

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. VIII.

APRIL, 1904.

No. 2.

THE LOGOS IN THE PROLOGUE OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

“In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and God (predicate) was the Logos.”

We have here, at the opening of St. John's Gospel and arranged in climactic succession, three ponderous propositions concerning the Logos. It can hardly be questioned that, in the use of this term, it is not the purpose of the writer to introduce a hitherto unfamiliar conception within the circle of Christian readers. When John wrote the fourth Gospel, the name Logos evidently constituted a part of the Christian vocabulary as a current designation of Jesus Christ. That it is found only in the Johannean writings seems to point to a comparatively late origin. The name occurs four times in our prologue. Here it is used absolutely, without any modifier. In Rev. 19, 13 we have the phrase “the Word of God” (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), while in 1 John 1, 1 the expression is “the Word of life” (ὁ λόγος τῆς ζωῆς). These are the only passages in which the title is found. The question, therefore, that confronts us at the outset is as to whence this idea and name were derived.

Harnack, after the manner of the Tuebingen school, discerns in the employment of this title the prelude toward the blending of Christianity with Greek philosophy. According to his opinion, the writer of this prologue is the forerunner of those Christian “teachers who, prior to their

James V to Lutheranism. In 1540 he was accused of having "divers books suspected of heresy, including the New Testament in English, Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, and several treatises of Erasmus;" he was excommunicated and burned in effigy in St. Andrews.

The most striking and impressive proof of the progress of the Reformation made in Scotland at the close of the Hamilton period was shown in the passing of the Act of Parliament, March 15, 1543, introduced by Lord Maxwell, which ordained "that it should be lawful to every man to use the benefit of the translation which then they had of the Bible and New Testament, together with the benefit of other treatises containing wholesome doctrine."

Though later on fresh persecutions broke out for a time, this law was never repealed.

LUTHER ON THE "A DEBITO AD POSSE" FALLACY IN THE DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION.

Christian doctrine can and should be drawn from the clear Word of God alone. "Verbum Dei condat articulos fidei et praeterea nemo, ne angelus quidem." What cannot be proved by clear testimonies of the Bible is not a constituent part of Christian theology. On the other hand, every doctrine set forth in clear and unmistakable terms of Holy Writ must be received, believed, and confessed by every true Christian. And when a conflict arises between a clear word of God and human reason, science, or philosophy, the all-sure Word of God must carry it against all objections from all quarters whatever. A Christian must learn to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. To refuse submission to a clear word of the Bible is nothing short of rebellion against the majesty of God Himself.

Human reason *ought to* submit to the clear Word of God; but the Bible and experience teach that, of her own

accord, she *will* not submit. She disdains to listen merely and to learn what the Scriptures teach. She aspires to the cathedra of the Christian Church to display her own wisdom. And in order to obtain the coveted position she will, if need be, disguise herself in the garb of Scripture. She will quote testimonies of the Bible, and as a "gloss" or an "inference" attach to them her own heretical opinions. A forced figure serves her purpose in explaining away a clear but obnoxious doctrine of the Bible. And an alleged "necessary conclusion" from a word of God suffices to palm upon the church her own teachings as pure Scripture doctrine.

Luther says in his profound Treatise on the Bondage of the Will:¹⁾ "See what happened to that trope-inventor, Origen, in expounding the scriptures. What just occasion did he give the calumniator Porphyry, to say, 'those who favor Origen, can be no great friends to Hieronymus.' What happened to the Arians by means of that trope, according to which they made Christ *God nominally*? What happened in our own times to those new prophets concerning the words of Christ, 'This is my body'? One invented a trope in the word 'this,' another in the word 'is,' another in the word 'body.' I have therefore observed this:—that all heresies and errors in the scriptures have not arisen from the simplicity of the words, as is the general report throughout the world, but *from men not attending to the simplicity of the words, and hatching TROPES and CONCLUSIONS out of their own brain.*"

Melanchthon was among the first who endeavored to obtain a hearing in the Lutheran Church for the spurious wisdom of man. By his notorious "NECESSE EST" synergism was established and the scriptural and old Lutheran *sola gratia* and *solī Deo gloria* were overthrown. Melanchthon argued: The Bible plainly teaches that the love of God is universal and embraces Saul as well as David, — *hence it*

1) Cole's translation, p. 190.

necessarily follows that the different conduct of David was the reason why he was elected in preference to Saul, who was rejected.¹⁾ To the numerous passages of Holy Writ on universal grace Melancthon tacks an inference, hatched out of his own brain, an unscriptural *necesse est*, which, if properly and consistently developed, is destructive of both the Christian *truth* and the Christian *principle of truth*. Of Christian *truth*,—because it substitutes for the divine doctrine of salvation by free grace the human theory of salvation by man's conduct. Of the Christian *principle of truth*,—because it replaces the lawful authority of Holy Writ by the audacious and fallacious pretensions of human reason. While the Bible ascribes the *whole* of man's conversion and salvation to God, Melancthon, by adding his "*necesse est*" to the Bible, obtains a share of the work and a share of the credit for man.

By the same method of tacking a human inference to a word of Scripture, Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, and Synergists of all ages, churches, and countries have endeavored to establish the capacity and power of natural man for spiritual acts, especially, for contributing toward his own conversion and salvation. From the Holy Scriptures they quote divine commands and exhortations, and then they infer from their own mind an ability in man to comply with God's behests. From the Bible they prove a certain *praeceptum* or *debitum*, and then they add from the resources of their own reason a corresponding capacity or *posse* in man. They argue: God commands us to repent; hence it is within our power to repent. Or: According to the clear Word of God, man ought to believe the Gospel; hence man is able to believe the Gospel.

1) Melancthon writes: "Cum promissio sit universalis, nec sint in Deo contradictoriae voluntates, necesse est in nobis esse aliquam discriminis causam, cur Saul abiiciatur, David recipiatur, i. e., necesse est aliquam esse actionem dissimilem in his duobus. Haec dextre intellecta vera sunt, et usus in exercitiis fidei et in vera consolatione, cum acquiescunt animi in Filio Dei monstrato in promissione, illustrabit hanc copulationem causarum, verbi Dei, Spiritus sancti et voluntatis." (Luthardt, *Die Lehre vom freien Willen*, p.178.)

In the days of the Reformation this argument *a debito ad posse*, or a *praecepto ad posse* was the main weapon of the Diatribe of Erasmus in his famous controversy with Luther. The object of Erasmus was to prove a remnant of spiritual powers in natural man. Free-will—he maintained—is “that certain small degree of power which, without the grace of God, is utterly ineffective.”¹⁾ “Moreover”—Erasmus proceeds—“I consider Free-will in this light: that it is a power in the human will by which a man may apply himself to those things which lead unto eternal salvation, or turn away from the same.”²⁾ This theory Erasmus promised to prove by the “canonical Scriptures.” But having searched the Bible in vain for testimonies in proof of his infamous thesis, Erasmus concluded to make short work of it. He simply quoted a great number of divine commands and exhortations, and from his own brain he added as a “necessary conclusion” the ability and capacity in man to do what God requires. But Luther, with the weapon of God’s Word and sound logic, answered

1) Cole, p. 62.

2) Ibid., p. 108. Luther maintains that, in a measure, natural man is free in things pertaining to this world, but he denies his freedom in matters spiritual. He writes: “For although you (Erasmus) think and write wrong concerning Free-will, yet no small thanks are due unto you from me, in that you have rendered my own sentiments far more strongly confirmed, from my seeing the cause of Free-will handled by all the powers of such and so great talents, and so far from being bettered, left worse than it was before: which leaves an evident proof, *that Free-will is a mere lie; and that, like the woman in the Gospel, the more it is taken in hand by physicians, the worse it is made.*” (p. 5.) Again: “But, if we do not like to leave out this term [free-will] altogether (which would be most safe, and also most religious), we may, nevertheless, with a good conscience teach that it be used so far as to allow man a Free-will, not in respect of those which are above him, but in respect only of those things which are below him: that is, he may be allowed to know that he has, as to his goods and possessions, the right of using, acting, and omitting, according to his Free-will; although, at the same time, that same Free-will is overruled by the Free-will of God alone, just as he pleases: but that, God-ward, or in things which pertain unto salvation or damnation, he has no Free-will, but is a captive, slave, and servant, either to the will of God, or to the will of Satan.” (p. 66.)

Erasmus as he deserved, and tore to shreds the sophistic and rationalistic, but specious and well-couched, argument of the Diatribe.¹⁾ Among the Synergists of the schools of Melancthon and Laternmann, however, this torn and tattered sophism continued to live and hold its own in spite of the Bible and sound philosophy. And in modern "scientific" theology, which is fairly steeped in synergism and Rationalism, the "great" argument *a praecepto ad posse* has been for decades a staple article.²⁾ To be sure, the Pelagians and Synergists, ever since the defeat of Erasmus, have continued to scour the Bible for testimonies in proof of man's most arrogant and fateful claim. But to the present day they have signally failed to add substantially to

1) Luther admits that Erasmus is his superior in the powers of polished eloquence. "I am" — says he — "but a barbarian and do all things barbarously. . . . But from you, my friend Erasmus, suffer me to obtain the grant of this request: that, as I in these matters bear with your ignorance, so you, in return, would bear with my want of eloquent utterance." (Cole's translation, p. 1. 5.)

2) Dr. Luthardt, having proved from the Old and the New Testament that conversion (repentance and faith) is a work of God, proceeds as follows: "Und doch wird auf der anderen Seite Busse und Glaube als dasjenige bezeichnet, welches der Mensch zu *leisten* hat, und die Bekehrung von ihm *GEFORDERT*. *Metavoïre* lautet vom Alten Testament her auf jeder Stufe der Heilsoffenbarung die goettliche Predigt, die sich an den Willen des Menschen richtet. Immer ist, von der Zeit der Propheten an, die *μετανοια* die sittliche Grundlegung der Heilszukunft. *Und es liegt auf der Hand, dass jener alte Grundsatz, den Luther gegen Erasmus und die strengen Lutheraner gegen die Synergisten so gerne anwandten, hier nicht gilt: a mandato ad posse non valet consequentia.*" (Warum, das weiss Luthardt selber nicht. F. B.) "Gott wuerde die Busse nicht *fordern*, koennte sie der Mensch nicht *leisten*. Denn er fordert sie als die unumgaengliche Bedingung des Heils, das er dem Menschen wirklich zgedacht hat. Und alsbald, sobald der Mensch diesen Zuruf hoert, *soll* er seiner Forderung auch nachkommen, *kann* es also auch jederzeit; vgl. Ps. 95, 7 f. Hebr. 4, 7 ff. Ingleichen wird der *Glaube* vom Menschen *gefordert*. *Πιστεβete* verbindet sich in der Regel mit *μετανοïre*. Und schon dass er als Gehorsam bezeichnet wird, z. B. Roem. 1, 5, zeigt, dass er als ein sittliches Verhalten gemeint ist, *welches der Mensch zu leisten hat*. . . . Es mag die Gnade dem Menschen noch so nahe kommen: die Thuere muss der Mensch selbst aufmachen, dass Jesus zu ihm eingehe; er muss hoeren auf Jesu Stimme, Apoc. 3, 20." (*Die Lehre vom freien Willen*, p. 426 f.)

the argument of Erasmus. The *a debito ad posse* sophism is the best and most that human reason has been able to do towards establishing natural powers for spiritual acts.

Also in the Lutheran Church of America Synergists of all shades have for decades been wielding this weapon against the champions of the *sola gratia* and the *soli Deo gloria*. One of the latest attempts at battering down the Lutheran doctrine of conversion and election by God's grace only was made in the January number of the *Lutheran Quarterly* by Prof. Richard of Gettysburg. And here, too, the "Long Tom" that he directs against the theological stronghold of Missouri and its allies is none other than the old wooden gun of Erasmus working havoc among such only as fire it.

Prof. Richard purposes to prove that man's conversion is not effected by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit alone, but that man (his intellect and will) enters as a third cause contributing toward his own conversion. He gives full assent to the synergistic doctrine of Melancthon. His very object is to defend and prove the Melancthonian theory of the three concurring causes of conversion, and to refute the doctrine of Missouri and the Formula of Concord, that God alone is the Author of our conversion and salvation. Prof. Richard believes in man's "natural and inherent capability of responding" to impressions of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. He teaches that the will of natural man in conversion is "a free self-determining personality which has not lost absolutely the image and likeness of God, and whose crowning glory is its essential freedom."¹) He teaches that the Word of God and the Spirit presuppose in the unconverted man "intelligence to discern the truth" and "ability to obey the truth." "No doubt" — says Prof. Richard — "in every New Testament instance where repentance and faith are enjoined, the divine word and Holy Spirit are presupposed to be present,

1) *Lutheran Quarterly*, January, 1904, p. 33.

and to be active both in the mind and in the heart of the hearer of the divine word; but over against the word and the Spirit are set the mind of man with presupposed intelligence to discern the truth, and the will with presupposed ability to obey the truth, and also as having the ability to decline the invitation of the gospel, and to refuse the assistance of the Holy Spirit."¹⁾ In brief: The Gospel presupposes spiritual powers in natural man, in his intellect as well as in his will; and man can and must contribute to the production of his own repentance and faith.²⁾

1) Ibid., p. 65.

2) Heppe, whose teaching on conversion and whose interpretation of the Melancthonian doctrine Prof. Richard adopts, writes: "Indem nun Gott diese Verheissung der Suendenvergebung allen denen persoendlich darbietet, welche das Wort des Evangeliums hoeren, *so haengt die Ergraeifung dieser Verheissung oder der Glaube an dieselbe von dem Willen des einzelnen Menschen ab.* DENN das Wort ERMAHNT jeden, *Christum im Glauben zu ergreifen*, und macht jeden dazu tuechtig, sich vom Heiligen Geist ziehen zu lassen." (Dogm. I, p. 320.) In a note Heppe adds: "Auf allen Punkten der Melancthonischen Lehre von der Bekehrung ist es wahrzunehmen, dass das religioes-ethische Interesse der eigentliche Schwerpunkt derselben ist. Der Mensch bedarf einer sittlichen Selbstbestimmung, er muss in einen ernsten Kampf gegen sich selbst eingehen, muss mit Eifer nach der Gnade und Gerechtigkeit trachten, — damit er die sich ihm frei darbietende Gnade wirklich bejahen und ergreifen koenne. Es kommt auf den Menschen an, ob er sich bekehren lassen will oder nicht; denn der Mensch traegt als persoentliches Wesen auch nach dem Suendenfalle den gottebenbildlichen Charakter. Der Mensch wird also von Gottes Gnade in der Weise bekehrt, dass er sich dieser gegeneuber nicht als todte Sache, sondern als lebendige, sich selbst bestimmende Person verhaelt. Die Bekehrung des Menschen ist daher nie ein magischer oder mechanischer, sondern immer ein durch und durch sittlicher Vorgang im Menschen. Melancthon erinnert daher (Postil. P. I, p. 713) an die Worte der Offenbarung: 'Siehe, ich stehe vor der Thuere und klopf e an. So jemand meine Stimme hoeren wird und die Thuere aufthun, zu dem werde ich eingehen und das Abendmahl mit ihm halten und er mit mir,' und fragt: wie reimt sich dieser Ausspruch zu dem Geschrei: 'homo se habet mere passive'? Denn (faehrt Melancthon S. 765 fort) 'si homo haberet se pure passive, tum tractatio esset violenta sine ullo nostro motu aut lucta, aut certe fieret conversio, ut cum aqua infunditur in dolium. Hae imaginationes sunt deponendae, quas quidem ipsa experientia refutat, quia conversio non fit sine magna lucta, et haec lucta testatur, quod homo non habeat se pure passive.'" (L. c., p. 331 f.)

Such is the bold and bald synergism of Prof. Richard. And he is candid also in confessing the source of his synergistic doctrine. He writes:¹⁾ "In the realm of mind at least, everything is cause, which, in any way, shape or form contributes to the production of psychical effect. And in such realm every cause *in actu*, is simultaneously interlaced with the effect, and is jointly concerned in it, and is at once cause and effect, acting and acted upon. The relation of the two is reciprocal. With this agrees essentially Melanchthon's definition of cause: *Causa per se est proprie causa. Est autem causa, qua posita in actu, necesse est sequi effectum, conjunctis omnibus per se causis, et qua non posita, non sequitur effectus.* C. R. 13, p. 307. Hence, since the human soul is a self-active entity, it must follow that conversion, which is an effect wrought in the soul, is connected with the activity of mind acted upon and acting. Hence, also, the theory of pure passivity is philosophically, psychologically and theologically untenable. From the very nature of the human mind as potentiality for cause, and as a self-active entity, the will cannot be absolutely *inert* in conversion; for though perception, feeling and willing are not identical, yet they are inseparable. Where and when the one is, there and then the others are. The two last could not exist without the first, and the first would be self-consumed without the renewal and stimulus of the other two. They are all activities of the one identical indivisible conscious *ego*. Hence, when the *ego* perceives the truth, the *ego* feels the truth, the *ego* acts with reference to the truth. A defective philosophy, which does not rightly interpret the relation of cause and effect, and a defective psychology, which does not rightly interpret the activities of the soul, have betrayed Missouri into a defective theology. Of course, however, in matters of theology Missouri repudiates philosophy and psychology as the devil's will-o'-the-wisp, but all the worse for Missouri."

1) *Lutheran Quarterly*, p. 42.

From what he calls philosophy and psychology Prof. Richard carries his error into theology. And as a cure for her "defective" theology he advises Missouri to follow his example. Prof. Richard is a Synergist, because he is a Rationalist. He does not believe that the Word of God is the only source and norm of theology. He believes in drawing Christian doctrines from philosophy and the sciences, and in explaining the Bible accordingly. Instead of searching the Scripture for an answer God alone can give, he turns to philosophy and psychology which do not and cannot answer the questions involved. And whenever philosophy and psychology or any other human science pretend to know what they do not know, or profess to teach spiritual truths which lie beyond their lawful spheres, they are guilty of a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, and every loyal Christian, especially every theologian who would not become a traitor to Christianity, is, indeed, bound to repudiate such insane philosophy and science as the "devil's will-o'-the-wisp." However, Prof. Richard is mistaking his own corrupt views for philosophy and psychology. The doctrine which he ascribes to them is a product of his own confused and unphilosophical mind. This is evident from his own statements, for he argues: Psychology teaches that man is a perceiving, feeling, and willing ego; hence it teaches that man contributes toward the production of repentance and faith! Psychology is, indeed, responsible for the above premise; but who is responsible for the inference? Prof. Richard is the culprit, who falsely adorns his synergistic doctrine with the authority of philosophy and psychology. He treats psychology in the same ignoble manner as he does the Bible, and mars a noble science by his wretched inference. He states a fact of psychology, and, instead of really inferring from this fact, he simply adds as an appendage his synergistic doctrine. Between the above-mentioned facts of psychology and the doctrine that man contributes toward the production of faith there never has been and never will

be a logical connection. The synergistic conclusion emanates from Prof. Richard's brain and is merely tacked mechanically to the innocent facts and teachings of philosophy and psychology. It is not philosophy and psychology that militate against the Scripture doctrine of conversion, but Prof. Richard's defective and corrupt views of philosophy and psychology. In his argument he glaringly confounds the questions: What is faith, and, Which is the origin of faith? From the fact that faith is an act of man he infers that it is produced by man. In the same manner Prof. Richard proves that his doctrine is the old Lutheran teaching of the Apology. He quotes: "Faith is not only knowledge in the intellect, but also confidence in the will, that is, it is to will and to accept that which is offered in the promise."¹) From the fact that faith is here correctly defined as "*velle et accipere*" Richard falsely infers that faith is produced by man. Missouri teaches in agreement with the Bible and the Lutheran confessions that faith is indeed an *actus intellectus et voluntatis*, but an *actus*, produced not by man but by the Holy Spirit alone. And this doctrine, though it cannot be *derived* from reason, philosophy, or science, *conflicts* only with corrupt reason, corrupt logic, corrupt philosophy, and corrupt psychology. Throughout the Christian centuries false prophets have flattered themselves that philosophy, science, and deep thinking were responsible for their erroneous teachings in theology. But sound philosophy, logical thinking, and mental acumen never yet have made a man a heretic. And as to Prof. Richard, it is not deep and philosophic but shallow and false thought that has made him a Synergist.

But Prof. Richard is candid also in stating what he rejects. He admits that the Missouri doctrine of conver-

1) Mueller, p. 95: "Sed illa fides, quae justificat, non est tantum notitia historiae, sed est assentiri promissioni Dei, in qua gratis propter Christum offertur remissio peccatorum et justificatio. Et nequis suspicetur tantum notitiam esse, addemus amplius: est velle et accipere oblatam remissionem remissionis peccatorum et justificationis."

sion is in perfect agreement with the Formula of Concord. But he condemns both. With greater boldness than honesty he maintains that, prior to 1577, the three concurring causes theory of Melancthon was the old Lutheran teaching, of which he declares the doctrine of the Formula of Concord a fraudulent substitute. He writes:¹⁾ "Now, it is well known that within less than twelve months these same six men (Andreae, Selnecker, Musculus, Koerner, Chytraeus, Chemnitz) had transformed the Torgau Book into the Bergic Book; that is, into the Form of Concord, and *had forsaken the old Lutheran doctrine of the will and of conversion*, which, in its essential features, they had only a little while before sought to deliver again to the Church as in perfect harmony with the old Lutheran Confessions, and 'as their own faith, doctrine and confession.' . . . So complete and radical a change of 'faith, doctrine and confession,' in so short a time, has scarcely ever occurred in the Church."²⁾ Prof. Richard does not believe that man's conversion and salvation is *in solidum* a work of God. He quotes and rejects the following sentences of the Formula of Concord:³⁾ "It is certain that conversion to God is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, who is the true author who alone works this in us. . . . The understanding and the will of the unregenerate man are nothing else than the *subjectum convertendum*. . . . In this conversion the will of man, the subject of conversion, does nothing, but merely suffers God to operate in it, until it is regenerated."⁴⁾

1) p. 60 f.

2) On this historical falsehood and Prof. Richard's dishonest method of establishing it, see *Lehre und Wehre*, vol. 50, p. 103—110.

3) p. 59.

4) Luther teaches "that the mercy of God alone does all things, and that our own will does nothing, but is rather acted upon: and so it must be, otherwise the whole is not ascribed unto God." (Cole, p. 24.) Again: "This word [John 1, 12] also is a hammer that beats down Free-will, as is nearly the whole of the Evangelist John, and yet, even this is brought forward in support of Free-will. Let us, I pray you, just look into this word. John is not speaking concerning any work of man, either great or

But what engages our attention more than Prof. Richard's coarse synergism itself is the *method* by which he endeavors to prove it. In the first place, he quotes a number of Bible passages which completely refute his own theory. He writes: "That conversion is a work of divine grace is taught already in the Old Testament, where God promises a new heart, and where the saints express their longings for a new heart. 'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord,' Jer. 24, 7. 'I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh,' Ezek. 11, 19. 'Create within me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me,' Ps. 51, 10. In the New Testament the new birth is represented as a work of the Spirit: 'Except a man be born anew' (margin: *from above*); 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit,' John 3, 3. 5; and the Christian life is represented as a deliverance from death: 'When we were dead through our trespasses God quickened us together with

small, but concerning the very renewal and transformation of the old man who is a son of the devil, into the new man who is a son of God. This man is merely passive (as the term is used), nor does he do anything, but is wholly made; and John is speaking of being made; he saith we are made the sons of God by a power given unto us from above, not by the power of Free-will inherent in ourselves. . . . The meaning of John is this.—That by the coming of Christ into the world by his Gospel, by which grace was offered, but not works required, a full opportunity was given to all men of becoming the sons of God, if they would believe. But as to this willing and this believing on his name, as Free-will never knew it nor thought of it before, so much less could it then do it of its own power. For how could reason then think that faith in Jesus as the Son of God and man was necessary, when even at this day it could neither receive nor believe it, though the whole creation should cry out together—there is a certain person who is both God and man! Nay, it is rather offended at such a saying, as Paul affirms, 1 Cor. 1: so far is it from possibility that it should either will it, or believe it. John, therefore, is preaching, not the power of Free-will, but the riches of the kingdom of God offered to the world by the Gospel; and signifying at the same time how few there are who receive it; that is, from the enmity of the Free-will against it; the power of which is nothing else than this:—Satan reigning over it and causing it to reject grace, and the Spirit which fulfills the Law." (p. 183 f.)

Christ,' Eph. 2, 5. 'Being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you did he quicken together with him,' Col. 2, 13; and everything is ascribed to grace: 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' 1 Cor. 15, 5. Compare 1 Cor. 4, 7; and repentance is said to be a divine gift: 'To give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins,' Acts 5, 30. 'To the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life;' Acts 11, 18: 'If peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the faith,' 2 Tim. 2, 25; and the entire work of salvation is ascribed to God: 'By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory,' Eph. 2, 8."

These testimonies, which could be multiplied indefinitely, are, indeed, a complete refutation of the synergistic theory and a powerful confirmation of the doctrine of the Formula of Concord by *Prof. Richard himself*. However, in order to clinch his involuntary argument against synergism, Richard could have added another class of passages which directly deny the alleged *ability* and assumed *power* of natural man for spiritual acts. Prof. Pieper, in *Lehre und Wehre*,¹⁾ refers to John 6, 44. Rom. 8, 7. 1 Cor. 2, 14. In the first passage Christ declares: "No man *can* (*δύναται*) come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." In the natural and unconverted man there is, according to these words of Christ, neither the *act* of believing nor the "pre-supposed" *ability* to believe. Rom. 8, 7 Paul, describing the carnal, *i. e.*, the unconverted man, says: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed *can* be (*οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται*)." Here Paul avers that the unconverted man is void of both the spiritual *acts* required by the Law and the *power or ability* for such acts. The same apostle, speaking of the attitude of natural man to the Gospel, writes 1 Cor. 2, 14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit

1) p. 100 f.

of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither *can* (*δύνανται*) he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Of the spiritual knowledge of the Gospel, which is identical with true faith, Paul here declares that neither this knowledge itself nor the *ability* for receiving it inheres in natural man.¹⁾ All these and similar passages, together with the testimonies quoted by Prof. Richard, take conver-

1) On the spiritual blindness of natural man Luther remarks in his Treatise on the Bondage of the Will: "For to this power applies that which Christ and the evangelists so often bring forward out of Is. 6, 'Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive.' What is this else but saying, that Free-will, or the human heart, is so bound by the power of Satan, that, unless it be quickened up in a wonderful way by the Spirit of God, it cannot of itself see or hear those things which strike against the eyes and ears so manifestly, as to be as it were palpable by the hand? So great is the misery and blindness of the human race! Thus also the evangelists themselves, when they wondered how it could be that the Jews were not won over by the works and words of Christ, which were evidently incontrovertible and undeniable, satisfied themselves from that place of the Scripture, where it is shewn, that man, left to himself, seeing seeth not, and hearing heareth not. And what can be more monstrous! 'The light (saith Christ) shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not,' John 1! Who could believe this? Who hath heard the like—that the light should shine in darkness, and yet, the darkness still remain darkness, and not be enlightened!" (Cole, p. 102.) Again: "Here, where Christ openly saith, 'They know not what they do,' does he not testify that they could not will good? For how can you will that which you do not know? You certainly cannot desire that of which you know nothing! What more forcible can be advanced against Free-will, than that it is such a thing of naught, that it not only cannot will good, but cannot even know what evil it does, and what good is?" (Cole, p. 182.) On the spiritual incapability of the natural man Luther remarks: "Now let us see what his opinion is concerning the endeavor and the power of Free-will in the carnal, who are in the flesh. 'They cannot please God.' Again, 'The carnal mind is death.' Again, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.' And again, 'It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Here let the advocate for Free-will answer me—How can that endeavor toward good, 'which is death,' which 'cannot please God,' which 'is enmity against God,' which 'is not subject to God,' and 'cannot' be subject to him? Nor does Paul mean to say, that the carnal mind is dead and inimical to God; but that, it is death itself, enmity itself, which cannot possibly be subject to the law of God or please God; as he had said just before, 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did,' etc." (Cole, p. 349.)

sion and salvation entirely out of the hands of man and place it exclusively where it belongs, in the hands of God.¹⁾

Having himself shattered his own theory Prof. Richard proceeds to establish it. Indeed, he is not able to quote a single passage from the Bible which makes for his synergism. Still, he is bound to prove it at all hazards. How does he accomplish it? He argues:²⁾ "This class of passages [quoted above] seems to take salvation entirely out of our hands, and to place it exclusively in the hands of God. But there is a class of passages addressed to man, in which he is required to *do* something, and is described as *doing* something. Repentance and faith are *required* of man as *acts* which he can perform. 'To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,' Ps. 95, 7. 8. Here a demand is made upon those who hear the word of God. If man has no ability to harden his heart, then to command him not to harden it, is worse than superfluous. But the ability to do a thing implies the ability to choose not to do it. 'Let us give diligence to enter into that rest,' Hebr. 4, 11. This is an exhortation, and every exhortation implies free-

1) Prof. Richard's object is to take a part of the work of man's conversion and salvation out of the hands of God and to place it in the hands of man. Yet he claims to be an Old Lutheran. But what a gulf between the theological spirit of Prof. Richard and Luther who wrote: "As to myself, I openly confess, that I should not wish Free-will to be granted me, even if it could be so, nor anything else to be left in my own hands, whereby I might endeavor something towards my own salvation. And that, not merely because in so many opposing dangers, and so many assaulting devils, I could not stand and hold it fast (in which state no man could be saved, seeing that one devil is stronger than all men); but because, even though there were no dangers, no conflicts, no devils, I should be compelled to labor under a continual uncertainty, and to beat the air only. Nor would my conscience, even if I should live and work to all eternity, ever come to a settled certainty, how much it ought to do in order to satisfy God. For whatever work should be done, there would still remain a scrupling, whether or not it pleased God, or whether he required anything more; as is proved in the experience of all justiciaries, and as I myself learned to my bitter cost, through so many years of my own experience." (Cole, p. 369.)

2) *Lutheran Quarterly*, p. 63 f.

dom of choice and action. Repentance is *required* of man as something he *can do*, and as a *conditio sine qua non* of the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2, 38. . . . Repentance is *described* as something that man *can do* and *must do*. 'Repent ye,' to which is joined: 'Believe in the gospel,' Mark 1, 15. 'Except ye repent, ye shall in like manner perish,' Luke 13, 3. Repentance is also joined with turning. 'Repent ye therefore and turn again,' ἐπιστρέψατε, 'to turn about, turn back,' Acts 3, 19, and is used with reference to 'turning from idols,' with a purpose of 'serving a living and true God,' 1 Thess. 1, 9. 'They turned to the Lord,' Acts 9, 35. 'Bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the Lord,' Acts 14, 15. In all these places repentance is represented and commanded as something that men can do and should do, after they have heard the gospel. In 1 Pet. 2, 25 this *turning* is clearly represented as a voluntary act: 'For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned (ἐπεστράφητε) unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.' Believing is described as an *act*, and is enjoined. . . . To command a person to repent and to believe, on the presupposition that he has no power to repent and to believe, is hypocritical mockery; and every person who repents and believes is conscious of a psychical action which is his own, and for which he alone is responsible, whatever may have been the impulse or the assistance from without."

Prof. Richard quotes a number of divine commands and exhortations, and then attaches to each of them his synergistic doctrine as an inference. He cites a divine command, and "infers" that man is *able* to do the thing he is commanded to do. He quotes an exhortation and "*concludes*" that a corresponding power and ability inheres in man. But Prof. Richard's alleged "inference" is not a logical fruit of his premise, but a strange product, tied to it mechanically, as dolls and watches, cakes and fruit to a Christmas tree. Judged by his article against Missouri (a veritable

jungle of irrelevant quotations, historical falsehoods, and logical fallacies), Prof. Richard entertains extremely crude and primitive views on the relation between a premise and a conclusion. He confounds mechanical juxtaposition of two thoughts with logical connection. He does not seem to know that an inference cannot legitimately include an element which is not contained in the premises. The passages which Prof. Richard quotes do not in the least make or witness for synergism. Yet the affixed conclusion does contain the synergistic doctrine. Whence this strange element? Prof. Richard's product is greater than his factors allow! Like an Indian juggler he manages to get more out of a Bible passage than it contains. How does he accomplish it? His argument is the old fallacy *a praecepto ad posse*, which, in syllogistic form, may be stated as follows: What God demands man is able to do; God does demand repentance and faith: hence man has the power and ability to repent and believe. The minor premise of this syllogism Prof. Richard profusely proves from the Bible. But in proof of the major premise he offers absolutely nothing. He does not even formulate it. Perhaps, because he himself was ashamed of seeing and exhibiting it in black and white. Yet, he cannot have been ashamed of entertaining it in his mind, for it is the only logical source of his conclusion. Does Prof. Richard really endorse the major premise required by his argument? He declares:¹⁾ "To command a person to repent and to believe, on the presupposition that he has no power to repent and to believe, is *hypocritical mockery*." Evidently Prof. Richard's argument does silently assume and presuppose, as a self-evident axiom, the theological enormity that fallen man is able to do what God commands. And without further ado he declares his synergistic inference (the ability to repent and believe inheres in man) a well-founded doctrine of theology, witnessed for

1) p. 65.

by philosophy and psychology, by an "entire body of passages" of the Bible, and by the testimony of the saints, and the denial of which involves "hypocritical mockery" in God. But in spite of this Philistine boast the above major premise as well as the conclusion are and remain, as shown above by Prof. Richard himself, in glaring conflict with the clear Word of God. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is a continuous and loud protest against the monstrous doctrine that fallen man is able to do what God commands, able to repent and believe. Prof. Richard's assumed major, as well as his inferred conclusion, amount to nothing less than a total denial of Christianity and a complete restoration of heathenism.¹⁾

And as to the "goodly fellowship of saints," Prof. Richard, beyond doubt, is able to quote a great number of theologians in favor of his doctrine. Pelagius and his adherents, the mediaeval sophists, Erasmus, Melancthon, Pfeffinger, Latermann, and a great number of modern theologians are ready to witness for man's activity in conversion. Moreover, Prof. Richard has the "goodly fellow-

1) Of Erasmus Luther wrote in a letter to Amsdorf (Cole, p. 384 f.): "Nay, there can be no doubt in the mind of a true believer, who has the Spirit in his nostrils, that his (Erasmus' mind) is alienated from, and utterly hates, all religion together; and especially, the religion of Christ. Many proofs of this are scattered here and there. And it will come to pass by and by, that, like the mole, he will throw up some dirt, that will shew where and what he is, and prove his own destruction. . . . In his letter upon 'Christian philosophy,' which is published with his New Testament, and used in common throughout all the churches, when he had propounded the question, — 'Why Christ, so great a teacher, descended from heaven, when there are many things taught even among the heathens which are precisely the same, if not more perfect,' — he answers, 'Christ came (which I doubt not but he believed most Erasmianly) from heaven, that he might exemplify those things more perfectly and more fully than any of the saints before him!' Thus, this miserable renewer of all things, Christ (for so he reproaches the Lord of glory), has lost the glory of a Redeemer, and becomes only one more holy than others." The assumed major premise, "What God commands, man can do," made Erasmus what is now called a liberal theologian.

ship" of millions of unbelievers and thousands of heathen philosophers and scientists who are all willing to testify: *Suae quisque fortunae faber est*. Indeed, for his monstrous major premise he may even quote "Saint" Kant, the great "philosopher of Protestantism," who wrote: "Denn wenn das moralische Gesetz gebietet, wir *sollen* jetzt bessere Menschen sein, so *folgt* unungaenglich, wir muessen es auch *koennen*." To be sure, Prof. Richard does not lack fellowship. But what he is not able to do is to quote, in confirmation of his synergism and sophism, a single syllable of the Holy Bible, or the voice of a single heart in Christendom. There never has been, and there never will be, a Christian who, in his innermost soul, can say and will say: "My conversion and salvation I owe, in part at least, to the efforts of my own will." There is not a heart in Christendom but abhors both Prof. Richard's assumption and inference as rank heathenism and a complete denial of the Christian *sola gratia* and *soli Deo gloria*. Yea, if Prof. Richard is a Christian, his head will lack the fellowship of his own heart. His own heart will condemn his own synergistic and sophistic mind, and give the lie to the impious productions of his own brain. Erasmus, too, in his controversy with Luther, appealed to the "saints." But Luther reminded him of a double fact: 1. That real saints, when defending free-will, argue from their confused heads, instead of testifying out of their Christian hearts; 2. that "many were accounted saints on earth whose souls are now in hell."¹)

But reason, logic, philosophy—they, too, raise their voices in condemnation of Prof. Richard's fallacy *a debito ad posse*. According to Scripture this synergistic argument consists of one truth, sandwiched between two falsehoods. And though sound philosophy, based on natural facts, neither denies nor maintains Prof. Richard's minor

1) Cole, p. 71 ff.

premise (the power to repent and believe inheres in man), because it pertains to the spiritual sphere of knowledge, of which philosophy is ignorant, yet it *does* condemn from its own knowledge, based on universal experience, the major premise which Prof. Richard silently assumes as a self-evident axiom (man can do what God commands him to do). Logic, finally, declares a syllogism with but one premise (which is all that is left, if Prof. Richard should repudiate his silent major) a logical monster. And (if Prof. Richard should determine to retain it) an inference from a disputed premise is condemned by logic as a *petitio principii* or a fallacy *ex non concessis tamquam concessis*.

Hence, the argument *a praecepto ad posse*, on which Prof. Richard rests his synergistic theology, is according to the joint verdict of Scripture, sound philosophy, and logic a stupid fallacy, neither more nor less. It is of a category with the fallacies *a posse ad esse*, or, *ab esse ad necesse esse*. And it requires neither logical acumen nor training to see through the utter futility of this sophism. Why, according to Prof. Richard a cobbler might argue: I *ought* to make well-fitting shoes; hence I *can*! A physician: I *ought* to cure my patient; hence I am *able* to do it! A creditor might say to an insolvent debtor: You *ought* to pay; hence you *can* pay! Abel to Cain: You *ought* to restore my life; hence you are *able* to do it! A preacher to the godless: You *ought* to love God above all things and your neighbor as yourselves; hence you *can* do it.—And if Prof. Richard would develop and perfect his method of arguing by adding the inference *a posse ad esse*, and *ab esse ad necesse esse*—what miracles could he work in this dull and stupid world of ours! Profligates and drunkards, after a debauch, could quiet their consciences by philosophizing à la Richard: We *should* have been sober and pure; hence we *could* have been sober and pure; hence we really *have* been sober and pure; hence, of necessity, we *must* have been sober and pure! What a downy pillow, too, it must afford poor Richard after

writing a wretched article like the one against Missouri, to feel himself enabled by his new method of inference to reason: You *ought* to have argued truthfully, logically, and scripturally against Missouri; hence you *could* have argued thus; hence you really *have* argued thus; hence it is *impossible* for you to have argued otherwise.

However, as indicated by the title of this article, our object at present is not to handle Prof. Richard ourselves, but to turn him over to Luther. Prof. Richard claims to be a true Lutheran, an Old Lutheran.¹⁾ May he receive his well-merited rewards at the hands of his acknowledged master. In his answer to the Diatribe of Erasmus Luther, *ex professo*, expatiates on the *a praecepto ad posse* argument in the doctrine of conversion. And if Prof. Richard will consent to give Luther, whom we shall freely quote, a patient hearing, he will, we doubt not, experience the truth of the saying: . . . "*Quid rides? Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.*"

(To be concluded.)

F. B.

Book Review.

The Life of Dr. Martin Luther. By *Ernst August Brueggemann*. St. Louis, Mo. *Concordia Publishing House*. 1904. 136 pages. Cloth cover. Price, 60 cts.; gilt edge, 85 cts.

We recommend this Life of Luther to our Christian homes and schools for its lucid arrangement, its perspicuous and simple style, and its numerous illustrations.

F. B.

1) Erasmus, too, was commonly called a Lutheran. "But"—says Luther—, "as Christ liveth, they do him a great injury who call him a Lutheran, and I will defend him against his enemies: for I can bear a true and faithful testimony that he is no Lutheran, but Erasmus himself." From the following quotations it will appear that Prof. Richard, by claiming to be an Old Lutheran, inflicts a similar injury upon himself.