparing their positions, and by drawing out the differences between their approaches, further light is shed on Ritschl's exegetical work.[158]

c. From the comparison between Ritschl and Weiss as outlined above, three brief points concerning Ritschl's approach to biblical work can be made. First, it needs to be noted again that Ritschl and Weiss had the same material to hand from which to develop their positions (at least when Weiss wrote his initial works on the Kingdom, which is why a comparison with, say Schweitzer or other, later interpreters would not be so helpful). It should also be noted that both Ritschl and Weiss approached the material, methodologically, in virtually the same way. Both began with the Old Testament material as the proper background to the teaching of Jesus, and proceeded from there to an assessment of Jesus' teaching, and that, consequently, of the apostles and other writers of the New Testament. These basic similarities serve to highlight even more sharply the differences between their positions.

The first point concerns the material from which Ritschl

and Weiss developed the Old Testament background. As noted above, Weiss included in the material he felt was relevant: the books of the intertestamental period, and especially those of an apocalyptic nature. That this had a profound influence on his development of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God is seen even from a cursory reading of Weiss' work. The Kingdom as the future promise of Jesus, as the last great divine event still to be expected and only marginally applicable to the present life of the Christian, the Kingdom as the sole work of God in judgement at the last day - these eschatological, apocalyptic interpretations form the core of Weiss' understanding. And Weiss' work on the texts of the New Testament reflects his inclusion at the earlier stage of the intertestamental literature.

This is, of course, in sharp contrast to Ritschl's approach. As has been noted above, Ritschl did not consider the intertestamental literature to be of use in interpreting the Old Testament religious background to Jesus.[159] Ritschl based this partly on his commitment to the canon as the source of authoritative material for theology, and partly on the fact that he saw no direct reference in the recorded words of Jesus to any of that literature. Thus, because of the vast majority of the books of the Old Testament (especially the "major" prophets and the Psalms, from which Ritschl drew much of his understanding of the Old Testament) are not at all of an apocalyptic nature, Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God reflects this.

Both Weiss and Ritschl made the decision about what material to include on historical grounds. For Weiss, as for the "members" of the religionsgeschichtliche Schule[160], the historical

method demanded that no artificial and arbitrary barriers, such as the doctrinal concept of canon, could be allowed to limit the choice of material that was brought to bear on theology. Any material that was historically proximate was therefore historically relevant. For Ritschl, however, as noted above[161], the historical method demanded a strict limitation of the material to that which was actually evident in the texts in question. Therefore, for example, when Ritschl understood Jesus as setting himself overagainst the religion of the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., as an aberration of the true Old Testament religion of the prophets, and called them back to the true Old Testament religion, Ritschl felt it necessary on these historical grounds to exclude the intertestamental literature as irrelevant to an understanding of Jesus' use and understanding of the Old Testament background to the Kingdom of God. Ritschl would, therefore, not have the kind of apocalyptic and eschatological flavour to his work as Weiss did.

The second point concerns Ritschl's actual handling of the text itself. Unlike Weiss, who took a great deal more liberty in "reconstructing" a text,[162] or who had little problem with dismissing an introductory formula as "misleading"[163], Ritschl handled the text in a much more cautious manner.[164] That is, rather than tampering with the text to discover a meaning, Ritschl goes to some pains to discover the meaning of a passage by detailed linguistic work as well as comparison with other passages. Ritschl stresses the "clear" meaning of a passage, leaving disputable passages open to question.[165] Ritschl's methods (and theological interests) demanded that the text as it stands should determine how it is interpreted. While using generalisations from other portions of scripture and

passages with similar content to illuminate a passage, Ritschl does not "reconstruct" a passage in an attempt to understand it. To Ritschl, such a reconstruction would violate the integrity of the historically given texts, and would be a procedure that was not scientifically controllable, in the sense that there would be no way of deciding what was and what was not a legitimate reconstruction.

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From this comparison with Weiss, then, two points arise concerning Ritschl's approach to the Bible. The first is that Ritschl's commitment to the canon is seen to be reinforced. His refusal to engage with extrabiblical material in constructing his theology also demonstrates his commitment to the Lutheran exegetical and theological tradition. The second is Ritschl's handling of the texts. His refusal to tamper with the texts reflects his commitment to their integrity as historical documents meant to be interpreted as they stand. These two things help to point towards (though do not fully demonstrate) Ritschl's overall commitment to the exegesis and interpretation of the texts as they stand. While this does not preclude a prior theological interference in making these decisions, it does indicate Ritschl's fundamental commitment to understanding the texts as they stand, and to using that understanding as the basis for formulating his theological position.

III CONCLUSION.

The issues raised by this analysis of Ritschl's biblical work are the subject of further analysis and critique in Chapter Five. Questions raised in an acute manner by the analysis in this chapter, such as the question of history and the historical method, are dealt with in what follows, together with a summary of

all the findings of the thesis thus far.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. David Kelsy, The Use of Scripture In Recent Theology (London: SCM, 1975).

2. Other notable studies in the field of the role of scripture in theology are, eg., H. Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative (New Haven: Yale, 1974); R.Johnson, Authority in Protestant Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959); J.Reid, The Authority of Scripture (London: Methuen, 1957); H.Diem, Was ist Schriftgemässe (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1958); etc..

3. Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: University Press,1963).

4. Kelsey, Scripture, p.125. One also joins with Kelsey in refusing to decide on the issue of whether or not these jurisprudential methods are more approrpriate than the traditional syllogostic methods of logic. "That is a problem for the logicians to settle. We only look to his (Toulmin's) proposal for help in exhibiting the anatomy of theological arguments: we are not concerned to diagnose their logical diseases." (p.129).

5. ibid., p.129.

6. ibid., p.122.

7. ibid., p.123.

8. ibid., p.125.

9. ibid..

10. ibid..

11. ibid..

12. ibid..

13. ibid..

14. ibid..

15. In the discussion of the "candid" form for argument, Kelsey's examples are used throughout.

16. Kelsey, pp.126 to 129 for the following discussion.

17. ibid., p.128.

18. ibid., p.126.

19. ibid., pp.129-130.

20. ibid., pp.133-4; Kelsey points out that this is a fair representation of a family of arguments fround frequently in the Church

20. Dogmatics, though in "candid" form there are no direct quotations from passages in the Dogmatics.

21. Kelsey, Scripture, pp. 134-38.

22. ibid., pp. 134-5.

23. ibid., p.135.

24. ibid..

25. ibid..

26. ibid., p.136.

27. ibid..

28. ibid., p.137.

29. ibid., p.138.

30. Because of the nature of the case, it is obvious that the macro-argument dealt with in this section is taken from J&R III. This is where Ritschl's theological proposals are set forth, while the background work is done in vols. I and II and in the considerable amount of other published and unpublished material in which Ritschl worked out his basic positions. The manuscript lectures on the New Testament are of the utmost importance in section II.B in discussing the Kingdom of God.

31. Eg., Richmond, Ritschl, pp. 168ff; Lotz, Ritschl and Luther, pp.42-4; Hefner, Three Essays., pp.29-30; Schäfer, Ritschl, pp.44-67.

32. Schäfer, Ritschl, pp. 44ff.

33. J&R III, paragraph 49, pp. 452-472.

34. ibid., pp. 442-452.

35. ibid., 472-485.

36. Kelsey, Scripture, p.130.

37. Some of the material comes from the first two volumes of RuV, others come from the other studies Ritschl did as preliminary to the writing of J&R III.

38. J&R III, pp. 456-463.

39. It is this exegetical claim that is examined in section A.3.

40. Kelsey, Scripture, pp.126,130.

41. J&R III, p.456.

42. J&R III, p.456.

43. ibid..

44. ibid..

45. This is not unlike the explanation of miracle given by C.S.Lewis in his book Miracles (London: Collins, 1947). Lewis describes miracles like changing water into wine: "The divine art of miracle is not an art of suspending the pattern to which events conform but of feeding new events into that pattern." Ritschl's position was not the fashionable writing-off of miracle of his day, but neither is it an affirmation of its central importance to apologetic that was also fashionable (and still is) in other circles of his day. In trying to maintain a clear subordination to scripture in his theology and to prevent a source of attack on his position by those who wrote-off miracle, Ritschl found it necessary to devalue miracle so that no understanding of Christ and Christian thought is in any way dependent on it.

46. J&R III, p.456.

47. In making these generalisations (in this section of J&R III) about the nature and extent of Jesus' power of miracle, Ritschl seems to be thinking mainly about the miracles of nature and healing. What he does not seem to be referring to at all are such Gospel miracles as the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11). The Gospel narratives do reckon this sort of thing as a fairly staggering "alteration" of the "fixed system of things".

48. J&R III, p.456.

49. ibid..

50. ibid..

51. J&R III, p.460. Ritschl also makes the point here that the exalted Christ's exercise of power over the world is done through the community, and that that power is "anything but a fact of objective and palpable experience." He continues, "the phenomena in which many seek the real proof of the might of Christianity, namely political influence and the legal authority of church officials and ecclesiastical institutions, are the very things that come under strong suspicion of falsifying the intention of Christ; indeed, it is only a really strong faith in the invisible that, amid the miry abominations and miserable trivialities of church history, can trace the advancing power of Christ over this world at all." ! (J&R III, p.460).

52. The exegesis of this passage is found on pp.462-3 of J&R III.

53. J&R III, p.viii.

54. Kelsey, Scripture,pp.129-30.

55. Garvie, Ritschlian Theology, p.237.

56. Richmond, Ritschl, p.102.

57. ibid., p.102.

58. Kelsey, Scripture, pp. 135-38.

59. ibid., pp.130, 137.

60. ibid., p.137.

61. D.Kelsey, "The Bible and Christian Theology", Journal of the American Academy of Religion, vol.xiviii, no.3, September 1980, pp.385-403.

62. ibid., p.390.

63. ibid.. The intentionality necessary to doing theology as shown by Kelsey, and the importance of the logical inter-connectedness of the various theological loci, are similar to the kind of analysis provided by the general systems theory. Two points from General systems theory are of relevance here. One, the object of the theory is to provide a means of viewing things as organised wholes. Two, this means giving full and proper consideration to the relationships which exist between sets of componants. Without relationships there is nothing; with relationships there are systems. See E. Laszlo, Introduction to Systems Philosophy (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1972). For an experimental use of systems theory in theology see the article by J.E.Huchingson, "The World as God's Body: A Systems View", in Journal of the American Academy of Religion, vol.xiviii, No.3, September 1980, pp. 335-345. See also W. Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science, (ET, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976.).

64. See especially Ritschl's "Festival Address on the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of M. Luther" (1883) (translated by D.Lotz in Ritschl and Luther. New York: Abingdon, 1974, pp.187.202), for Ritschl's assessment of and commitment to the Reformation. Also worthy of special attention is Lotz' article "A. Ritschl and the Unfinished Reformation" in Harvard Theological Review (vol.73, nos.3,4, July to October 1980,pp.337 to 372) for the most significant discussion to date of Ritschl's self-understanding and motivation as a theologian. In this article Lotz clearly demonstrates Ritschl's commitment as a theologian to calling the church "back to the New Testament by way of the Reformation", and to calling the church "forward to the reconstruction of modern protestantism in the name, and on the basis, of that epoch-making reformation of the sixteenth century which still awaits completion" (pp.341-2).

65. Cf. J&R I, pp.155, 157-8; see also D.Lotz, Ritschl and Luther, pp.31-36.

66. J&R III, p.vii.

67. J&R III, p.11.

68. ibid., p.10.

69. ibid..

70. This is partly to be seen in the way in which Ritschl ordered vol.III of J&R, where everything is ordered around the concept of Justification (and by implication, the Kingdom of God) and its relations.

71. Kelsey, Scripture, p.163.

72. "Biblische Theologie", pp.118-120.

73. ibid., p.118.

74. ibid., p.22.

75. ibid..

76. ibid., p.23.

77. ibid., pp.23-4.

78. ibid., pp.28-9.

79. ibid., p.29.

80. ibid..

81. ibid., pp.29-30.

82. ibid., p.30.

83. ibid., pp.30-1.

84. ibid., p.32.

85. ibid., p.118; cf. also Leben I, p.258 re. the prophetic background to the Kingdom of God in Jesus' preaching in Ritschl's theology.

86. ibid., p.118.

87. "Biblische Theologie", p.119.

88. ibid..

89. ibid., pp.119-120.

90. ibid., p.120.

91. See, eg., the detailed work in RuV II on the forgiveness of sins in the Psalms and Prophets (pp.51-61); on the Servant of God in Isaiah (pp.61-69); on the notion of the ransom price (pp. 69-81);

on the holiness, grace and love of God in the Old Testament (pp.90-96); on the justification by God in the Old Testament (pp.101-112); the wrath of God in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament (pp.123-130); on the wrath of God in the Psalms (pp.130-134); on the effects of the wrath of God in the Old Testament (pp.134-138); on the legal offerings of the Old Testament (pp.185-208); on human justification in the Old Testament (pp.260-269). And this is not to mention the detailed work contained in Ritschl's exegetical lectures on the various books of the New Testament.

92. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 120-121.

93. ibid., p.122.

94. ibid., p.123.

95. Cf. Leben I, pp. 258f.

96. "Biblische Theologie", p.124.

97. ibid., pp. 124-5.

98. ibid., p.125.

99. ibid..

100. ibid.. Cf. also Leben II, pp. 173-4.

101. "Biblische Theologie", p.126; Leben II, p.173.

102. "Biblische Theologie", p.126.

103. ibid., p.127.

104. ibid..

105. ibid..

106. ibid., pp.128f.

107. ibid., p.128.

108. "Biblische Theologie", p.128.

109. ibid., p.129.

110. ibid..

111. ibid., pp. 129-30.

112. ibid., p.130.

113. Cf. J.Weiss, Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (ET London: SCM, 1971), p.59 (This is a translation of the first edition of Weiss' first book on the Kingdom of God, Die Predigt

Jesu vom Reiche Gottes, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892). See also Normin Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Preaching of Jesus (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), p.16.

114. Forward to the second edition of Die Predigt Jesus vom Reiche Gottes (1900).

115. It is interesting to note that Weiss (who, as is well known, was Ritschl's son-in-law) had a very high regard for Ritschl's use of his concept of the Kingdom of God in his theology as a means of bringing their generation nearer to the Christian religion: "I am still of the opinion that his theological system, and especially this central concept (of the Kingdom of God), presents that form of teaching concerning the Christian faith which is most effectively designed to bring our generation nearer to the Christian religion; and, properly understood and rightly used, to awaken and further a sound and strong religious life such as we need today." (Predigt, 2nd ed., as quoted in Perrin, op.cit.,p.18). Not only does this statement serve to show how central the Kingdom of God was to Ritschl's system, but also shows the practical nature and emphases of Ritschl's theology, as indicated above in Chapters One and Two.

116. See eg., pp. 1-35 in Predigt (2nd ed.) where Weiss outlines the Old Testament background to the idea of the Kingdom of God and the Lordship of God; And also above for the outline of Ritschl's procedure.

117. Predigt (2nd ed.), pp. 26-29.

118. ibid., pp. 19-26.

119. ibid., pp.30-35. The editors, in their introduction to Weiss' Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, explain that Weiss, in common with his age, confused Zoroastrianism with the Parsees, who were the Persians who fled to India in the 7th and 8th centuries to avoid Muslim persecution, but who were, nevertheless, still Zoroastrian (pp.49-50, n.135).

120. See above, p.93-94.

121. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 33-67.

122. ibid., p.118 re.Lk.4.16-30.

123. Predigt (2nd ed.), pp.26-35; Jesus' Proclamation, pp. 74-79 (ET Die Idee des Reiches Gottes in der Theologie, p.111.).

124. J&R III, p.456, and above p. 149-150.

125. Predigt (2nd ed.), pp. 36-65 for Weiss; see above, pp p.164ff. for Ritschl.

126. Predigt (2nd ed.), pp. 134-144; and above, pp. p.168ff.

127. Predigt (2nd ed.). pp.154-159; and above, pp. 169-170.

128. Predigt (2nd ed.), pp. 2-11.

129. See above, pp. 170-171.

130. Predigt (2nd ed.), pp. 40-48.

131. Above pp. 171.

132. "Biblische Theologie", pp. 128ff.

133. ibid., p.128.

134. ibid..

135. ibid., p.129.

136. ibid..

137. ibid., pp. 129-130.

138. ibid., p.130.

139. Proclamation, pp. 72-4.

140. ibid., p.72.

141. ibid., Cf. also J.Weiss "Die Parabelrede bei Marcus", Studien und Kritiken, 1891, p.318.

142. Proclamation, p.64.

143. ibid..

144. ibid..

145. ibid.,; cf. "Parabelrede", pp. 303ff.

146. Proclamation, p.72

147. ibid..

148. ibid..

149. ibid., p.73.

150. ibid., Weiss' emphasis.

151. ibid., p.73.

152. ibid., Weiss' emphasis.

153. ibid., Weiss' emphasis.

154. ibid., p.73.

155. Proclamation, p.74.

156. A. Schweitzer, Das Messianitäts-und Leidens-geheimnis. Eine Skizze des Lebens Jesu. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901). (ET, W.Lowrie, The Mystery of the Kingdom of God (London: A&C Black, 1925)).

157. C.H.Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (New York: Scribner's, 1961). This is not to say, however, that Dodd's is a resurrection of Ritschl's position, only that in giving place to the elements of realisation in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom, Dodd has reemphasised an important aspect of Ritschl's position.

158. The point of the following comparison is not to pass a judgement on whose interpretation is the more correct. That is the provenance of the New Testament specialist. Rather, the point is to illuminate how Ritschl used the texts, and what prior decisions that use indicates.

159. see above, pp.164f.

160. see above, pp. 173ff.

161. Above, pp.164f.

162. See for example, Proclamation, p.72.

163. See for example, Proclamation, p.64; also "Parabelrede", pp. 303ff.

164. Examples of where Ritschl is more critical towards the text can be seen in J&R III, p.318; pp. 347-9. These, however, represent exceptions rather than the rule in Ritschl's handling of the texts.

165. Cf. J&R III, pp.344-45.

CHAPTER FIVE: CRITQUE

I. INTRODUCTION.

Broadly speaking, the main focus of this study has been to investigate certain aspects of the relationship between Albrecht Ritschl and the Bible. As such, the study has ranged over a number of specific areas: what it means to talk of "biblical theology" and to call a theologian a "biblical theologian", and how those terms can be applied to Ritschl; Ritschl's own views on the exegetical and interpretive task in theology, that is, on the hemeneutical task; detailed examination of how scripture functioned in Ritschl's theological argument; how Ritschl followed his own and the general hemeneutical guidelines in practice.

It remains, then, to make an evaluation of the "findings" that have come out of the areas outlined above. Therefore, section II of this chapter contains a summary of those "findings" and an evaluation of them, in terms of assessing Ritschl both according to his own self-understanding, and from the point of view of general theological method. Particular attention is paid to Ritschl's understanding and application of the "historical method" and the more general question of the "problem of history".

II Summary and Critique.

Presented here is what Kelsey would call the "diagnosis" of the arguments that were analysed in chapter Four. Before, however, doing that diagnosis, some comments are made about the whole notion of the "genuineness" of an authorisation of a theological claim by scripture in part A. Part B. contains the "diagnosis" of the arguments as analysed in chapter Four, and part C. is an evaluation of the "findings" of this study with special reference to

the historical method, and to exegesis.

A. It is important before discussing the way(s) in which scripture authorises Ritschl's theological claims to emphasise Kelsey's comments on the genuineness of an authorisation of a theological claim by scripture.

When a theological claim has been authorised by several different logically distinct means (ie., by scripture, a phenomenology of personal and spiritual independence, or historical considerations), it is not possible to state that the position is "more" authorised by, say, scripture, simply because, say, the data involved are direct biblical quotations. Nor is a theological position "less" authorised by scripture simply because the datum involved is, say, an ontology or a phenomenology. Because of the way in which a conclusion is authorised by data, warrants and backing, all of which may be of different logical types, all serve to authorise the conclusion in some way.

> Thus a conclusion that is authorised by data which consist of direct biblical quotations may also be authorised by backing consisting in a section of an ontology. It is at least logically possible that a theological proposal might be authorised by data provided by an ontological analysis and also authorised by warrants backed by direct quotations from scripture. [1]

How a theologian decides to build his theological structure is less important than the materials he uses and the final shape of the position he builds (though, as is seen below in part C., the kinds of decisions he makes before he begins to do his theology do largely affect the way in which the structure comes out).

Thus, Kelsey argues that it is "meaningless" to ask which of the two (from the quotation above) is more "genuinely" authorised by scripture, "meaningless in that every answer would,

in the nature of the case, be arbitrary."[2] So it is not possible (or as Kelsey puts it, "it is pointless"[3]) to contrast authorising a conclusion by appeal to scripture, to authorising a conclusion by appeal to an ontological or a phenomenological analysis, etc., "as though, if it were genuinely authorised in one way, it would not be authorised in one of the other ways in the same argument."[4] Therefore, the point of the "diagnosis" below is not to discover if Ritschl's theological conclusions are "genuinely" (that is, exclusively) authorised by appeal to scripture, but is, rather, how Ritschl's positions are authorised by the appeal he does make to scripture.

B. "Diagnosis".

1. In the macro-argument described in chapter Four (II.A.1.) on the Godhead of Christ, it was seen that scripture served to authorise Ritschl's conclusion as data and backing in the argument. In the micro-argument (II.A.2.) on the Lordship of Christ, it was seen that scripture served to authorise Ritschl's conclusion as data, warrant and backing. In neither argument is scripture the sole means of authorising the conclusion. It is, therefore, necessary to set out briefly what roles scripture played in these arguments in order to understand the way in which scripture serves to authorise the conclusions.

In both arguments scripture played the role of data. In an argument data serve the function of stating the "facts of the case", and serve to demonstrate the conclusion on the most straightforward level. Data consist of explicit and categorical statements upon which the conclusion basically rests. Thus in the argument about the Godhead of Christ, Ritschl states the "facts

of the case" in terms of the biblical picture of Christ's exercise of Lordship over the world as the demonstration of his effective spiritual supremacy over the world in terms applicable only to God. The "facts" in this argument are a summary generalisation from scripture (the detail of which is done elsewhere) about the life of Christ; the summary of the events of the life of Christ as recorded in scripture. In the argument for the Lordship of Christ, the data are, more specifically, the events themselves as recorded in scripture of Christ's life. In the first argument, the picture gained from the record of the life of Christ (the data of the second argument) represent the primary factual base on which Ritschl rests his argument.[5] Therefore scripture plays the role in both arguments of explicit, categorical statements of the "facts of the case" for the initial authorisation of the conclusion.

In the micro-argument, scripture also played the role of warrant. Warrants are rules or inference licences that authorise the use of data to support the conclusion. They are general, hypothetical statements which support the "facts of the case", and they are logically prior to the data since they represent the principle of selection of the relevant data. Thus, in this argument, Ritschl supports his use of the data by the general, hypothetical statement that if one demonstrates in Christ's life a spiritual independence over against the world, one has shown his spiritual Lordship over the world, which, further, is a predicate reserved for God. Therefore, scripture plays the role in the micro-argument of a general, hypothetical statement which authorises the use of the data to support the conclusion.

In both arguments, scripture plays the role of backing

for the warrants in the arguments. Backings are assurances that stand behind the warrant which give the warrant its authority and currency. They are explanatory statements which assure the validity to the argument of the warrant, and are the "bottom line" in an argument. In the case of a dispute about the truth or validity of the backing, a new argument would need to be mounted where the backing would take on the role of the conclusion. In the macro-argument, the backing Ritschl uses for the warrant (a phenomenology of personal and spiritual independence) consists in the events of supremacy of Christ's life, direct quotations from and references to scripture that demonstrate Christ's patience under suffering, his vocational self-understanding, and his unique knowledge of God. In the micro-argument, the backing Ritschl uses for the warrant (general statements about Christ's spiritual independence and Lordship) is a biblical phenomenology of the independence of the religious consciousness and of the acts of God, made up of generalisations from and quotations of scripture. Therefore, in both arguments, scripture plays the role of assurances standing behind the warrants which are explanatory statements that assure the validity of the warrants, giving the warrants their currency and authority.

Scripture, then, is seen to figure prominently in Ritschl's theological argument as data, warrants, and backing for his conclusions (at least as seen in the two arguments presented here). This is not to say that this pattern holds true in all of Ritschl's theological arguments, or to say that scripture stands unsupported (by historical research, ontological arguments, dogmatic preconceptions, etc.) in any of these roles. It is to say, however, that in these two arguments (at least) scripture plays

the roles of data, warrants and backing, and that these roles are significant of Ritschl's use of scripture in formulating his overall theological position.

2. For the sake of completeness, and to be able to see more clearly the interplay between the various "fields of argument" in the development of Ritschl's theological position, the other elements that serve to authorise Ritschl's theological conclusions are presented briefly here. Again, in different arguments for different conclusions, these elements (and the biblical element) may (or may not) assume different roles. In the arguments analysed in Chapter Four they are as follows.

In the macro-argument, the warrant for the data is an ontology of personal independence and supremacy. In it, independence from and supremacy over the world are described as spiritual for the Christian. God is shown as the highest independence from the world. Added to that ontology is the Old Testament description of God as "Grace" and "Truth", which description is also applied to Christ in the Gospel of John. As a general, hypothetical statement about independence, this warrant serves to authorise the move from the data of the biblical picture of Christ's exercise of Lordship over the world, and his effective spiritual supremacy over the world in terms applicable only to God, to the conclusion that "grace" and "truth", as the Old Testament terms applicable only to God, express the essential characteristics of the Godhead of Christ. Therefore, in this argument, an ontology (of personal independence and supremacy) plays the role of authorising the move from data to conclusion.

In both arguments, the conditions of rebuttal show

some of the other elements that lie behind and support both the warrants and their backing. In the macro-argument, for example, a spiritual/experiential element is introduced, in that the argument is rendered invalid if the Lordship of Christ over the community is not experienced and subsequently acknowledged by the community. Or, if it is demonstrated that Ritschl's argument applied only to the will of Christ and not to his being, then the conclusion falls to the ground. Similarly, in the micro-argument, an historical/ontological element is introduced in that the argument is made invalid if one is permitted to go beyond the bounds of the historical evidence and allowed to speculate authoritatively on the "unobservable nature" of Christ (something which Ritschl, in any case, would not allow. This condition of rebuttal really means for Ritschl that there is no condition for rebuttal based on speculation about the "unobservable nature" of Christ). Thus, the arguments are further supported by spiritual/experiential and historical/ontological elements that play the role of the conditions for rebuttal, which must be met for the argument to be valid and to be moved towards the conclusion.

C. 1. In spite of the variety of "Copernican revolutions"[6] in hermeneutics in the last 250 years, it may be fairly said that Spinoza set the tone and "rules" for the historical-critical study of scripture in the latter half of the 17th century; rules that form the core of a satisfactory historical hermeneutic. Spinoza's "rules" may be summarised under the following four points:

1. The nature and properties of the language in which the Bible were written, and in which its authors spoke must be examined and understood;

2. One must analyse the subject matter of each book and arrange

the subject matter under headings which show its content clearly;

3. The environment of the books must be studied to know and understand as much as possible about the author and his circumstances;

4. The subsequent history of the book and its inclusion in the Canon must be studied and understood.

Given these four points, some form of conclusions may be reached concerning the meaning of the book.[7] In short, these "rules" could be summarised under the headings of the exposition of the context of a passage, the linguistics of a passage, the history and culture immanent in and surrounding a passage.

Since the Enlightenment the importance to a text's meaning of its context has been stressed to mitigate the more bizzare flights of fancy based on an extracted, "homeless" portion of scripture. Since the turn of the 19th century, great stress has been laid on the historical and socio-cultural elements in and influencing the composition and meaning of a text. Since the middle of the 19th century, there has been great stress on the text itself: its language, varients and translation. All of these, no matter the variety of interpretive schemes laid on with them (whether allegorical, existentialist or post-structuralist), have together formed the basic hermeneutic task, and comprise the basic "questions" to which the interpreter must address himself. While there has not always been general agreement on what should comprise each of these elements (as was seen in chapter Four between Ritschl and Weiss concerning the inclusion of the intertestamental literature), and while stress has been laid now on one and now on another of the components, some form of each one has been included since Spinoza first outlined them.

To all of this, however, the modern scholar would add the factor of the interpreter's own historicity to complete the "hermeneutical circle". As Robert Funk puts it:

> Authentic access to the text arises out of the blind exposure of the full historicity of the text in conjunction with the exposure of the historicity of the interpreter. 8

The involvement of the interpreter in the task of historical criticism can, however, be a source of problems, as was wryly noted by Harnack in 1900:

> There is something touching in the anxiety which everyone shows to rediscover himself, together with his own point of view and his own circle of interest, in this Jesus Christ, or at least to get a share in him. 9

The historicity of the interpreter and the involvement of the interpreter in the process of interpretation was noted and even demanded by Ritschl in his stricture that the only valid theology and exegesis could be done by one who places himself firmly within the community which Christ founded, "and this precisely insofar as it believes itself to have received the forgiveness of sins as his peculiar gift."[10] Indeed, Ritschl goes even further than that. Anticipating the work of Bultmann, Ritschl states:

> This religious faith does not take an unhistorical view of Jesus, and it is quite possible to reach an historical estimate of him without first divesting oneself of this faith, this religious valuation of his person. The opposite view is one of the characteristics which mark that great untruth which exerts a deceptive and confusing influence under the name of an historical absence of presuppositions. 11

Indeed, according to Ritschl, "we can discover the full compass of his (Christ's) historical actuality <u>solely</u> from the faith of the Christian community."[12] Ritschl, then, understood the important role of the historicity of the interpreter in his interprepation.

The four elements seen in Spinoza's "rules" above are

found in full in Ritschl's own hermeneutical guidelines, as is evident from what was seen in Chapter Three of Ritschl's principles and methods of exegesis, and in Chapter Four in the exposition of his formulation of the Kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus. Ritschl's strictures and his practice demanded and showed an initial turning to the Old Testament to set the linguistic and socio-historical circumference within which his exposition of the New Testament was to take place. His interpretation of individual passages showed that he followed his own and the general hermeneutical practice by paying close attention to linguistic detail and historical and cultural elements. While the setting of the context was Ritschl's first move in determining the meaning of a passage.

Ritschl also followed his own particular hermeneutical guidelines, in that he made Christ central to the interpretation of all parts of scripture. This is Ritschl's basic interpretive scheme which he used to control his general exegetical work. Even as Ritschl began his study of the Kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus with the presentation of the Old Testament background (as seen above[13]), Ritschl began to bring the Old and New Testaments together by casting Jesus in the role of a prophet to the covenant people. Jesus is cast in this role because of what Ritschl understood God to be "up to" in the history of Israel and in his relationship to his people. Even more so as Ritschl moved to the direct interpretation of the New Testament. Jesus was shown to be the cenral figure in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, transforming and transcending the hopes and expectations of the Old Testament, and showing himself to be the promised salvation of mankind, and planting the seeds of a new hope, that of the coming King-

dom and its consumation in God's future.

Thus, in these ways, Ritschl "obeyed" the "rules" of general hermeneutical practice, in including the components of context, linguistics, history and culture. He also "obeyed" his own strictures, in centering all interpretation on Christ, and by applying to his hermeneutical studies and conclusions the kind of ruthless "logical dexterity" that he demanded of a coherent and cogent exposition of scripture and theology.

2. Having said that, however, Ritschl's hermeneutical practice does raise some acute problems in terms of his application of the historical method. As was noted above, the key factor alongside the interpreter's own historicity, is the method of historical study followed. For Ritschl, that method follows closely that outlined by Funk in his insistance that historical study must be "blind". The interpreter must allow the material itself to determine the shape and content of the results: the text itself must direct the enquiry. As Funk puts it:

> Under the aegis of its presupposition that history is a closed unity and prompted by its methodological aim not to presuppose its results, historical criticism is <u>blind</u>. 14

or as Ritschl puts it:

> Das wissenschaftliche Erkennen endlich bewährt seine allgemeine Gesetzlichkeit durch die Entdeckung von Gesetzen auf dem besondern Gebiete, dem es sich zuwendet. 15

Given Ritschl's avowed position on this matter, however, it is of interest to discover why he refused, for instance, to include the intertestamental literature in his interpretation of the New Testament in developing his understanding of the Kingdom of God. That the material from that period was well known, and known to have a bearing on at least the religion of the Jews in the time

of Jesus (if not directly on the New Testament itself) is amply demonstrated by the use Weiss made of the material in his development of the Kingdom of God. As was seen above, Ritschl refused to use the intertestamental literature on the ground, as he saw it, of its historical irrelevance. A simplified version of Ritschl's reasoning would run something like this: Since Jesus came setting himself over against the religion of his day in every particular, proclaiming that the Pharisees and Sadducees had violated the spirit if not the letter of the true religion of the Old Testament, especially as found in the Psalms and the Prophets, and since Jesus was calling them back to that true religion of which he was the fulfillment, Ritschl held that only the Old Testament (especially the Psalms and the Prophets) and Jesus himself were necessary to understand Jesus' message. Therefore, the material of the intertestamental period was irrelevant, because it neither described the true religion of the Old Testament, not did it describe the work and person of Jesus, and was therefore immaterial to a study of the Kingdom of God.

In so arguing, Ritschl made one significant and massive unhistorical judgement about the work of Jesus: that is, casting Jesus in a totally adversarial role in relation to the religion of the Jews in his day. It is clear from even a cursory reading of the Christian community's own book that Jesus was seen to be not merely or only setting himself over against the religion of his day (it is, perhaps, the Christian community who saw Jesus in this way rather than Jesus himself), but was also seen to be setting himself to taking what was the best of (or even just ordinary in) that religion and creatively transforming and re-forming

it into something new and powerful. Indeed, to have come merely setting himself over against the religion of the Pharisees and Sadducees in every particular would not only render Jesus almost completely unintelligible to his contemporaries, it would also have made a nonsense out of Ritschl's claim to understand Jesus to be the fulfillment of the religion of the Old Testament. Jesus' activity must be seen, rather, as a creative transformation and not a wholesale negation.

It is also clear that Ritschl allowed certain dogmatic and interpretive considerations to restrict the freedom of the text itself to direct the scientific historian's study. As was seen above, at two points in Ritschl's execution of the hermeneutical task, his own particular hermeneutical guidelines were followed closely in his work with the text: that of making Christ central to the interpretation of all parts of scripture; and that of Ritschl's own understanding of what God was "up to" in the history of Israel and his relationship to his people. These two points are of great significance to Ritschl's understanding and interpretation of the texts of scripture. To make Christ the central controlling factor in understanding the Old Testament, no matter how sympathetically one may view doing so, is to place a dogmatic (in this case Lutheran dogmatic) restriction on the historical enquiry. And to use a generalised summary of what God was "up to" in the history of Israel and his relationship to his people based on the Psalms and the Prophets alone (and no doubt passed through the controlling factor of the centrality of Christ) as a regulative means of understanding the Old Testament (and by implication the New Testament) is to place a dogmatic/interpretive preconception in a controlling

position which, again, limits the freedom of the text to interpret itself (to use Ritschl's phrase). To use Funk's terminology, it is to give "sight" to the critical-historical study of the texts when it should be allowed to be "blind". Thus, what Ritschl gave with the one hand (that the text should be allowed to interpret itself) he took away with the other (by allowing certain dogmatic/interpretive considerations to control the reading of the text). While Ritschl may have been self-consistent in doing so, he may also be said to have violated the general understanding of the historian's task in being so at all.

It is possible to interpret Ritschl's position here as being one of "protecting" his conclusions from falsification in the light of relevant evidence, ie., the intertestamental literature. Depending on how one used the intertestamental literature, Ritschl's positions could be seen as falsified (as Weiss, for example, does with regard to the Kingdom of God), and that, therefore, Ritschl's refusal to use that material is a "protectionist" measure. However, while Ritschl's refusal to use the intertestamental literature has the appearance of protecting his results from falsification, it is more fair to Ritschl and his understanding (faulty though that may be) of, especially, the preaching of Jesus and its relationship to the Old Testament, to accept that Ritschl refused to use the material because he genuinely thought it historically irrelevant in this context.

Another way of approaching this issue in terms of Ritschl's understanding of biblical theology, however, is to recall that for Ritschl everything in theology has to come before the bar of scripture before it can be accepted as, at the least, biblical

truth. The "bar of scripture" for Ritschl is, of course, the Canon. Nevertheless, if a theological position can be shown (as noted in Chapter Two) to be out of line with the findings of biblical theology, then it is, for Ritschl, false and must be discarded. Thus, at the heart of Ritschl's understanding of biblical theology there is an, albeit rudimentary, and purely biblical, but nonetheless genuine possibility for falsification.

Having said this, however, it must be noted that the "problem of history" and "historical method" in theology are not so straightforward that one can simply apply "rules" to solve them (if they were so easily solved there would, in fact, be nothing that could be called the "problem of history", etc..). There is a consensus about general guidelines for the discipline of historical-critical study, but the consensus is patient of a wide range of variations.

"The problem of history", writes Gogarten, "as it confronts modern theology, first became apparent in the historical view of the Bible, that is to say in the interpretation of the Bible, both as regards its origin and as regards its contents, as a historical book like other historical books."[16] Given that the historian views the Bible in one way and the "traditional Christian faith" in another, the "problem of history" in modern theology has led Van Harvey (following Troeltsch) to posit a real and insoluable divide between "traditional Christian faith, based as it ultimately is on a supernaturalistic metaphysics", and the presuppositions of the historical method.[17] This same divide is described by Gogarten in terms of the subject/object dichotomy, where the problems of hermeneutics is really the question of whether the

interpretation of history is done from within or outside of history.[18] Other modern writers (notably Butterfield), on the other hand, stress that continuity between "traditional Christian faith" and the presuppositions of historical method can be maintained.[19] In more sophisticated ways, theologians such as Barth, Tillich and Bultmann "saw in the collapse of the old quest of the historical Jesus a chance to be once again both biblical in spirit and historically honest".[20] This, of course, received equally sophisticated criticism as paradoxical and unstable. In D.M.Baillie's words: "there is no stability in a position which accepts to the full the humanity of Christ but has no interest in its actual concrete manifestation and doubts whether it can be recaptured at all."[21] Despite Baillie's own argument that a knowledge about Jesus was necessary for Christian theology, "it still remained to be established whether or not such knowledge was a possibility."[22] And the attempts to initiate a "new quest for the historical Jesus" associated with James M. Robinson and Ernst Käsemann proceeding along kerygmatic and existentialist lines came under fire from the same nagging question originally raised by Troeltsch: "how can such a new quest succeed, however, if the old quest was impossible because of the nature of the sources?"[23] Pannenberg, Gilkey and Gadamer (among others) have all grappled with and continue to grapple with these problems; with the nature of the texts, the historian's/theologian's position and the possibility of faith.

What this amounts to is a difficulty with the whole notion of "the problem of history". While on the one hand it is possible to view Ritschl's historical/theological effort as subscribing to the full tenents of the historical-critical method, on

the other hand, it is equally possible to view Ritschl's efforts as a traditional formulation of the Christian faith while giving lip service to criticism. Both views could be expounded with considerable force and persuasion. Lotz, for example, puts great stress on Ritschl as a "traditional" theologian of the Bible and the Lutheran Reformation.[24] Ritschl's continuity with the mainstream of Christian thought, especially with the thought of Luther and the great German Lutheran divines, is stressed almost to the exclusion of any interaction with the critical forces present in scholarship in Ritschl's day. Hefner, however, sees Ritschl's system and thought grounded firmly in the "vitalities of history", in the historical methods learned from Baur, and in Ritschl's copious historical study.[25]

In reality, Ritschl tried to have it both ways. As has been seen in this study, Ritschl was committed to both the rigours of scientific, historical-critical study of the texts of Bible and of the history of dogma, and to traditional theological understanding as set forth by Luther (as understood by Ritschl). Ritschl desired a firm, factual and objective understanding of the New Testament, of the life of Jesus, of what God was "up to" in the Old Testament, which he believed could be had from detailed textual and historical study. Ritschl wanted this for practical theological reasons so that he could find and determine one true interpretation of the New Testament which would serve as the basis for the life of the church in the Kingdom of God. But the same desires which drove him to attempt his quest for historical accuracy and objectivity stood in the way of his ever achieving them. Ritschl's attempt foundered not on his inability to pursue the goal, but on his prac-

tical purposes and on his ties with Luther and the Reformation, even on his view of the Bible and the Canon. In short, Ritschl paid much more than lip service to historical-critical study, as his abundant scholarship shows; but the dogmatic preconditions he set for that scholarship mitigated his efforts and left him open to both the criticisms of the religionsgeschichtliche Schule and to those who were yet more traditional than he was.

When it comes, therefore, to having to pronounce a judgement on the adequacy and integrity of Ritschl's biblical work as viewed from the perspective of historical method, it must be said that Ritschl violated the integrity of the method and that his efforts are therefore inadequate. And yet, to say that it is inadequate and lacking in integrity is not to "write off" Ritschl's biblical or dogmatic work. It is merely to qualify it, to set a proviso before it so that the student does not approach it unawares.

3. There is, however, more to be said about this from a "methodological" point of view. When viewed from the perspective of the historical method, as was noted above, Ritschl's biblical and theological effort was seen to be wanting in the integrity and adequacy of its performance. But as Kelsey argues with considerable force, how a theologian approaches the theological enterprise, and therefore how he approaches the Bible in doing his theology, stems from basic decisions the theologian makes before he decides how to approach the biblical texts. It concerns a

> decision a theologian must make about the point of engaging in the activity of doing theology, a decision about what is the subject matter of theology. And that is determined not by the results of historical-critical biblical study, but by the way in which he tries to catch up what Christianity is basically all about in a single, synoptic, imaginative judgement. 26

And it is worth noting at this point that this understanding of Kelsey's is based on his study of five theologians who all adopt, in Kelsey's phrase, "the emblem 'let theology accord with scripture'".[27] The theologian makes a prior judgement about not only "what Christianity is basically all about", but also, and in conjunction with that, why appeal to the biblical texts at all in doing theology? These two judgements will affect how a theologian approaches scripture, and will in some measure affect the results of his biblical work.

The sword of historical-critical study of the text of scripture cuts, of course, both ways. For inasmuch as the theologian decides "before" he begins his study of the texts to abandon all dogmatic constraints, or the constraints of faith in his study of the texts in order to allow the texts to dictate to him the results of the study, so too, he has taken a decision that will affect to some degree the results of his biblical work (especially as regards its relationship to faith). The question, then, may not be about which approach to "doing" theology affects the results of theology more, but which approach to "doing" theology is acceptable to whom, given that any approach to "doing" theology and to scripture necessarily prejudges, to a greater or lesser extent, the results of the study. Can it be said that it is anything but an arbitrary decision as to what kind of approach to scripture is made? If there is no agreement amongst theologians about what the "point" is of "doing" theology, then can an agreement be expected about what sort of approach should be made to scripture in "doing" theology (if any approach to scripture should be made at all)?The connection between the questions about the point of "doing" theology and what sort of approach to make to the critical study of the texts

needs to be noted if anything like sense is to be made of judgements about a theologian's handling of the texts and about his theological construction based on it.

Part of the reason for adopting Kelsey's critical tools for studying how Ritschl interacted with the Bible in his theological work stems from the fact that Ritschl, like the theologians studied in Kelsey's work held that it was of the greatest importance that theology should be done in accordance with scripture. Therefore, in earlier parts of this study, considerable space was devoted to demonstrating Ritschl's own claimsto be a biblical theologian, and the importance of Ritschl's biblical work to his dogmatic constructions.[28] As a study, therefore, of theologies that go under the banner "let theology accord with scripture", Kelsey's critical tools are best suited to analysing Ritschl's biblical/exegetical performance.

If, however, Ritschl's theology went under a different "banner", say, "let theology accord with the historical method", a different set of critical tools would be needed to assess Ritschl's work. In effect, to study Ritschl's biblical and theological work from the "standpoint" of the historical method alone is to misunderstand what Ritschl saw as the point of "doing" theology, and, therefore, to misunderstand his approach to scripture.

There can be no doubt that Ritschl saw the historical-critical study of the Bible to be of considerable importance to the adequate understanding and use of scripture and to developing a constructive system of theology. As was seen in chapter Three, Ritschl placed great stress on the unhindered study of the texts with the mandatory tools of critical scholarship, "grammatical skill"

and "logical dexterity".[29] For Ritschl this provided the method behind his principle that "scripture interprets itself". But for Ritschl, the historical-critical study of the text was but a tool (one tool among many), no matter how important a tool, and not an end in itself. Ritschl's historical-critical study of scripture was part of the means to an end. It was part of Ritschl's approach to scripture that is intimately connected to what he saw as the point of "doing" theology. Thus it is important to a critical internal understanding of Ritschl's exegetical performance and of Ritschl's understanding of the hermeneutical task, to discover and understand what Ritschl saw as the point of doing theology at all, and to understand why Ritschl tried to "have it both ways" in his use of the historical method in theology. Only then can Ritschl's efforts be discussed and evaluated externally from more general theological and critical perspectives (which full evaluation lies outside the scope of this thesis: the point here is to try to lay the ground work of analysis and critique for that full evaluation).

4. According to Ritschl's son and biographer, Otto Ritschl, for Ritschl, theology was the <u>theory</u> that lay behind the religious and moral actions that comprise the Christian faith.[30] Further, theology does not serve (indeed, cannot serve) as a merely descriptive science portraying the religious and moral appearance of empirical Christianity. It is, rather, to discover and bring to light the <u>norm</u> of Christian faith and morality from the revelation of God in Christ.[31] Together with the preaching of the Gospel and with religious instruction, theology is to serve the greater goal of ascertaining and understanding the revelation of God in Christ, and therefore to inform Christian faith and morality.[32] To use

Ritschl's own terms, the point of doing theology is to "(fructify) churchly instruction" and to "(shore) up the moral sense of community"; in short, to build up faith (as trust in God) which is "the test of genuine Protestantism" as conceived by Luther.[33] As has been noted throughout this study, Ritschl undertook the theological enterprise for essentially practical reasons. And these practical reasons, building up the religious life and ethical activity of the Christian community, are captured by Ritschl and expressed theologically in his famous description of Christianity as an "ellipse with two foci".[34] Christianity, as an ellipse with two foci, expresses what Christianity for Ritschl is all about; to use Kelsey's terminology, it is Ritschl's "single, synoptic, imaginative judgement".[35] It is this judgement which provides Ritschl with the impetus to doing theology; it provides the point and subject matter of theology. It is that which stands behind his "approach" to scripture.

For Ritschl, then, viewing theology as a science, even as an historical science, was of secondary importance to the function theology served in the life of the Christian community. This is not in any way to denegrate the place of theology. If anything, it is to give theology a position of supreme importance in the life of the church, for it is from theology that the church gains its understanding of what the Christian life is all about; from which it gains its knowledge of Jesus and salvation.

This is an understanding of crucial importance if Ritschl is to be properly and adequately understood and interpreted. Without fully appreciating the function of theology in Ritschl's conception of the life of the church, it is not possible adequately

to criticise or understand what he had in mind, as so many critical studies of Ritschl in the past have shown. When Ritschl's theological construction is read without reference to the function it actually served for him, that is, when his system is read in isolation from his understanding of its place in the life of the church, then at best, a faulty and partial understanding of Ritschl is gained. To understand what Ritschl saw as the point of doing theology will give considerable and valuable insight into why he did his theology in the way he did; into why he used and approached scripture the way he did. The importance of this for understanding and criticising Ritschl cannot be overestimated.

It is, however, just at this point that the whole question of the historical method in theology is most acute. If, as Ritschl maintained, one is rigorously to apply the historical method in theology to serve the purpose of exposing the historical Christ and his teaching, then what does one do when that historical study dictates that next to nothing can actually be known about Jesus, and that nothing reported in the Gospels can with any certainty be ascribed to Jesus? For Ritschl, that would be an unthinkable situation. It was, for him, the giveness of the Canon and the giveness of its reliable record of Jesus to which the historical method was applied. Itwas not applied by Ritschl, except in the most exceptional and insignificant cases, to the question of the canon itself. Not because of an inability to do so, and certainly not because of any intellectual dishonesty or sloth, but, rather, because it was the Bible to which Ritschl as a Lutheran theologian went to work out the true and historical meaning of religion and ethics for the Christian community. It was to the community's own book

that Ritschl went, with all of his intellectual abilities, to work out and understand the community's life. For Ritschl, the point of doing theology at all was to make Christian religion and ethics possible. Thus it is that he can say:

> It is no mere accident that the subversion of Jesus' religious importance has been undertaken under the guise of writing his life, for this very undertaking implies the surrender of the conviction that Jesus,as the Founder of the perfect moral and spiritual religion, belongs to a higher order than all other men. But for that reason it is likewise vain to attempt to re-establish the importance of Christ by the same biographical expedient. We can discover the full compass of His historical actuality solely from the faith of the Christian community. Not even His purpose to found the community can be quite understood historically save by one who, as a member of it, subordinates himself to His Person. 36

As Albert Swing noted as long ago as 1901:

> In (Ritschl's) historical work his aim in general terms was to make divine revelation positively normative for everything in Christian theology. By historical exegesis he would search for the objective realities of revelation, and make their proper arrangement and estimation his task as a Christian theologian; and the great reality of all is Jesus Christ. 37

For Ritschl, the giveness of the Canon and the giveness of its reliable record of Jesus were the bedrock upon which he built the structure of his theology. The methods and tools of historical scholarship (or linguistic or socio-cultural study, etc.) were applied to the study of the texts of the Canon only and insofar as they did nothing to destroy that bedrock. The question of the falsifiability of the concept of the Canon, then, was not an open one to Ritschl. Otherwise, Ritschl could see no point in doing theology at all.

5. If what has been described above presents an accurate picture of what Ritschl saw as the point of doing theology, then it is possible to come to some understanding about Ritschl's "approach" to scripture. Part of an understanding of an "approach"

to scripture hinges on what one means by the activity called "exegesis". According to Kelsey:

> There are several different types of activity that can be legitimately be called "exegesis". Their results impose quite different kinds of possible controls on theology. [38]

a. Kelsey identifies three different kinds of exegesis. One, "one may study a biblical text taken as a historical source that itself has historical sources". Two, "one may study a biblical text simply as it stands" to discover "what interests shaped the work" and "how it would have been understood by its original audience in its original context". Three, "one may ... study a biblical text taken as Christian scripture" in an attempt to discover rules and norms for the "church's common life to help nurture and reform her self-identity."[39] For Kelsey, the distinctions between the three types trade on the difference between studying the Bible as a "text" or as "scripture". In the first two kinds of exegesis (which Kelsey identifies as "exegesis$_1$" and "exegesis$_2$") the biblical texts are approached as just that, texts. In the third kind of exegesis ("exegesis$_3$") the biblical texts are approached as scripture. According to Kelsey, to take the biblical texts as scripture is to use them in a normative way for both theology and the church's common life to keep the church and theology faithful to their common task.

As Kelsey points out with considerable force, "the results of these different kinds of exegesis bear on the doing of theology in quite different ways."[40] Exegesis$_1$ and exegesis$_2$ cannot ("by definition") enable scripture to perform in a normative way for theology precisely because they do not view and study the biblical texts as scripture. They may control the way a theologian

uses his imagination, but "strictly speaking, only the results of exegesis$_3$ function normatively in theology."[41] The results of exegesis$_1$ and exegesis$_2$ *may* feature in the results of exegesis$_3$, and in that way only would exercise some sort of normative function over theology, but only insofar as they were included and controlled by the results of exegesis$_3$.

> However, *whether* the results of exegesis$_2$ are relevant and *what* patterns in scripture are studied in exegesis$_3$ depend on a logically prior and imaginative decision about how to construe "scripture" which is not itself corrigible by the results of a kind of biblical study.[42]

Before noting some of the implications of this for the use and understanding of the biblical texts, it is necessary to identify the kind of exegesis (on Kelsey's plan) that Ritschl in fact did. It is clear from what was seen above about what Ritschl understood to be the point of doing theology, that Ritschl approached biblical exegesis on the basis of the search for a normative understanding of scripture that would serve to establish and regulate the religion and moral activity of the Christian community of the Kingdom of God. That is, Ritschl approached the biblical texts as scripture, to use Kelsey's distinction, corresponding closely to what Kelsey calls exegesis$_3$. It is also clear that on the basis of his approach to the biblical texts as scripture Ritschl incorporated many of the results of exegesis$_2$ (viewing the texts in terms of what would have been understood by its original audience in its original context), though Ritschl did not incorporate much (if anything) from the results of exegesis$_1$ (viewing the text in terms of an historical source which itself has historical sources). That Ritschl *did* look to the biblical texts in terms of an historical source for theology should not be confused with the activity Kelsey calls exegesis$_1$.

For Ritschl's use of the biblical texts as an historical source stems wholly from and is controlled by his use of the methods of exegesis$_3$. His is not, fundamentally, a source-critical study of the texts.

Ritschl, then, viewed the activity called exegesis as a study of the biblical texts as scripture. Ritschl did this type of exegesis precisely to discover rules and norms for the "church's common life to help nurture and reform her self-identity ... (and to judge) the nature of the church's task and about how scripture ought to be used in the church's common life to keep her faithful to that task."[43] Given that Ritschl's understanding of the task of exegesis is so, some of the implications may be drawn out.

b. Exegesis in the historical mode (exegesis$_1$) and in the literary mode (exegesis$_2$) have, among other things, provided material that helps to overcome what Kelsey calls "the status quo opinions prevalent in a Christian community at any particular time."[44] If exegesis is to be "critical" it must transcend the status quo in order for it to have a function at all. In a real sense, exegesis$_1$ and exegesis$_2$ are the methods of falsifiability available to the theologian. They allow theological concepts and theories to be challenged and falsified by a critical exegesis. Any other result would be what Ritschl would call a "descriptive science merely portraying the appearance of empirical Christianity at any given point."[45] Or as Kelsey puts it, it would "simply celebrate her current practices".[46] Thus, as a critical exercise, exegesis$_1$ and exegesis$_2$ force the exegete to a close study of the "determinateness, the details, of the texts".[47] As Kelsey points out, the painstaking

attention to detail, especially of the wording and structure of the texts in critical exegesis has been the decisive factor behind many new "imaginative construals of Christianity's central reality, and with them, major reforms in the church's common life."[48] But, since those very reforms and new construals of Christianity have seemed to later generations of historical exegesis to be seriously in error, the point of the critical exegetical exercise would seem to be not so much conceptual, in that it produces new concepts of Christianity, but rather to be merely critical. Krister Stendahl's criticism of both Augustine's and Luther's interpretation of Romans is cited as a case in point.[49]

Exegesis$_1$ and exegesis$_2$ also set limits to what can be held to be historically and literarily true about the texts themselves. Irrespective of one's theological position, the theologian can, no more than anyone else can, claim no more than what is historically true (or thought to be true by the authors) about the texts. What the theologian can claim is what would be acceptable "from the ordinary canons of rationality ... established by normal methods of historical or literary-critical argument".[50]

These limits would be of more than passing interest to this study of Ritschl if Ritschl had exceeded them in his exegetical work with the texts. Ritschl, however, apart from viewing the Bible as scripture, that is, as that from which norms and rules for the church's common life are drawn, made few if any historical claims about the history or literature of the texts. Questions of date, authorship, etc., are of only minor interest to Ritschl, and impinge very little on his theological and exegetical work.[51] Ritschl's view of the Bible as scripture is itself, of course, a

judgement on the history and literature of the texts, and more is said about this below.

Neither exegesis$_1$ nor exegesis$_2$ can be seen to be normative in doing theology, because neither are a study of the texts as scripture. Only exegesis$_3$ can provide norms.

> But that means that it is a study of scripture done within the context of a certain construal of the text: studying it in regard to certain patterns which are taken to be authoritative, and not in regard to others, as filling certain kinds of functions in the common life of the church, and not others, as having certain kinds of logical force, and not others. [52]

Thus, what is studied in exegesis$_3$ is dependent on a prior decision about how to construe the texts, "a construal ... rooted in the concrete particularities and peculiarities of the church's common life as the theologian participates in it."[53] Or, as Ritschl puts it, exegesis is based on the standpoint of the theologian in the community of faith which Christ founded, which community, in turn, determines what is studied in exegesis$_3$ and to what end it is studied. In other words, the very act of engaging in exegesis$_3$ determines the shape and scope of the exegetical/hermeneutical task.

Therefore, if the results of exegesis$_2$ are to function in any normative way in theology, they must form a part of what the purpose of doing exegesis$_3$ is about, and on how the mode of God's presence to the community is understood.

> Given certain construals of the mode of God's presence, it may be decided that the way the passage should be construed in theology now is identical with 'what it meant' as used in its original setting. In that case, the actual results of exegesis$_3$ would be identical with the results of exegesis$_2$. [54]

That may, of course, not be the case. But whether or not it is the case depends on a theological and not an exegetical decision. If, as

in Ritschl's case, the results of exegesis$_2$ (what the texts meant in their original setting) serve as the raw material from which a theology is built for the purpose of building up the current religious and moral life of the church, then the results of exegesis$_3$ will excompass, but not be coterminous with, the results of exegesis$_2$. Thus,

> exegetical judgement is necessarily incomplete until it is explicitly interrelated with exegetical judgements about the original meaning of passages from other 'parts' of the canon whose dialectical relationship constitute the canon a 'whole'. That is, 'exegesis' is then necessarily 'exegesis within the canon'. 55

This is exactly the position in Ritschl's case. For Ritschl, 'Church' is understood in a dialectical relationship not just with scripture, but with scripture as canon (a position Brevard Childs has also put forward as a "new model" for biblical theology[56]).

Essentially, then, there is a circular relationship between theology and scripture as canon. Both inform and to some extent control each other. Scripture, as the community's book, dictates the normative role for theology for shaping and controlling the church's response and faithfulness to her task as the church. Theology, as the critical expression of the church's self-understanding and as critical of the church's faithfulness to her task as the church, interprets the community's book to give that self-understanding. Scripture, as the source and norm (to use Ritschl's terminology) of the church's self-understanding, stands in a dialectical relationship to theology, which is the critical and reasonable judgement concerning the church's self-understanding and its faithfulness to scripture. This means that theology is an essentially <u>practical</u> study (practical, that is, insofar as theology is understood to have to be done in accordance with scripture). To use Ritschl's terminology it

is not a "disinterested science", nor merely "descriptive", but is involved with and critical of the church's performance of her task, and of her faithfulness to her calling and self-understanding.

III. Summary

Three points of major importance have emerged in this chapter from the analysis and critique presented of Ritschl's biblical work in this study. One, that scripture plays a number of important authorising roles in Ritschl's theological argument, although scripture is not the sole means of authorising his conclusions. While no conclusions can be drawn from this as to the "genuineness" of scripture's authorising role in Ritschl's theological arguments, scripture nevertheless was seen to play important authorising roles. The point was, most importantly, to see just how scripture authorised Ritschl's conclusions.

Two, and of great significance to properly understanding and interpreting Ritschl, it was seen that in his use of the historical method in theology, Ritschl used the historical method to exact an understanding of Christ and his teaching from the New Testament that would serve the function of building up the church's religious and ethical life. When viewed solely from the point of view of the historical method, Ritschl was seen to have been inadequate in his application of it. When understood, however, from the point of view of Ritschl's reasons for engaging in theology at all, it emerged that he applied the historical method in a way that was wholly consistent with his understanding of the point of doing theology. Ritschl did not apply the historical method to the question of the canon itself, but only to the giveness of the canon and its reliable record of the teaching and life of Jesus. This point is of crucial

importance to understanding what Ritschl had in mind in his theology and exegesis, and to answering such questions as why he did not include the intertestamental literature in his formulation of the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus. While this may not (and indeed probably cannot) be found to be an acceptable position in New Testament scholarship and theology in general, it is of the utmost importance to a critical internal understanding of Ritschl himself, and as such, the importance of this cannot be overestimated.

The third point concerns Ritschl's understanding of the activity called exegesis. Three kinds of types of exegesis were discussed: exegesis$_1$, where the biblical texts are studied as an historical source which itself has historical sources; exegesis$_2$, where the texts are studied as they stand to discover what they would have meant to their original audience; and exegesis$_3$, where the texts are taken as scripture in an attempt to discover rules and norms for the church's common life and to help nurture and reform the church's self-identity. The important point here is that Ritschl was seen to approach the texts in terms of exegesis$_3$, and only to include the results of exegesis$_1$ (rarely) or exegesis$_2$ (especially) if and only insofar as they contribute to the results of exegesis$_3$. Because theology cannot be, for Ritschl, a "disinterested science", nor merely "descriptive", but is involved with and critical of the church's performance of her task and of her faithfulness to her calling and self-identity, exegesis can only be the search in the biblical texts (taken as scripture) for rules and norms for the church's life. This too, is of crucial importance for understanding how Ritschl used and understood the Bible in his theology.

Taken together, then, Ritschl's understanding of the

"point" of doing theology, which in turn dictated his use of the historical method in theology and exegesis and what he understood by the activity called exegesis, how Ritschl actually used scripture in his theology and theological arguments became more clear. Seen only "structurally" in his theological argument, Ritschl's use of scripture stands unsupported; there seems to be no reason why he used scripture so. Seen "theoretically", however, in conjunction with his "structural" use of the Bible, his position becomes somewhat clearer. Ritschl used the Bible in his theological argument in the way in which he did because of his understanding of the canon, exegesis and the historical method: in short, by what he understood as the "point" of doing theology. Taken as an understanding of "why" and "how" Ritschl used the Bible in his theology, a more adequate and significant understanding of Ritschl's theology in general is gained, and a more acceptable interpretation of his theology done. To say that this study has, therefore, produced a new and more adequate interpretive basis and scheme for understanding the theology of Albrecht Ritschl would not be to overstate the case.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Kelsey, Scripture, p.135.

2. ibid..

3. ibid..

4. ibid..

5. On the applicability of seeing the biblical pictures of Christ as a "factual base" for the argument see part C below for the discussion of historical method.

6. C.West, "Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics and the Myth of the Given", in USQR, vol.xxxiv, no.2, Winter 1979, p.71.

7. B.Spinoza, Tractatus Theologico-Politicus (Hamburg: 1670), chapter 7. Also, R.M. Grant The Interpretation of the Bible (London: A & C Black, 1965), pp. 117-121.

8. R.W.Funk, "The hermeneutical problems and historical criticism" in Robinson & Cobb (eds.) The New Hermeneutic (NY: Harper & Row, 1964), p.187.

9. Adolf von Harnack, What is Christianity? (NY: Putnam's Sons, 1900), p.3.

10. J&R III, p.2; and above p.106.

11. J&R III, pp. 2, 3; Cf. Bultmann.

12. J&R III, p.3. my emphasis.

13. Above, pp.164-168 ; "Biblische Theologie", p.16; RuV II, p.6.

14. Funk, op.cit., p.186.

15. RuV II, p.1.

16. Gogarten, Demythologising and History (London: SCM, 1955), p.12.

17. Van Harvey, The Historian and the Believer (London: SCM, 1967), p.5.

18. Gogarten, op.cit., pp.57f.

19. See, eg., Butterfield Writings on Christianity and History (NY: Oxford, 1979) ed., McIntire; also McIntire (ed.) God History and Historians (NY: Oxford, 1977).

20. Harvey, op.cit., p.11.

21. D.M.Ballie, God was in Christ (NY: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1948), p.28.

22. Harvey, op.cit., p.12.

23. ibid., p.13.

24. Lotz, Ritschl and Luther; see also above Chaper One.

25. Hefner, Faith and the Vitalities of History; see also above chapter One.

26. Kelsey, Scripture, p.159.

27. ibid..

28. See above, chapter One and Two.

29. RuV II, p.19; "Biblische Theologie", pp. 18-19.

30. O. Ritschl, Leben II, p.165f.

31. ibid, p.165.

32. ibid..

33. Ritschl, "Festival Address", in Lotz, Ritschl and Luther, pp.201,202.

34. J&R III, p.11.

35. Kelsey, Scripture, p.159

36. J&R III, p.3.

37. Swing, Theology of A. Ritschl, p.23

38. Kelsey, Scripture, p.198

39. ibid..

40. ibid., p.199.

41. ibid..

42. ibid..

43. ibid., p.198.

44. ibid., p.199.

45. O. Ritschl, Leben II, p.165

46. Kelsey, Scripture, p.199.

47. ibid..

48. ibid..

49. Kelsey, Scripture, p.203, n.21. K. Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Instrospective Conscience of the West", Harvard Theological Review, vol. 56 (1963), pp.199-215.

50. Kelsey, Scripture,p.200.

51. For example, Ritschl's lectures on the Letter to the Hebrews. Of the 362 pages of the lectures, only 32 deal with historical or literary critical issues, and in them he mostly follows conventional views as to audience, date, authorship, etc., His main concern is to get at the meaning of the Letter in terms of its use as scripture. A. Ritschl, "Erklärung des Hebräerbriefs" in the Eck Nachlass, SS 1878/9, no. 11, Universitätsbibliothek Giessen.

52. Kelsey, Scripture, p.200.

53. ibid..

54. ibid., p.201.

55. ibid..

56. Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), pp. 149ff.

POSTLUDE

It is no bad thing, at this point in the thesis, to restate what the thesis has been concerned to do. This takes two forms: first a statement of what this study has not been; and, second, a statement of what it is.

First of all, this study has not been undertaken with the aim of presenting a complete and exhaustive account of Ritschl's theology. It is not meant to be a synopsis of Ritschl's dogmatic system (such as Garvie, Swing, Richmond and others have attempted), nor is it meant to be a systematic study of one or more of the major doctrinal components of Ritschl's dogmatic system (such as "Ritschl's Christology" or "Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God"). More specifically, this is not a study of Ritschl's doctrine of revelation or inspiration of the Bible (studies which would in themselves be both interesting and important for the future of Ritschl research). Many aspects of these kinds of enquiry are present in the thesis, but it cannot be defined by any of them (though it would not be untrue to say that light has been shed on these subjects by this study, but it was not undertaken specifically to do so).

More importantly, however, because of the "oral tradition" of Ritschl scholarship outlined in Chapter One, this thesis is not a study of Ritschl from a "philosophical" point of view (the dangers of which were noted in Chapter One and the Introduction to Chapter Two). It was felt that it was more important, more profound and more to the point to discover the significance for Ritschl's theology of his biblical work. This study, therefore, cannot be said to be of the "philosophical type" as defined in

Chapter One.

The point of the thesis has been to explore theologically and methodologically the place of the Bible in Ritschl's theology. By studying Ritschl's understanding of and approach to "biblical theology" and the theologia positiva, by examining Ritschl's principles and methods of exegesis, by plotting the place of the Bible in Ritschl's theological argument, and by assessing Ritschl's engagement with the "problem of history" and the historical method, the place and use Ritschl made of the Bible in his theology has been explored. To put it in other words, how important Ritschl understood the Bible to be for the theologian, and how he actually used the Bible in important areas of his theological argument and exegesis have been explored from a number of angles.

The argument mounted from the exploration of Ritschl's interaction with the Bible is that Ritschl's theological achievement can only be fully understood if the importance of his use of the Bible is adequately taken into account. This is not to say that Ritschl is simply to be understood as an exegete: to say that would be to subject Ritschl to yet another stereotype. Rather, as the discussion of the use of the Bible in systematics attempted to demonstrate, biblical exegesis can only be part of the formulation of a dogmatic argument. The point is that in Ritschl's case it is a neglected part.

The fact that volume II of RuV remains untranslated points to (though does not demonstrate) the neglect of this aspect of Ritschl's work, in English at least. The study of volume III has always been (at least tacitly) assumed to be sufficient for

understanding Ritschl's intentions and his developed system. This has always been a problem in interpreting Ritschl as Ritschl himself admits.[1] Thus part of the point of this study has been to examine more closely the contents of volume II as they pertain to Ritschl's overall understanding of the place of the Bible in doing theology. While volume II is important to understanding Ritschl's use of the Bible, the manuscript lectures introduced in Chapter Two provide a clearer picture of how Ritschl understood the hermeneutical task as the interaction between the various theological disciplines in formulating a systematic theology. The importance of the manuscript material lies not so much in the fact that it provides the grounds for a new hypothesis about Ritschl's theology. Rather, it serves to change the balance of the interpretation of Ritschl by bringing into prominence a different kind of material to that contained in Ritschl's published works. Where volumes II and III of J&R, for example, provide, as it were, the "dressed stone" (both biblical and dogmatic) with which Ritschl built his systematics, the manuscripts provide a look at the tools and methods he used when working with the raw material to prepare it for use. When, for example, Ritschl speaks of the "contradiction between Christ's purpose of reform and the authoritative position of the Pharisaic Scribes"[2] in volume III, the manuscript material affords a look at why and how Ritschl reached that conclusion, and how he could describe it even further as Jesus setting himself totally over against the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees.[3] Thus the manuscript lectures go beyond the conclusions to the reasoning behind them, which in turn helps us to see Ritschl in a somewhat different light, as working exegete and biblical historian. The manuscript lectures,

therefore, play an important part in helping the reader to a more balanced view of Ritschl and to a more informed assessment of him as a biblical theologian, thus redressing the "image" of Ritschl somewhat.

That Ritschl's biblical work is important has been conceded by most of the recent commentators on Ritschl's theology, as was noted in Chapter One: conceded, but not studied in anything like adequate depth. Even those studies most sympathetic to the case for interpreting Ritschl as a biblical theologian (those of Schäfer and Lotz) fall conspicuously short of the mark when treating Ritschl's biblical scholarship. Furthermore, Richmond's study, the latest comprehensive examination of Ritschl's theology, while admitting (with Garvie's judgement of nearly 80 years earlier!) that Ritschl's theology is "bibliospheric"[4], goes no further towards gaining an understanding of what that means. Thus even those scholars who admit the biblical gap in studies of Ritschl's theology do little to fill it. The point of this thesis, then, has been to move towards filling that gap.

In order to validate this line of enquiry further, however, it was necessary to show from Ritschl's own work that this study is warranted. Chapter Two was devoted to this validation. In it, it became apparent that it is neither trivial nor a truism to describe Ritschl as a "biblical theologian", given his understanding of the nature and task of biblical theology in his overall methodological framework, and how the results of biblical theology are normative for all other theological enquiry. This is the first point of substance to emerge from this study and is one of considerable importance to assessing and understanding Ritschl's

systematics as a whole. That this has further implications for understanding the rest of Ritschl's system is not to overstate the case in the face of the "oral tradition" of Ritschl research.

Methodologically, the place of biblical theology in formulating a theological position was expressed by Ritschl in his understanding of the theologia positiva. According to this understanding, biblical theology is basic to theology, relating to "ecclesiastical theology" (or the history of dogma) in what Ritschl called an "analytical and synthetic relationship", which is the work of "dogmatic theology". The results of biblical theology, for Ritschl, are normative for theology because they are the fundamental criteria against which previous dogmatic formulations are measured, and against which present ecclesiastical theological formulations are measured (a position examined and expressed in different terms when discussing exegesis in Chapter Five). The interaction between biblical theology and ecclesiastical theology (the tradition) is the process which leads to and is the work of dogmatic theology. The whole process, for Ritschl, allows for a coherent and complete system of theology to be built.

The significance of this point lies in its demonstration of Ritschl's commitment (methodologically at least) to biblical theology as normative for systematics: a point altogether too often overlooked by commentators on Ritschl's theology, and therefore in need of clarification and re-emphasis.

Given Ritschl's commitment to biblical theology's normative function for theology, the important question to ask next concerns how Ritschl understood the authority of scripture for theology. It was interesting to note in this respect that

Ritschl ascribed to scripture two kinds of authority. He held that scripture's authority rests on its being the authoritative and authentic record, both historical and spiritual, of the priestly-sacrificial work of Christ in which God and man are brought near in the forgiveness of sins. Scripture was also held by Ritschl to be the authentic record of the experience of the first Christian community of the justifying act of God in Christ, and of the community's commissioning to the task (with God) of the Kingdom of God. (This is yet another demonstration of Ritschl's "elliptical" understanding of Christianity, with the twin poles of justification and reconciliation; religion and ethics; forgiveness and response ; gift and task. Even Ritschl's assessment of the content of the New Testament reflects this: God's presence in Christ in forgiveness representing the religious pole, and the giving of the task of the Kingdom of God representing the ethical pole.) Scripture for Ritschl is not only the most historically proximate record of the person and work of Jesus (though it is very importantlythat), it is also the record of God's continuing presence to the community. Thus the Bible assumes for Ritschl an historic and a spiritual authority over theology.

Ritschl's ascription of authority to scripture forms the theory which stands behind his actual practice. In order to assess what this theory actually meant in practice, Kelsey's tools for analysing theological arguments were deployed in order to see what kind of authorising roles scripture played in Ritschl's arguments concerning the Godhead of Christ and the Lordship of Christ. The point of substance to emerge from this analysis was that the Bible played a number of significant authorising roles in the two

arguments presented in Chapter Four. Scripture figures prominently in Ritschl's theological argument as data, warrants and backing for his conslusions. And, as noted in chapters Four and Five, the condition of rebuttal (or principle of falsification) is, tacitly at least, assumed to be the bar of scriptural examination and correction. This is not to say that this pattern holds true in all of Ritschl's theological arguments, or to say that scripture stands unsupported (by historical research, ontological arguments, dogmatic preconditions, etc.) in any of these roles. It is to say, however, that in these two arguments (at least) scripture plays the roles of data, warrants and backing (and as the tacit condition of rebuttal), and that these roles are significant of Ritschl's use of scripture in formulating his overall theological position.

The fact that Ritschl did employ the Bible in significant authorising roles in his theological argument goes some way toward justifying his own claim to be a biblical theologian. Although it must be agreed with Kelsey that it is pointless to contrast authorising a theological conclusion by appeal to, say scripture, to a conclusion authorised by, say, historical research, as though if it were authorised in one way it could not also be authorised in other ways in the same argument. The fact, however, of Ritschl's prominent use of scripture at various levels of his arguments does further support the contention of the earlier chapters. When taken with the other elements which go to form the substance of his argument, a fuller and more nuanced picture of Ritschl's method of theological argument emerges. Precisely because the analytic method employed requires an interaction in dogmatics between biblical and other disciplines, the conclusion reached

concerning Ritschl's theological argument is protected against the erection of yet another one-sided stereotype of his theology.

Beyond the structure of his theological argument, however, lies two important features of Ritschl's theology which show his commitment to the Bible as part of his Lutheran heritage (as noted by David Lotz and discussed in Chapter One): that Christ is central to interpretation, and the essentially practical role of theology in the life of the church. For, like Luther before him, Ritschl saw Christ and his redemptive work as the central clarifying and unifying principle of exegesis and interpretation. For Ritschl this was of central importance. Given his understanding of the "point" of doing theology (as discussed in Chapter Four), that theology is involved with and critical of the church's performance of her task and of her faithfulness to her calling and self-identity, and is (in part) thus the search in scripture for rules and norms for the church's life (and not, therefore, a "disinterested science"), and the centrality of Christ, some of the problems which Ritschl's critics had with Ritschl's understanding and use of the historical-critical method become clearer. Weiss and (especially) Troeltsch, for example, were highly critical of what they saw as Ritschl's failure to follow the historical-critical method honestly. They saw Ritschl's failure, for instance, to include the intertestamental literature in his discussion of the Kingdom of God, to be a violation of the integrity of the historical-critical method and disallowed Ritschl's claim to be committed to it. We saw, however, that Ritschl used the historical method to exact an understanding of Christ and his teaching from the Canon of the New Testament which would serve the function of building up the church's religious

and ethical life. Ritschl's was not a "disinterested" study of the New Testament designed only to discover what could be "safely" said about it. It was Ritschl's commitment to the church and its life in the world which led him to be a comparatively conservative critic; a commitment to the church and its own book which led him to stay within the bounds of that book when formulating a theology for the church's life and self understanding. Weiss and Troeltsch (and other critics of Ritschl) were, in effect, demanding that Ritschl silence his subjective involvement with both church and scripture in his biblical and theological work in order to attain some form of independent "objective" reading of scripture according to the canons of historical-critical method. In other words, the demand was that Ritschl should accept a different understanding of the "point" of doing theology. Given that an understanding of the "point" of doing theology is essential to formulating a programme and methodology for theology, changing what Ritschl saw as the "point" of doing theology would have changed the content and method of his theology.

While Ritschl did not put it in these precise terms, his understanding of the proper subject matter for theology had more to do with what modern theologians would call teleology rather than history. As was seen in Chapter Five, theology was for Ritschl primarily a practical discipline concerned with the life and work of the church and with its faithfulness to its calling and self-identity and self-understanding. Or, in other words, theology has to do with the life, the existence of the church, historically, spiritually, but above all, practically. Harking back to Luther, Ritschl undertook to produce a theology of and for the church.[5]

Ritschl looked back through history, and specifically Christian history, to cull from it, in conjunction with the biblical material, a theological understanding of what it means to be the church in the world in response to God.

History, as a "process of ordering the actual data of awareness"[6], is useful to the theologian, according to Ritschl's view, insofar as that process provides him with a satisfactory explanatory means of interpreting Christianity in terms of his own experience and his interaction with the data of Christian history. Or, to quote Hefner again,

> the norm by which the Christian theologian attains his knowledge and certainty consists of the totality of the events in the Christian historical witness as they appear in any present moment. [7]

This would be a fair assessment of how Ritschl understood "history" to be important for the theologian. "History" as such was neither Ritschl's raison d'être for doing theology, nor his goal in doing theology. For Ritschl, the raison d'être and goal of theology are one and the same: to produce a self-critical and authentic guide for the life of the church.

The question that nags at Ritschl's response to critics more radical than himself, however, is that no matter why Ritschl engaged in the study of theology, can that be an excuse for not following what historical-critical method dictates can be said to be "true" about the texts of the New Testament? Is not a theology which ignores or treats selectively the findings of historical-critical study based on mis-understandings, at best, or false understandings, at worst, of the New Testament, and therefore of no use to the church? Are Ritschl's critics correct in consigning his theology to the pigeon-hole of untenable theologies?

The answer to the last question must be "no", because the answer to the previous question is that the findings of historical-critical study of the New Testament are many and varied and do not all point in one direction. The findings of historical-critical study, being varied, are patient of more than one kind of informed use. The criticisms of Weiss and Troeltsch and others of Ritschl's biblical and historical work need to be understood, therefore, in terms of their own sense of the point of doing theology in order to put them into proper perspective. In all areas of Ritschl's thought, his biblical work needs to be taken more seriously as a basis for interpretation, and fuller justice done to the reasons he gives for its particular character.

The aim of this thesis, then, has been to expose more fully some of the "factual value" of Ritschl's biblical work in his theology, and to explore some of the effects this can have on the interpretation of his theology. It is no part of the claim of this thesis, again, that Ritschl is to be understood only as an exegete: rather, that his theological achievement can be <u>fully</u> appreciated only if the importance of his biblical work is adequately taken into account. By a variety of means Ritschl's interaction with the Bible has been explored and the important place it had for him in the construction of dogmatics shown. Any account of Ritschl's theology that does not take his biblical work seriously must therefore be regarded as suspect and its conclusions treated with caution. To do less is to fundamentally misunderstand Ritschl from the start.

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Nearly fifty years ago, and fifty years after Ritschl's death, H.R.Mackintosh wrote that Ritschl was, "like Tennyson, (in) the 'middle distance', too far for gratitude, too near for reverence. He is behind a passing cloud to-day". Thirty years after that judgement, Jaroslav Pelikan, in describing Ritschl as one of the "Makers of Modern Theology", could see that the "cloud is ready to begin passing from over Ritschl".[8] As the centenary of Ritschl's death approaches, it only remains to hope that, with the resurgence of interest in Ritschl's theology of recent years, Ritschl has at last moved out from behind his cloud and out of the "middle distance" and into a perspective that allows the twentieth century to treat him at least with gratitude. As a theologian he deserves no less.

NOTES TO POSTLUDE

1. J&R III, p.8.

2. ibid., p.448.

3. "Biblische Theologie", pp.33-67.

4. Richmond, Ritschl, p.61.

5. Hefner recognised this when talking about Ritschl's theology: it "involves a concern both for life and for history and its continuity ... a basic recognition that Christian faith has to do essentially with the concrete realities of life". Faith and the Vitalities of History, p.113; also, p.113, n.1.

6. Hefner, ibid., p.134.

7. ibid..

8. J. Pelikan, "Editor's Preface" in P.Hefner, Faith and the Vitalities of History, p.9.

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