

# Concordia Theological Monthly

Continuing

LEHRE UND WEHRE  
MAGAZIN FUER EV.-LUTH. HOMILETIK  
THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY-THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

---

---

Vol. XI

September, 1940

No. 9

---

---

## CONTENTS

	Page
Reason or Revelation. Th. Engelder .....	641
Die Erscheinungen des auferstandenen Heilandes P. E. Kretzmann .....	661
BAPTIZΩ. K. G. Manz .....	667
Entwuerfe ueber die von der Synodalkonferenz angenommene Epistelreihe .....	689
Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches .....	701
Book Review. — Literatur .....	713

---

---

Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *weiden*, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den Wölfen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verfuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24*

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? — *1 Cor. 14:8*

---

---

Published for the  
Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States  
CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE, St. Louis, Mo.



ARCHIVES

# Concordia Theological Monthly

---

Vol. XI

SEPTEMBER, 1940

No. 9

---

## Reason or Revelation?

(Continued)

### IV

"It will be seen from the above that our strictures of distinctive Reformed teachings can be summarized under the heads of rationalism and legalism, representing pernicious tendencies to which we all are prone and which seriously impair divine truth as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures." (*Popular Symbolics*, p. 223.) We all are prone to rationalistic thinking. We Lutherans, too, need to guard against setting reason above revelation. We need it as much as any. What we have set down in the preceding articles was not addressed so much to the vulgar rationalists and the Reformed rationalists as to ourselves. It laid the groundwork for the present discussion, the discussion of rationalism in the Lutheran Church. The Reformed are not the only ones who, while professing the *sola Scriptura*, give reason a voice in theology. There are Lutherans, too, who do the same, Lutherans who are classed as conservatives.<sup>1)</sup> There are those who abhor Zwingli's

---

1) Those Lutherans who in the dark ages espoused *rationalismus vulgaris* and are known today as Liberals do not come within the scope of the present writing. We are no longer dealing with men whose slogan is: Reason and Revelation. One of them is Dr. R. T. Stamm (Gettysburg), who wrote an article for the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, April number, entitled: "Fractional Thinking and Lutheran Inhibitions" and there declared: "We need a saw to cut off the horns from six self-imposed and false dilemmas in order that we may substitute wholeness of thinking for the 'either-or' fallacies involved in them," the fifth false dilemma being: "Either submission to the authority of the Scriptures or the assertion of the proud pretensions of reason. . . . When we begin to ask just *how* God gave His revelation and inspired the Scriptures, we do not get far before we realize how false is the dilemma 'either the Scriptures or human reason.' For God will be seen to have used every faculty of the writers of Scripture in giving His revelation. That included their reason. . . . We must translate from their environment

bald statement *Deus nobis non proponit incomprehensibilia*, and would not think of following the Reformed rationalists in rejecting the Real Presence because it is incomprehensible, but who still reject plain teachings of Scripture on other points because their reason finds them incomprehensible.

A case in point is the fatal attempt made by many Lutherans to harmonize Scripture-teachings which seem to contradict each other. When they find that one clear doctrine of Scripture is logically inconsistent with a second doctrine clearly taught in Scripture, they say: *Deus nobis non proponit incomprehensibilia*; our reason cannot rest under this glaring antinomy; to satisfy our reason, we must trim and readjust one or both of these teachings so that they fit together; the doctrines of Scripture must be made to form a harmonious whole. The *sola-Scriptura* theologian accepts every teaching of Scripture just as it stands. He is not disturbed by the logical discrepancies that appear. It is not his business to satisfy his reason. And when a theologian makes it his business to harmonize seemingly discordant teachings of Scripture, he has entered the camp of the rationalists. For the only way to harmonize them satisfactorily to reason is to modify them, make them over — falsify them. And that is putting reason above Scripture.

There is the doctrine of universal grace and the doctrine of the election of grace. Scripture clearly teaches that it is the earnest will of God to save all men. Just as clearly Scripture teaches that those who are saved owe their salvation solely to the grace of God in Christ, that we have come to faith and shall enter into eternal life because of God's gracious election. Now, reason judges that these two doctrines are incompatible. It seems to reason that a particular election<sup>2)</sup> would exclude universal grace, and *vice versa*. We are inclined to argue that, if God earnestly desires to save all men, He would have predestinated all unto salvation; and since election is particular, not universal, the saving grace of God cannot be universal. We cannot reconcile these two truths. As Dr. Stoeckhardt says: "True, a discrepancy remains, as our reason

---

into ours, and here again it is not a question of human reason versus revelation. Human thinking inspired by God's Spirit must guide us at every step. . . . It is not a question of revelation or reason but of revelation given, received, interpreted, and applied through the human reason, which is energized and guided by the Spirit of God." Dr. Stamm is not, and does not want to be, a *sola-Scriptura* theologian. He belongs in the class described on page 481 ff. above.

2) Charge this pleonasm (particular election) to the account of those who teach an election that takes in all, the election "in the wider sense." We know, of course, that any and every election is particular. Else it were no election. But this absurd and impossible use of the term "election" as extending over all compels us to employ the pleonastic "particular."

views the matter, between the statements of Scripture regarding the cause of salvation and the cause of damnation, inasmuch as Scripture ascribes the former to God alone, the latter to man alone. As our reason views it, a discrepancy remains between the particular election of grace and the universal gracious will of God; but this discrepancy is not *contradictio in adiecto* since the election of grace and the gracious will of God are entirely different concepts. Our reason is ever inclined to draw this inference, that those who are finally saved did not resist the Word and Spirit of God as determinedly as others or that God did not will the salvation of those who are finally lost as earnestly as He willed the salvation of the elect. Every attempt to logically compose this difference leads either to Calvinism or synergism. As far as our salvation and our need of salvation is concerned, it is sufficient if we hold, without an attempt at curtailment, both sides of the truth and leave it to God to conciliate this difference. True theology halts at the limits of the divine revelation." (*Epheserbrief*, p. 95. See *Theol. Quart.*, 1911, p. 118.) Again: "The Scripture doctrine of election in no wise subverts or impairs the other clear, comforting doctrine of the universal will of grace, 1 Tim. 2:4. We cannot indeed rationally harmonize these two doctrines. But we bring our reason into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5, and believe and maintain both divine doctrines in their full extent." (*Lehre u. Wehre*, 1880, p. 308.) But not all Lutherans have been willing to do this. Melanchthon was not willing to do it. He convinced himself that these two statements: (1) God will have all men to be saved, and (2) he that is saved owes it entirely to God's grace, God's grace in election and conversion, cannot both be true, and he uttered his conviction in that horrible statement: "Since the promises of grace are universal and there cannot be contradictory wills in God, there *must necessarily* be some cause *in us* to account for the difference why Saul is rejected and David accepted, in other words, there must be in each a different kind of action." (*Loci*, ed. Detzer, I: 74.) "Dich plagt deine Philosophie," Luther had to tell Melanchthon. Melanchthon could not resist the temptation of his rationalistic flesh to remove the discrepancy in Scripture, and, as always happens when men feel that they must readjust Scripture, he simply canceled that Scripture which he did not like. He wanted to retain universal grace, but in the process of harmonizing he cast overboard the other truth, that David owed his salvation in no wise to anything in himself but entirely to God's grace. Many within the Lutheran Church are today following the lead of Melanchthon. They tell us that, if we teach a particular election, we are Calvinists, denying universal grace. The church historian Dr. Kurtz, speaks of the "peculiar predestination doc-

trine of the Missourians.” “They teach that God has from eternity chosen a number of men unto salvation and decreed: These shall and must be saved. Salvation in Christ is indeed offered to all, but only in the case of the elect God sees to it that they accept and retain it, and He does this not *intuitu fidei* but purely according to His good pleasure. . . . Already in 1872 the protest was raised against this view as being essentially Calvinistic.” (See F. Pieper, *Die Grunddifferenz*, p. 43.) This is, of course, a caricature of Luther’s and the Lutheran teaching; neither Luther nor the Formula of Concord nor Walther taught that the grace dealing with the lost is *non seria et efficax*; they did not teach a salvation by force. But we can understand why the rationalizing Lutherans draw this caricature. They cannot help themselves; they are obsessed with the idea that a particular election leaves no room for a grace which is universal. Lutherans in America have been saying: “If it is held that God has elected only a chosen part of our race, that these are brought to faith and salvation and that these must be saved, while others cannot be saved, the revealed plan of a universal redemption is rendered futile.” (See *Lehre u. Wehre*, 1881, p. 313.) Again the caricature; but also again the idea that “particular election” and “universal grace” are contradictions. And the contradiction can easily be removed: cancel the teaching of particular election.

To this day Lutherans in America are insisting that the election of grace militates against the universality of grace. In the *Lutheran* of March 16, 1938, a reviewer takes up the fine Scriptural statement “Our faith in the Son of God is the result of our election unto eternal life” and disposes of it in this wise: “On that score, if I am elected to go to the top rung of Jacob’s ladder, I am elected, and that is that! Being elected the resultant required faith is supplied to get me there — to fulfil the election! The election’s the thing! . . . Judas wasn’t elected either and consequently had no faith. He failed in the middle because he was not elected to the end — instead of failing to arrive at the proper end because he fell in the middle! . . . Had he been elected, his conversion could not possibly have been hindered; but he wasn’t elected. . . . There are theologies which need revision — possibly by the importation of the Roman Catholic *‘limbus patrum’* purgatory for those neither foreordained to become sons of perdition nor elected to eternal life.” This theologian has convinced himself that, if our faith is the result of our election, the reason why some do not come to faith is because God did not care about their conversion, and that consequently one who teaches a particular election cannot teach universal grace; so the theology of such a one needs revision.

That is saying, in effect, that what Scripture says on particular election needs to be revised and readjusted — canceled.

Who says that particular election and universal grace are contradictories? Scripture does not. Scripture nowhere tells us that these two doctrines do not agree. It is our reason that insists that they cannot stand side by side. And that is a pure fiction. It is an illusion. It is a fallacy. *Lehre und Wehre* says on this point: "Human reason makes the deduction: If God alone works faith, without man's cooperation, then God neglected those who do not believe and are damned. That, again, is a pure invention. Scripture speaks in the passages quoted only of those persons who believe and are saved and shows how they came to faith, but does not say a word concerning the others who are lost because of their unbelief. In their case Scripture inculcates the truth that it is their own fault that they do not come to faith and obtain salvation. . . . Always, whenever Scripture speaks of eternal election, it speaks *in concreto* of persons who are elected and reminds the Christians that they owe their faith, their Christian estate, their eternal salvation, to God's eternal election. We read Acts 13:48: 'When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'" (1904, p. 64.) But that cannot be true, declares blind reason. It would follow from this that God had no care for the others. So Acts 13:48 needs to be revised. The reason why men refuse to teach both doctrines, universal grace and particular election, is not that Scripture repudiates one of those teachings but solely that their carnal reason refuses to teach both. That is brought out very clearly in the following pronouncement: "There is no dispute as to the fact that predestination is taught in the Bible. But just what does it mean? As I understand it, there are especially three different interpretations. The one says in effect that God has sovereignly chosen and elected some unto salvation and some unto damnation. . . . To me this seems impossible if God, as the Scriptures declare, 'would have *all* men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,' 1 Tim. 2:4. . . . The second interpretation says that God has *elected* some unto faith and salvation. It stresses just as strongly as the first that God sovereignly determines those who shall believe. It tries (as it seems to me, unsuccessfully) to ignore the negative side of the question, or the election unto unbelief and damnation. If God determines who shall believe, it follows that He thereby also determines those who shall not believe. Predestination unto unbelief is the natural corollary and consequence of predestination unto faith." (The *Lutheran Companion*, Dec. 16, 1933.) Note the words italicized by the writer, "*elected*" and "*unto*." And note

particularly the terms "It follows" and "natural corollary." Where did we meet these latter terms before? It is one of the chief arguments of the Calvinists that "the very terms 'elect' and 'election' imply the terms 'non-elect' and 'reprobation.'" "There can be no election without its opposite, reprobation." We denounced this sort of argumentation as gross rationalism. And now comes a Lutheran theologian and insists that "predestination unto unbelief is the natural corollary of predestination unto life." He is strongly opposed to Calvinism. He stands for universal grace. But in his reasoning he occupies common ground with Calvin! His reasoning is false; but, relying on his reason, he makes as fatal a mistake as Calvin. The rationalistic Calvin teaches the false doctrine of a predestination unto damnation, and the rationalizing writer in the *Companion* denies the blessed doctrine of particular election.

He does that in the interest of harmonizing Scripture. "Particular election" would eliminate universal grace; so what Scripture says on that point must be adjusted and fixed up. And what teaching do we get as a result of the harmonizing operation? The *Lutheran Companion* continues: "The third interpretation says that God predestines unto salvation those whom He foreknows will believe in Jesus. . . . Foreknowing, He predestines those who believe unto salvation. In Rom. 8:29 we find this order: 'Whom He foreknew He also foreordained [predestined].' This third interpretation seems to me to be the only one that correctly safeguards both the grace of God as the sole ground and means of man's salvation and also the individual responsibility of man. The Bible teaches both of these truths." The Bible certainly does not teach "the individual responsibility" in the sense of the preceding words of this writer: "The Holy Spirit through the means of grace gives to *all the power to believe.*" (Italics ours.) "In this sense faith is the gift of God, for it comes only through the hearing of the Word. But not all who hear believe; some will not use the power given. The responsibility for this lies wholly with man, hidden in that mysterious personality of man which is free (as Adam was free) to resist the God of grace. God foreknows who will and who will not believe when the Word of Grace is preached unto them. Foreknowing, He predestines," etc. The Bible does not teach that God gives to all the power to believe and then waits to see who will choose to make the right use of this power and then chooses these as His own. The Bible teaches that God not only gives the power to believe but also creates faith itself. But the rationalizing, harmonizing Lutheran cannot accept this. That would, his reason tells him, be denying universal grace. So he chooses to make man's attitude the decisive factor in salvation. He has removed the offensive discrepancy but has paid dearly for

that. He traded the monergism of grace for the synergism of man's powers. — You cannot afford to let reason do the harmonizing. You will be cheated. Let God do the harmonizing. And He will do it through the light of glory. Wait for that.

We have just heard a Lutheran theologian express his abhorrence of the doctrine of a "predestination *unto* faith." This point in the doctrine of election — an essential point — is particularly offensive to the rationalizing Lutherans. They tell us: "Diese Personenwahl zum Glauben kann ich fuer nichts anderes erkennen als fuer einen calvinistischen Sauerteig." Luthardt-Jelke: "Walther, rejecting the formula that election took place *intuitu fidei* and teaching an 'election unto faith,' came dangerously close to predestinarianism." (*Komp. d. Dog.*, 1933, p. 177.) Another voice: "The question arises: Is not personal faith the result of God's eternal absolute decree? If the answer is in the affirmative, then we have drifted into the Calvinistic camp." ("Absolute" belongs to the caricature.) Dr. J. Aberly: "If faith alone knows Jesus as divine and if this faith itself is the work of grace, how can we escape the doctrine, be it that of Calvin or of Luther, as perpetuated by Missouri?" (*The Luth. Church Quarterly*, 1935, p. 81.) You must not teach that faith is exclusively the work of grace because Scripture teaches that grace is universal. But Scripture also teaches the first point! Well, you must harmonize these two statements of Scripture, and Luthardt and Jelke and Aberly choose to harmonize them by way of making faith the result, not of the operation of God, but of the cooperation of man. — A plague on your harmonizing!

We have just heard Lutheran theologians offering us in place of the election unto faith an "election *intuitu fidei*." This concept plays a prominent part in the harmonizing operation. Later Lutheran theologians made use of it in their attempts to soften, and get rid of, the antinomies in the Lutheran theology and thus to harmonize Scripture. "They used it," says Pieper, "in presenting the doctrine of election for the purpose of a rational explanation." (*Chr. Dog.*, II, p. 587.) The use of this hapless, sinister formula goes back to Melanchthon, and farther back to the Semi-Pelagians. Melanchthon: "Everywhere I speak as though predestination follows our faith and works. . . . God therefore approves and elected those who obey the call." And his disciple John Pfeffinger: "For we are elected and received because we believe in the Son." (See F. Bente, "Introduction to the Symbolical Books"; *Trigl.*, p. 197.) Does the formula "election *intuitu fidei*" serve the purpose of harmonizing the two seemingly contradictory doctrines? Yes — if it carries the synergistic sense (conversion being the result of the right disposition of a man). It is a fine logical solution — but an

anti-Scriptural solution, a wicked solution. But when it is used by a *sola-Scriptura* theologian, it explains nothing. It simply says that God from eternity decreed to create faith in us, and, knowing that He would do so, elected us. That leaves the discrepancy just where it was, and reason has once again made fools of men. Used in this way, it is a hapless, foolish formula. And in both cases it is illegitimate. It is the voice of reason intruding into theology. Theology has no right to operate with the *intuitu-fidei* theory of election. Dr. Reu puts that into diplomatic language when he calls the *intuitu-fidei* formula an invention of the theologians, having no basis in Scripture. (“Auch uns ist die *praedestinatio intuitu fidei* ein schriftloses *theologumenon*, die *praedestinatio ad fidem* dagegen klare Lehre der Schrift.” *Kirchl. Zeitschrift*, 1933, p. 502.) Similarly the *Journal of the Am. Luth. Conference*, March, 1940, p. 39: “Calvin as well as the Lutheran Intuitists reason *a priori*. The advocate of absolute predestination answers [the question, Who will enter heaven?]: He whom God arbitrarily elected, — of course, in Christ, not outside of Him, — but arbitrarily, in accordance with His absolute will and pleasure. This was in perfect harmony with Calvin’s philosophical conception of God. The Intuitist asks the same question but has a different answer. He knows that God wants all men to be saved, but he also realizes that not all will be saved. Now, who are the elect of whom Scripture undeniably speaks? Answer: Those of whom God foresaw that they would die in Christ, or in faith. And this theologian arrives at ‘*electio intuitu fidei finalis*.’ Yes, it is a human solution to a puzzling problem; but this solution is unwarranted by Scripture, except by the word ‘foresaw’ in Rom. 8:29, which, however, according to our best exegetes, means more than an intellectual process; it means an act of love. They were led astray by their *a-priori* approach to the great subject.” They were led astray by the rationalistic itch to find a way of harmonizing particular election and universal grace.—Do the Lutherans need to be warned against rationalistic tendencies?

The rationalistic mind insists on removing the antinomy of particular election and universal grace. Likewise it insists on solving the problem brought up by the question *Cur alii, alii non?* These two matters are essentially the same, but it will serve a good purpose to study them separately. This is the *Cur-alii* difficulty: “The Scriptures teach, on the one hand, that the grace of God in Christ is extended to all men alike, and, on the other hand, that there is no difference among men, since all are in the same state of total depravity and in the same guilt before God, and their conduct over against the saving grace of God is equally evil. Such being the case, we might conclude, either that all men would be

saved by the grace of God or all men be lost by reason of their own guilt. Instead, the Scriptures teach that some are saved merely by the grace of God and the rest are lost solely by their own guilt. Why this different result when the underlying conditions are the same? This is the mystery which no man ever has properly solved and no man ever will properly solve in this life, because the Word of God offers no solution." (Pieper, *Conversion and Election*, p. 21.) It will be seen that it is the same difficulty which confronted us when we placed side by side particular election and universal grace. For the doctrine of particular election is essentially the doctrine of the *sola gratia*. The only difference is that in the *Curalii* problem the doctrine of the total depravity of all men is accentuated, but that does not raise a new point, for the doctrine of salvation by grace alone means that because of their total depravity men cannot effect, nor contribute anything towards, their salvation. Now, then, why, since grace is universal, and since all men are in the same condition, are not all men saved? or all men lost? No difficulty is found here when the two classes are considered *separately*. Scripture tells us plainly why some are lost: it is their own fault; it is because they resist the Holy Spirit. And Scripture tells us plainly that we Christians are saved through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. "But the mystery appears when both classes are *compared with one another*. The question then arises: If grace is universal and total depravity general, then, why are not all converted and finally saved?" (L. c.) Here Scripture is silent. It does not reveal a *unit* cause covering both cases. It does not answer the question *uniformly*. But carnal reason will not rest there. It insists on an answer, and since God has not revealed it, it finds its own answer. It has, in fact, two answers and permits its dupes to take their choice. Calvinistic rationalism chooses this solution of the problem: The reason why some are saved and some lost, all being in equal guilt, is that God withheld His grace from the lost.<sup>3)</sup> The rationalizing Lutherans choose the other solution: The reason why some are saved and some lost, the grace of God being universal, is that those who are saved conducted themselves better than the others.<sup>4)</sup> Here the rationalizing Lutherans and the Calvinists are marching together. The Calvinists are fighting for the rights of reason, and a great contingent of

---

3) Of course, this does not solve the difficulty, since it ignores one of the two factors constituting the difficulty. The problem is: "Why, *since grace is universal*," etc. But their reason declares itself satisfied.

4) Of course, this does not solve the difficulty, since it ignores one of the two factors constituting the difficulty. The problem is: "Why, *since all men are in the same condition*," etc. But their reason declares itself satisfied.

Lutherans has joined them. The two parties are far apart on other questions. The Calvinists teach particular grace, and the Lutherans abhor this. The synergists deny the total depravity of man, and the Calvinists teach this. But on one point they are agreed: it is within the province of reason to find an answer to the question *Cur alii, alii non?*

Before we go on, we ought to hear some statements which offer the synergistic solution. Let Melanchthon begin: "Since the promises of grace are universal, there must necessarily be some cause in us to account for the difference why Saul is rejected and David accepted." Melanchthon's reason saw no other way of saving universal grace than by denying universal, equal guilt. Instead of heeding the admonition of Scripture to leave unsolved what Revelation has left unsolved, he set his philosophical mind to work and was satisfied with the solution offered, even though its harmonizing operation had to cut away a clear teaching of Scripture. And his disciples have been keeping it up. They say: "Thus there occurs at this point a personal decision of man himself, and it is in the dissimilar conduct of man over against grace offered to him and in his own personal decision that the cause must be sought why some are lost and others are saved." (See *Conversion and Election*, p. 55.) "The dissimilar workings of converting and saving grace are well explained on the ground of the dissimilar conduct of men over against grace." (*Op. cit.*, p. 34.) "If the fact of their being converted and saved depended on God alone and in no sense upon themselves and their own conduct, then indeed our heavenly Father would ultimately be not only the cause of the conversion and salvation of those who are saved, but the sole cause likewise of the non-conversion and perdition of those who will be lost." The implication of this argumentation is, as Dr. Pieper points out, that those who will have salvation depend on the grace of God alone and not also upon man's conduct are denying universal grace and imputing partiality to God. (*Op. cit.*, p. 67.) It is the old philosophy of Melanchthon: You cannot retain the universality of grace unless you deny the equal guilt. Why cannot men retain *both* teachings of Scripture, *gratia universalis* and *sola gratia*, and bid reason be silent? Will they never learn that Satan's paramour is aiming at leading them away from Scripture? But up to this very day the rationalizing Lutherans feel impelled to harmonize Scripture and solve unsolvable problems and are constantly stumbling into the pitfall of synergism. Just read page 135 of the current volume of our MONTHLY. First you have the Lutheran statement: "Human reason would like to construct a doctrine of election which contains a unifying principle, giving one answer to the question Why are some saved, others not?"

The Bible does not give us such a unifying answer." And in the very next item, discussing an article in *Der Lutherische Herold* (of the U. L. C. A.), we read: "And now follows the writer's synergistic explanation of the question *Cur alii, alii non?* He continues: 'Gott sah auch von Ewigkeit her voraus, dass die Mehrzahl der Menschen dieses in Christo vorhandene und durch die Predigt des Evangeliums dargebotene Heil nicht annehmen wuerde. Daher kann er seinen allen Menschen geltenden Vorsatz nur einem verhaeltnismaessig geringen Teil der Menschen zuwenden. Diese nennt die Schrift 'die Erwaehlten.' Die Erwaehlung ist also nicht durch Gottes Willkuer" (this belongs to the caricature) "bestimmt und bezeugt, sondern durch das Verhalten der Menschen. Gott hat sich die erwaehlt, die sich zum Glauben fuehren lassen."

Now, in offering this solution of the problem, the Melancthonians are following reason, not revelation. On this point they are rationalists. And if reason be the judge, their position is unassailable. "It is true," says Walther, "when reason hears that some are elected unto salvation by grace alone and not on the basis of their behavior and merit, *it must, if it would follow its principles, conclude* that the others are not saved because God has not chosen them, too, irrespective of their behavior and merit. It is also true that reason, hearing that those who are lost are lost solely through their own fault, *must conclude, if it would follow its principles,* that the others, who are saved, obtain their salvation for this reason alone that they are better, or conduct themselves better, than these." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1890, p. 275.) Yes, their position may be unassailable on rational grounds. But it is absolutely untenable on Scriptural grounds. For Scripture (a) forbids the synergistic solution as well as the Calvinistic solution and (b) forbids and denounces any attempt at a solution as wicked prying into a mystery which God has not yet revealed. "Walther fordert daher die *Verzichtleistung* auf alle Vermittlungen und die unverklausulierte Anerkennung eines Geheimnisses." (*L. c.*) As a Christian theologian you must refrain from all harmonizing in this matter and in no wise attempt to solve the inscrutable mystery of the *discretio personarum*. It is your Christian duty to take your reason captive. Discussing Hos. 13:11 ("O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help") and related passages, Dr. Stoeckhardt writes: "So verdanken die Christen Gott allein ihren Glauben und Seligkeit. So urteilt die Schrift ueber die verschiedenartige, entgegengesetzte *causa efficiens* von Glauben und Unglauben. Waehrend die menschliche Vernunft hier nivelliert und den Unglauben aus dem boesen, verkehrten Willen, den Glauben aus dem guten oder doch geneigten, gefuegigen Willen des Menschen herleitet, die Unbussfertigkeit aus der Unempfaenglich-

keit, die Busse aus der Empfaenglichkeit des menschlichen Herzens erklart, statuiert die Schrift den scheinbar unlogischen Gegensatz: Wenn der Mensch Christum und sein Wort nicht annimmt, nicht glaubt und verlorengiht, so liegt das im Menschen und am Menschen; wenn dagegen der Mensch die Liebe zur Wahrheit annimmt, glaubt und selig wird, so hat er das allein von Gott. Und unsere Pflicht ist, unsere Vernunft gefangenzunehmen unter den Gehorsam der Schrift." (*Lehre u. Wehre*, 1897, p. 25.)

That is Lutheran theology, Christian theology, to acknowledge the mystery here confronting us. And it is the pride of reason that causes men to rebel against the inhibitions of Scripture and to deride the old Lutheran answer to the question of the *Cur alii*: "We cannot answer it" as immature theology. The Formula of Concord declares: "In these and similar questions Paul (Rom. 11:22 ff.) fixes a certain limit to us how far we should go. . . . For that we neither can nor should investigate and fathom everything in this article, the great Apostle Paul declares, who, after having argued much concerning this article from the revealed Word of God, as soon as he comes to the point where he shows what God has reserved for His hidden wisdom concerning this mystery, suppresses and cuts it off with the following words, Rom. 11:33 f.: 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' " etc. The Formula of Concord is speaking of this mystery: "One is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again," etc. (*Trigl.*, p. 1087 f.) J. Gerhard tells the rationalizing Lutherans: "What is now hidden from us will then [in the life everlasting] be manifest. Then the reason will be manifest why one was elected, the other rejected." (*Loci*; *L. de vita aeterna*, § 74.) Dr. F. A. Schmidt at one time told the rationalizing Lutherans: "Our earnest opposition to the theory of self-determination should astonish no one, as this doctrine ultimately transfers the miraculous work of conversion from the hand of God into the hand of man and thus divests it of its real mystery. To render less profound the impenetrable mystery of conversion and election, by means of rationalizing speculation, here as with all mysteries of God, amounts to no more nor less than, in effect, demonstrating the mystery out of existence. We insist upon retaining the 'mystery of faith' also in this instance 'in order not to be defrauded; for it is not unknown to us what he really has in mind.'" (See *Conv. and Elect.*, p. 47.) The Ohio Synod told the rationalizing Lutherans in 1875: "It will ever remain an unsearchable mystery to human reason why God permits so many to be lost, when He earnestly desires that all should be saved." (*Op. cit.*, p. 48.) Luther has told the rationalizing Lutherans: "Why it is that some are touched by the Law and

some are not touched, why some receive the offered grace and some despise it, . . . is not to be curiously inquired into but to be adored with reverence as the most profound secret of the divine Majesty, which He reserves unto Himself and keeps hidden from us. . . . By the light of grace it is insolvable how God can damn him who, by his own powers, can do nothing but sin and become guilty. Both the light of nature and the light of grace here say that the fault is not in the miserable man but in the unjust God; nor can they judge otherwise of that God who crowns the wicked man freely, without any merit, and yet crowns not, but damns another who is perhaps less, or at least no more, wicked. But the light of glory speaks otherwise." (XVIII: 1794, 1966.) In heaven all difficulties will be solved for us, all questions answered, all Scripture harmonized.

But restless reason cannot wait that long. And proud reason will not be told that certain things are beyond her comprehension. Rationalism sets out to dispel all mysteries of faith. And when Lutheran theologians bow to all other mysteries of faith but balk at this one, we will have to tell them that they are guilty of rationalizing. We shall have to say that to the writer of the following statements: "The author [of *Conversion and Election*, Dr. Pieper] gives no explanation why the Spirit works faith in some except as God has elected them. He holds that the election of the finally saved is a mystery, and no explanation should be attempted." "As the Holy Spirit works faith, why do not all men believe? *Should we say that the reason is a mystery?*" (Italics by us.) "We know that men resist the Holy Spirit; but why do some give up resistance? Is the grace of God irresistible? But such a belief would be Calvinism. *Should we again exclaim, It is a mystery!?*" (Italics by us.) The Lutheran dogmatician C. E. Lindberg wrote that in *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 89, 103. It is the rationalistic spirit which caused A. E. Deitz to write: "One way out of the dilemma is to say, as some theologians do, that there is an unsolvable mystery in both predestination and conversion and that it is quite impossible for us to determine . . . why some men actually believe and are saved while others are not. The postulating of a . . . mystery relieves the theologians of the effort to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable elements in the problem. Still the inquiring mind wistfully seeks for some other answer and wonders whether it is a fact that this is the end of the investigation, whether it is actually impossible to go further." (*Exploring the Deeps*, p. 44.)<sup>5</sup> That is not the theological method of the Formula of Concord. It is not the theology of Holy Scripture, which asks the theologian to

---

5) These writers, as might be expected, set the matter straight by means of the synergistic adjustment.

realize: "Now I know in part," 1 Cor. 13:12, and to adore, not to solve, the divine mysteries. It is the theological method of the rationalists.

This is a serious charge. But we will repeat it, repeat it in the words of Dr. Pieper: "How did Melanchthon arrive at his synergistic 'theory'? In studying the doctrine of conversion we are eventually confronted with the *crux theologorum*, the question why under universal grace not all men are converted and saved. While Luther absolutely deferred the answer to this question to *eternal* life (the *lumen gloriae*) and characterized the mere *attempt* to solve this difficulty as folly and a satanic temptation, Melanchthon considered it to be incumbent upon him to give an answer *in this life*. According to his own statement, he was bothered by the question, 'Why Saul is rejected and David accepted.' And since Calvin's solution, the denial of the *gratia universalis*, did not appeal to him, he chose the alternate, solving the matter by denying the *sola gratia*; he placed the *human will* (the *voluntas non repugnans* or the *facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*) beside the Holy Ghost and the Word of God as a concurrent cause of conversion (*tres causae conversionis*). He expressed this in the well-known statement: 'Since the promises of grace are universal,' etc. (See above.) In other words, Melanchthon became, within the Lutheran Church, the father of synergism (of the 'different conduct'), because here as elsewhere his 'philosophy' or his rationalism bedeviled him.<sup>6)</sup> All modern synergists follow this path of Melanchthon. They are, just like Melanchthon, conceited enough to imagine that 'theology' can and must supply information on divine things which Scripture does not give. (Thomasius: "The sole function of the Confession is to give expression to the facts of the Christian consciousness of the Church; to mediate and harmonize is the

---

6) A writer in the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1933, p. 81 f., says on this point: "We now come to the tragic side in the life of this man. . . . It was the old problem of free will that brought so much grief to him. . . . It would be foolish to say that Melanchthon's solution was a success. He has done little more than taken a flight into Aristoteles's philosophy. . . . He calls himself a *homo Peripateticus*. . . . Melanchthon's religion is the religion of the enlightened mind; it tends toward the rational and wants to build bridges from the religious realm to the non-religious."—When this same writer says that also Luther's treatment of the problem "is a failure," that "Scripture does not support it," and that "we might just as well be frank about it and say that Luther here left the realm of revelation and 'dabbled in philosophy,'" he is saying too much.—Not to be unfair to this writer, another statement should be quoted: "Whenever the doctrine of synergism raises its head, the Church falls back on Luther's arguments for free grace over against a free will. May she do it always with a clear realization of its implications!" The writer found it necessary to add this clause to the last sentence: "and stop short of the frightful doctrine of determinism." It was not necessary in *this* connection to add this.

task of theology').” (*Chr. Dog.*, II, p. 583.) This refusal to accept certain teachings of Scripture because other Scripture teachings seem to contradict them, this business of substituting for the mystery of the *discretio personarum* reasonable explanations, is rationalism pure and simple.<sup>7)</sup> And, as we have seen, many Lutheran theologians are engaged in this rationalistic business.

Nor is this the sole instance. Rationalistic considerations have shaped a number of other teachings of modern Lutherans. We have time to examine but two of them, and that only briefly. There is, first, the Hades heresy. Is the intermediate state a period of grace? Will another opportunity be offered in “Hades,” at least to those who did not come under the influence of the Gospel in this life? Schleiermacher fathered this idea. Dorner expressed it in these terms: “The intermediate state is one of blessedness for Him [Christ], and He can admit the penitent thief into it. Even those who were not laid hold of by Christ’s historic manifestation in this earthly life still must, and may, be brought into relation with Him in order to be able to accept or reject Him. And thus the universal relation of Christ to humanity and the absoluteness of the Christian religion are confirmed.” (See A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 385.) “Dorner,” says Strong (p. 566),

---

7) On the difference between gross and subtle rationalism see Dr. Pieper’s essay in *Proceedings of Minnesota and Dakota Dist.*, 1882, p. 33. “The gross rationalists declared openly that the Christian religion must everywhere agree with reason. The sole source and norm of religion is for them the so-called reason. . . . The subtle rationalists confess that Holy Scripture is God’s revealed Word. But they act as though Holy Scripture does not *fully* reveal all articles of faith. They supplement the statements of Scripture with reflections which allegedly establish a rational connection between such declarations of Scripture as seem to be contradictory. For example, Scripture says clearly and plainly that God would have all men to be saved. Then Scripture says clearly and plainly that those who are saved are saved by grace alone, through the operation of God. . . . It seems that one statement contradicts and invalidates the other. . . . In order to relieve human reason of this difficulty, they assume that some sort of human cooperation in the work of salvation takes place, though Scripture knows nothing of such a cooperation.” See also Dr. Hoenecke’s essay in *Theologische Quartalschrift*, October, 1904, p. 180: “This is the position of plain rationalism, which deduces from the premise that Scripture is intended for rational beings the postulate that all of its statements must agree with human reason. But masked rationalism takes the same position. . . . The conflicts with plain Scripture statements have their source in reason. For example, reason, the reason, too, of the believers, cannot resign itself to leave the mystery of conversion and non-conversion unsolved. It would solve the mystery by ascribing to man a preparatory self-determination. . . . The charge that our assertion of the absolute authority of Scripture compels us to admit that Scripture makes contradictory statements does not disturb us.”—Certainly, subtle rationalism does not go to the same lengths as gross rationalism; but it is, as far as it goes, rationalism pure and simple. On some points it sets reason above revelation.

“regards the intermediate state as one, not only of moral progress, but of elimination of evil and holds the end of probation to be, not at death, but at the Judgment, at least in the case of all non-believers who are not incorrigible.” And this fiction of the rationalist Schleiermacher has been warmly welcomed by the rationalizing Lutherans, by the Liberals of course, but also by most of the Conservatives.<sup>8)</sup> Scripture does not extend the period of grace beyond death. See Heb. 9:27. Men will be judged according to the things done in the body, not on the basis of what their souls did while the bodies were in the grave. See 2 Cor. 10:5. But the rationalizing Lutherans say differently. Martensen: “As no soul leaves this present existence in a fully complete and prepared state, we must suppose that there is an intermediate state, a realm of progressive development, in which souls are prepared and matured for the final Judgment. . . . Conversion must still be possible for the unconverted in Hades.” (*Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 457, 463.) J. A. W. Haas: “The purpose of the descent of Christ into Hades was to preach to the spirits in prison, 1 Pet. 3:19; those who disobeyed in the past were now to have the Gospel preached to them, 1 Pet. 4:6, and to receive the benefit of the propitiation.” (*The Truth of Faith*, p. 95.) We hear even A. Koeberle saying: “We can have the assurance: Christ is Lord also in the realm of death. He can reveal Himself to the captive, troubled souls, and spirits, who heard nothing of Him here on earth, as their Judge and Savior, as their Lord and Redeemer. Gott hat noch immer ‘viel tausend Weisen, zu retten aus dem Tod’ (Paul Gerhardt).” (*Das Evangelium u. die Raetsel der Geschichte*, p. 71.) And L. Schneller: “Aber auch in die Totenwelt hinein dringt noch die Predigt von der rettenden Gnade durch Jesus Christus. Ungezaehlte Millionen von Heiden sind ja gestorben, ohne je ein Wort von Jesus vernommen zu haben. Ihnen wird natuerlich das Evangelium noch drueben verkuendigt werden. Ungezaehlte Millionen in der Christenheit sind gestorben, ohne dass ihnen das Evangelium in seinem ganzen Ernst und seiner Herrlichkeit persoendlich nahegebracht worden ist, die jedenfalls dem Rufe Jesu nicht gefolgt sind. Sie haben ihre Strafe verdient, sie werden sie auch erleiden muessen. Aber ein Strahl von Hoffnung liegt fuer sie in der Tatsache, dass auch noch drueben das Evangelium verkuendigt wird.” (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., 1936, p. 439.)

---

8) “Die meisten neueren Exegeten behaupten, das κήρυγμα Christi in der Hoelle . . . habe den Zweck gehabt, . . . den Geistern im Gefaengnis das Heil anzubieten.” (Stoekhardt, *Kommentar ueber den Ersten Brief Petri*, p. 158.) “Die neuere Dogmatik hat hier die Schranke des alten Protestantismus, der Gottes Heilsoffenbarung an die Menschen streng auf die irdische Geschichte begrenzen wollte, nahezu einhellig durchgebrochen.” (P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge*, p. 181.)

Note, before we go on, that, while it is usually said that a second chance is given in "Hades" to those who had no chance here to hear the Gospel, we frequently find them asserting that there is a second chance also for some of those who came under the influence of the Gospel and were not converted. It is not only A. Schlatter (Reformed) who says: "Die Schranke, die das reformatorische Dogma der goettlichen Gnade setzt (und die darum alles vom seligen Sterben abhaengig macht), darf fallen, wofern nicht Gleichgueltigkeit den Aufschub der Bekehrung dadurch motiviert, dass sie auch jenseits des Todes moeglich sei." (See W. Oelsner, *Die Entwicklung der Eschatologie von Schleiermacher bis zur Gegenwart*, p. 91.) So only those are excluded from the second chance who are guilty of a high degree of secure procrastination. O. von Gerlach, too, excludes only those who are absolutely hardened. He says in his *Bibelwerk*: "Unter den Verstorbenen sind viele noch nicht unheilbar Verstockte, fuer die auch jenseits noch eine Rettung moeglich ist." Just like Dorner: Second probation for all who are not *incorrigible*. H. Cremer lets in not only those who never heard the Gospel but also those who, hearing the Gospel, have not yet decided for Christ. "Cremer betonte stark eine Bekehrungsmoeglichkeit der unreif, *unentschieden* Gestorbenen im Zwischenzustand (und zwar dem der Glaebigen, Hades)." (See Oelsner, *op. cit.*, p. 87.) Martensen lets down all the bars: "Conversion possible for *the unconverted* in 'Hades.'" Haas, too, uses the all-inclusive term "those who disobeyed."

Now, what is the source of this teaching? Not revelation, but reason. Scripture nowhere states that the Gospel will be preached in "Hades" to those who did not hear it in this life. 1 Pet. 4:6 speaks of men to whom the Gospel was preached while they were in the flesh. And the *locus classicus* for the doctrine of Hades salvation, 1 Pet. 3:19, does not say that the Gospel was preached in "Hades." Besides, it deals with those who were "disobedient." Those theologians who apply it to men who never heard the Gospel did not look closely at the text. Then, too, there is Heb. 9:27 and 2 Cor. 10:5. Scripture does not teach that conversion is possible in "Hades." Rev. L. Dahle (of Norway) admits this at once. In his treatise *Life after Death* (1893) "he does not aver that the doctrine of a possible conversion of such as in this life never heard the Gospel is a clear doctrine of Scripture. Yet he maintains that, if we 'go back to the fundamental principles of Scriptural teachings,' we are forced to come to such conclusion. Since God earnestly desires the salvation of all men, and since the Gospel call is universal, therefore the probability grows strong that all who have died in ignorance of the Gospel will be given an opportunity to accept Christ in Hades (pp. 172, 178, 180)." (*Theol. Quart.*, 1908,

p. 25.) The teaching under discussion is a rationalistic construction. These men imagine that without this teaching the doctrine of universal grace must fall. "In order to save universal grace before the forum of human understanding, some have thought that the Gentiles will be saved for Christ's sake, without faith in the Gospel, on account of their moral aspirations (thus, for example, Hofmann). Others have assumed that after this life an opportunity to hear the Gospel and to believe will be offered (Martensen, Kliefoth, etc.). But these are human speculations, without any basis in Scripture." (Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, II, p. 35.) "Dorner" (and the rest of the Hades theologians) "deals in speculation rather than in Scripture." (Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 566.) The rationalizing Lutherans are here again engaged in the business of solving the *Cur alii, alii non?* When they "see that God gives His Word at one place but not at another" (*Trigl.*, p. 1081), they feel that universal grace is endangered, and instead of letting the matter rest with God, as the Formula of Concord does, they invent the fiction of the possibility of salvation in "Hades." So the matter is straightened out, and God should act accordingly. It is another instance of squaring and harmonizing a teaching of Scripture with facts of experience. It is rationalism pure and simple.

Put it another way, in a more general way. These theologians argue that the justice and mercy of God calls for some such expedient. They say that, if God did not give men another opportunity in "Hades," He could not remain the gracious, merciful God. That is the argument as Th. Traub puts it: "Those who have not been called in this life enter the realm of death, Scheol, Hades, the prison, 1 Pet. 3. . . . We have no clear Scripture statement for the possibility of the conversion in the intermediate state of those who here on earth were not called by the Gospel. . . . But that salvation will be offered through the Gospel after this life to those who were not called in this life is demanded by the absoluteness of Christianity.<sup>9)</sup> If salvation is bound exclusively to the Lord Jesus, the love and justice of God demand, and our faith and our love demand, that *every man must be given the opportunity to decide for or against Christ.*" (Italics in original. *Von den letzten Dingen*, pp. 34, 81, 91.) Tholuck, another conservative Lutheran, finds that the justice of God absolutely calls for the intermediate state, for it would not square with the justice of God to have a wicked man, who in this life came only in slight contact with the Gospel and so did not come to faith consigned at once to damnation." (See Hoenecke, *Ev. Luth. Dogmatik*, IV, p. 232.) Scripture nowhere

---

9) "Absoluteness of Christianity." Do not bother to find out what this phrase means in this connection. It does not mean anything in this connection.

says that God is bound by His justice and mercy to provide additional opportunities in a "Hades." It is human reason that says so, *our* sense of justice, *our* conception of mercy. It is another instance of that fatal itch for harmonizing. God's ways must be made to square with our views. Revelation must harmonize with reason. And where revelation is silent, reason assumes the right to supplement revelation and to have its notions proclaimed as divine truth. That is rationalism pure and simple.<sup>10)</sup>

The argument for the conversion of some after death, based on the universality of grace, is presented by the Experientialists in this form: "Wenn Gottes Erwaehlen den Glauben wirkt, wie sollte unsere Demut uns nicht gewiss machen, dass Gott jedes andern sich ebenso annehmen wird wie unser! Wir wagen die zuversichtliche Hoffnung, nicht unsers Heils allein, sondern einer endlichen Wiederbringung aller." (P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge*, p. 186.) Althaus starts out with the thesis that conversion is

---

10) A footnote is in place again, dealing with the folly of wise reason. Those theologians who call for a second probation in "Hades" on the basis of God's justice and mercy are unreasonable if they do not insist on the ultimate salvation of *all men*. Some of them are consistent and ask for just that; but the conservative Lutherans do not want to go so far. That, however, is unreasonable. For if justice and mercy demand that a second chance be given in "Hades," the same justice and mercy demand that, when conversion is not accomplished in "Hades,"—and some tell us that conversion is a more difficult matter there than here,—God provide a second, a better-equipped, "Hades." We know that the Universalists and all other advocates of the apocatastasis base their teaching on their ideas of God's justice and mercy, the same justice and mercy with which the Hades theologians operate. We shall have to tell this latter class that reason has played them a trick, has befooled them, presents them to the world as immature rationalizers. Madam Reason likes to treat her admirers thus. We submit the following excerpt from an article by Axel B. Svensson, which points out that the Hades theologians do not think logically. "Prof. O. Hallesby maintains with very great definitiveness the view that opportunities for conversion will be afforded even after death. . . . He states emphatically that he does not at all believe in an opportunity for *us* to be converted after death. Accordingly, he does not deny eternal punishment. He expresses his astonishment that among the Christians in Norway there are some who would saddle on him the doctrine that ultimately all men will be saved. One can well understand his resentment over these accusations, which, it cannot be denied, are unjustified from his point of view. But if he had kept his eyes open to the consequences resulting from his own teaching, he would have understood quite well those whom he now regards as slanderers. For if there is a possibility of conversion after death for some, commonest justice demands that all shall have that possibility, because between grace offered within the limits of time and grace offered within the limits of eternity we cannot place the sign of equality. No comparison is possible at this point. The standpoint occupied by Hallesby is logically untenable. However, that would be of little moment, because men's logic is often 'a strange critter,' and it can certainly happen that God's logic lies upon a plane so high that we can never grasp it here in time; His thoughts are higher than ours. But the doctrine of conversion after death is unbiblical, and that settles the matter." (See *Theol. Monthly*, 1925, p. 195 ff.)

possible in the case of those who had not heard the Gospel in this life: "We may well hope that beyond the limits of our history (where and when we do not know) Christ will yet meet all whom He did not reach in time (*in der Geschichte*) and place them before Him *zur Entscheidung und Scheidung*. . . . Those in whom the call did not become effective here will be placed after death, on the Day of Christ, before the reality of Christ and God," etc. (Pp. 181, 218.) But he feels that on his premises he must extend the hope of final salvation to all,—"*endliche Wiederbringung aller*" (apocatastasis),—and he bases this teaching on his experience: Since God's love found me and accepted me, who am not better than the others, I am certain that He will finally accept all. That sounds reasonable. It appeals to our feeling. It is logical, too. But it is pure rationalizing. Christian experience is not a source of doctrine. (See p. 484 ff. above.) Our sense of what is right and proper must not take the place of revelation.—The teaching of Hades salvation is a rationalistic fiction.

Finally, rationalistic considerations have shaped the modern teaching of the inspiration of Holy Scripture. A very brief word on that. The majority of the Lutheran theologians of today, inclusive of the Conservatives, denies verbal, plenary inspiration, and denies it on the ground that it is an unreasonable doctrine. Some of their arguments: The Bible claims inerrancy for all its parts, but that claim does not accord with the facts. "The claims of an infallible Bible, verbally perfect, do not hold in the light of the facts." Science shows that the Bible is full of mistakes, and the Bible statement "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" stands corrected. The teaching of the Bible must be made to harmonize with the findings of science. Again, it would not accord with the majesty of God to ascribe to Him "the urbane touches in the Epistle to Philemon, the homespun philosophy of Proverbs," and to make him deal with "the trivialities" recounted in the Bible. And the "reprehensible ethics" found in the Bible does not agree with the holiness of God. The teaching of inspiration must be harmonized with our ideas of the fitness of divine things. Again, it would be derogatory of the holy writers to make them mere mouthpieces of God, mere phonographs. The teaching of inspiration must be harmonized with the dignity of man; the holy writers "must not be dehumanized." Again, verbal inspiration would involve "an enslaving legalism of the letter." What, are we to be bound by every word and letter of Scripture? Shall there be no room left for our free spirit? The teaching of inspiration must be harmonized with our dignity as free sons of God. And finally,—for space is running short,—what need is there for plenary inspiration? All spiritual needs are served, if only the saving truths

are inspired. If you make inspiration extend to everything written in the Bible, you are representing God as doing something superfluous, unnecessary, and useless. That would ill accord with the "wise economy of means" one expects of God. Away with such senseless teachings! Do not saddle the Bible with unreasonableness! Harmonize! — Proud, blind reason has many, many grievances against the doctrine of verbal inspiration. And reason must be humored.

At this point rationalism has gained one of its greatest victories. It has driven many to reconstruct an important doctrine of Scripture, and — these men are now compelled, as the inevitable result of having a Bible which is only partially inspired, to make reason the mistress of the theology. "The least deviation from the old inspiration doctrine introduces a rationalistic germ into theology. . . . Human reason is made the *norma* of truth, and Scripture is degraded to the position of a *norma normata*." (Walther, in *Lehre u. Wehre*, 1888, p. 196.)

We cannot deny it: much rationalism is found within the Lutheran Church, too.

And this harmonizing is an evil thing, fraught with great disaster. Let us study that in greater detail.

(To be continued)

TH. ENGELDER

---

## Die Erscheinungen des auferstandenen Heilandes

---

Die Chronologie der vierzig Tage gleich nach der Auferstehung unsers Heilandes bietet viel Material für anregendes Studium, aber auch gewisse Schwierigkeiten, die sich nicht leicht lösen lassen. Es ist darum kaum verwunderlich, daß nicht nur die verschiedenen Harmonien der evangelischen Geschichte vielfach nicht übereinstimmen, sondern daß auch viele Exegeten, die sich mit diesem Problem beschäftigt haben, zu verschiedenen Resultaten gelangt sind. Es lohnt sich darum wohl der Mühe, diese Frage einmal etwas näher anzusehen und wenigstens den Versuch zu machen, eine befriedigende Lösung zu finden. \*)

Manche Ausleger behandeln die ersten Erscheinungen am Ostermorgen einfach auf Grund der Synoptiker und bringen darum die Erscheinung des Heilandes vor den Frauen, Matth. 28, 8—10; Mark. 16, 8; Luk. 24, 9—11, als die erste, ohne auf die Frage der Zeitfolge einzugehen. De Wette schreibt in seiner Weise: „Erste Erscheinung vor der Maria Magdalena, Joh. 20, 14—18; Mark. 16, 9, womit die vor

---

\*) Außer den einschlägigen exegetischen Werken wurden bei dieser Arbeit besonders die Harmonien von Stöckhardt, Robertson, Olvisaker und Fahling benutzt.