

rejection of personal authority. It is, I suppose, the birth-right of students to charge their instructors with incapacity and narrowness, but Ritschl exercised his right to an abnormal extent. His mind passed from teacher to teacher, welcoming each system as its phase of truth flashed upon his vision, with an ecstasy which slowly yielded to what became almost an aversion. His mental condition during the first years at college was like the troubled sea that cannot rest. After three sessions at Bonn, under the famous Nitzsch, he became impatient with a master whom he regarded as being "worked out," and in 1841 passed on to Halle to receive inspiration from Müller and Tholuck. But here again his first enthusiasm for these celebrities soon cooled into a disregard, and he passed into the Hegelian climate. The sway of Hegel over him was of longer duration than any previous influence, and continued until the close of his undergraduate course, only to be exchanged some years afterwards for a modified Kantianism, which became his nominal position to the end of his life, and is still the philosophical groundwork of most of the Ritschlian school.

In this continuous shifting of attitude may be seen the tokens of a nature not inclined to that precision and definiteness which belong to one of strong philosophic grasp. In fact, we may well question if Ritschl was a systematic theologian. The mistake is made in looking upon his theoretic propositions as his gift to the age; where is his contribution is not in the way of philosophy. Charges of obscurity in thought and of contradiction have been made against Ritschl by those who are competent to judge of these things, as for example, by Dr. Orr, in his "Christian View of God and the world;" and we must look elsewhere than to his theory for the secret of his following. Ritschl is a religious teacher rather than a theologian; and, strange as it may appear, yet the criticism which he made upon Tholuck of being a preacher and not a professor, might well be made upon Ritschl's most noted disciples, Herrmann and Kaftan. It is impossible to ex-