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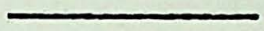
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LUTHER AND CALVIN ON HUMAN REASON

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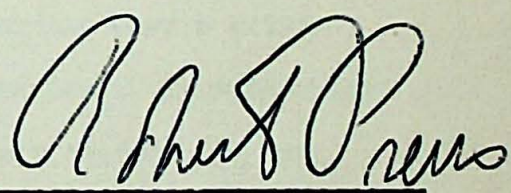


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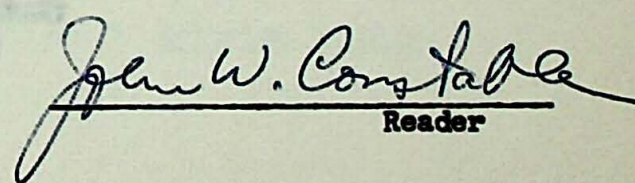
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem and Purpose

Human reason occupies a foremost important place in every sphere of the 20th century. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson during his Innaugural Message quoted from Is. 1:18, "Come, and let us reason together." Human reason plays a most important role in political affairs. Certainly the 20th century marks the immeasurable power and achievement of human reason especially in technology.

In the field of theology human reason occupies a very significant place today. Though Adolf Hitler persuaded thousands of German youths with his heroic speech at Nuremburg on September 13, 1935, "Reason must have dissuaded you from coming to me; faith alone gave you the command,"¹ he would not be able to persuade too many theologians to follow him with the same speech today. In the 20th century, it seems, no man wishes to accept something before he reasons. Perhaps "authoritarian" or "fundamental" theologians are trying to adopt the same methodology of Adolf Hitler in the field of theology.²

Interestingly enough, however, human reason has been a critical issue in the field of theology throughout generations. Thomas Aquinas made very clear where he stood on regard to man's reason. To him,

¹M. B. Stokes, "Christianity and Reason," Religion in Life, V, 17 (1948), 186.

²Ibid., V, 187.

"Authority proceeds from right reason and not right reason from authority."³ According to Aquinas reason is an inner light with which God speaks to mankind. The created intellect is an imparted likeness of God. Obedience to reason, therefore, is a preparation for obedience to God.⁴ This teaching, of course, is not necessarily new. Socrates has already said that man learns within.⁵ The Summa of Aquinas, which leans heavily on Aristotle, points out that man's reason is a fountain of knowledge even in the field of theology.⁶ Aquinas would insist that man ought to know philosophy in order to understand theology.⁷ To him, philosophy precedes theology. Thus, philosophy had been the "tool" of theology when both Luther and Calvin were born. Whether it was the revelation of God in the scripture or the rational faculty of man to be the authority in theology was a critical issue.

This issue is not over. In fact, the 20th century has revitalized this issue. Even many Protestants do believe that "reason gives us an ultimate criterion of truth."⁸ These men say, "the Word of God is a rational event. The reception of that Word employs the full use of

³J. R. Illingworth, Reason and Revelation (London: MacMillan & Co., 1902), p. 7.

⁴Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁵Thomas F. Torrance, "The Place and Function of Reason in Christian Theology," Evangelical Quarterly, V. (1941) 23.

⁶Etienne Gilson, Christianity and Philosophy, translated from French into English by Ralph MacDonald (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), p. 6.

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁸E. Frank, "Faith and Reason," Theology Today, V (October 1946) 301.

human reason."⁹ It is quite legitimate for Torrance to say, "It is within the bounds of autonomous reasoning that all modern philosophizing has taken place."¹⁰ It must be added that modern theologies are not excluded here.

Rudolf Bultmann values man's reason very highly. "Indeed," he says, "it is impossible to think highly enough of reason."¹¹ He adds, "Man is a creation of intelligence; and as he is the latest and newest such creation, his duty is to follow along the trail of that creativity."¹² He argues, it is impossible to have truth contrary to man's reason.¹³ Man, according to Bultmann, is the master and final authority of understanding.¹⁴

Paul Tillich does not differ much from Bultmann on this regard. Tillich sees human reason as the tool of systematic theology.¹⁵ He says that the depth of reason is pointing to truth.¹⁶ "Neither nature nor history can create anything that contradicts reason."¹⁷ "There would

⁹Torrance, V, 22.

¹⁰Ibid., V, 24.

¹¹Rudolf Bultmann, Faith and Understanding, translated from German into English by Louis P. Smith (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), I, 46.

¹²Ibid., I, 49.

¹³Ibid., I, 117.

¹⁴Ibid., I, 150.

¹⁵Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), I, 73.

¹⁶Ibid., I, 79.

¹⁷Ibid.

not be such a thing as biblical religion."¹⁸ He makes himself quite clear: "Revelation does not destroy reason, but reason raises the question of revelation."¹⁹

Emil Brunner, on the other hand, seemingly stood against Bultmann and also Tillich on this matter. Brunner accused Bultmann because the rationalistic and liberal approach of Bultmann has seriously impoverished the Christian message.²⁰ In fact, many fundamental scholars praised Brunner when he said, "That the truth of revelation possesses its own logic, and that the fact of revelation also possesses its own facts."²¹ This, many fundamentalists might have thought, was a solution to this problem. Brunner, however, was not saying that theology is the field of God's logic; hence man's logic cannot be admitted here. It was man's reason even in the field of theology that must rule. Without this mental, rational action, the Word of God cannot be understood. Brunner asserts, "Reason is the Condition sine qua non of faith."²² He goes even further, "The criterion of doctrine is not faith but reason."²³ He wishes to clear up some "errors" among the Protestants. Brunner says:

¹⁸Paul Tillich, Biblical Religion and Search for Ultimate Reality, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 2.

¹⁹Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 81.

²⁰Emil Brunner, Dogmatics, translated by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 215.

²¹Emil Brunner, Revelation and Reason, translated into English by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1946), pp. 212-213.

²²Ibid., p. 418.

²³Ibid., p. 421.

A wrong conception of the Sola Gratia has on occasion led Reformation theology to reduce the significance of the reason which received the Word to nothing, and so to turn the subject into an object, to make it truncus et lapis. The Bible gives no support of this view.²⁴

Man's reason, according to Luther, was approved highly by the Reformers. Even Luther, explains Brunner, stood and proclaimed, "unless I am proved to be wrong (convictus fuero) by the witness of Scripture or by evident reason (ratione evidente)."²⁵ According to Brunner, the Reformation spirit, Sola Fide, "in reality, however, it is absolutely impossible. For even the grammatical understanding of the Bible presupposes a rational activity, logical thinking and training in the use of ideas."²⁶ Brunner sees even repentance as an act of reason.²⁷ It is man's thought which wants to make creative in unlimited sense.²⁸

Interestingly enough, Karl Barth differs very little from other theologians previously mentioned on this point. According to a noted Catholic scholar, Barth is the real voice of Protestant theology. Barth, according to Gilson, denies human philosophy in the field of theology. Barth believes, according to Gilson's quotation, "That philosophy should

²⁴Ibid., p. 415.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 379-380.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 379-380.

²⁷Ibid., p. 430.

28. Emil Brunner, Die Mystik und das Wort, (Tübingen: n.p. 1924) p. 93., Quoted in C. Van Til, The New Modernism: An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1947) p. 161.

confine itself within its own natural bounds, give up all religious pretensions, in short 'confess itself really profane, really Godless.'²⁹

Gilson adds:

The restoration of Christianity to the purity of its essence was in fact the first intention of Luther and Calvin; such is still today that the illustrious Calvinistic theologian, Karl Barth, who employs all his powers to purify liberal Protestantism from Naturalism, and to restore the Reformation itself to the unconditional respect of the Word of God.³⁰

Needless to say, Barth is recognized as the theologian of the Word.

Consequently, anything which has its origin in man, for instance, in his structure as a human being (anthropology), in his thinking (philosophy), in his experience (man's religion and culture), is excluded as a source and basis of Barth's theology.³¹

Barth seems to confirm this. He says,

Human existence is a loan and is to be held in trust. From its structure as the existence of a rational creature it is clear that it can be understood only as a loan. God alone is truly rational, knowing what He wills and willing what He knows. Certainly reason as it characterizes man's structure cannot as such try to be self-sufficient.³²

Man can only listen to God's Word as the only source of truth.³³

Knowledge springs, according to Barth, from the faith in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.³⁴ No wonder Barth has been the object of

²⁹Etiene Gilson, Christianity and Philosophy, translated by Ralph MacDonald (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), pp. 29-30. This is a quotation from a report given by Karl Barth to the Trois Conferences, "Je Sers."

³⁰Ibid., p. 110.

³¹Herbert Hartwell, The Theology of Karl Barth, An Introduction (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 43.

³²Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, authorized translation by G. T. Thompson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936-), III, 328.

³³Hartwell, p. 43.

³⁴Ibid., p. 44.

theologians' praise. "The greatest theological genius that has appeared on the scene for centuries."³⁵

Barth, however, believes that the revelation of God is a rational event.³⁶ Barth asserts, "The Word of God--is a rational and not an irrational event."³⁷ The revelation of God, therefore, according to Barth, is real, "if and when it gives itself to be understood."³⁸ In the final analysis, Barth is still controlled by some form of modern critical philosophy.³⁹

Interestingly, if the spirit of the age of Enlightenment was "man could master life by the means of his own understanding,"⁴⁰ the theology of the 20th century is that "man as a rational being can never be satisfied with non-rational belief alone."⁴¹

There is, however, another position. It is the position of faith in the revelation. "By searching you cannot find out the Almighty, whose ways are not our ways nor His thoughts our thoughts."⁴² According to the scripture, it is faith which reveals the truth and human which hides it

³⁵Ibid., p. 179.

³⁶Ibid., p. 46.

³⁷Barth, I, i, 153.

³⁸Ibid., I, i, 180.

³⁹Cornelius Van Til, The Defense of the Faith (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1955), p. 147.

⁴⁰Hartwell, p. 4.

⁴¹Frank, V, 301.

⁴²Adam A. Hunter, The Teaching of Calvin (2nd edition; Glasgow: McClellan, Jackson & Co., 1950), p. 71.

(Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21). Hence, it seems, we have two standards on truth. Certainly they cannot both be right.⁴³

Since Protestant theology was molded and manifested mainly by Luther and Calvin it would be legitimate to ask where and how these two men stood on this issue. What was the source of their theology? What were their views of the place of human reason in science, social order, theology and apologetics? Do they agree on these questions? If so, to what extent? If they differ, how and to what extent? What would be their advice to the 20th-century theologians concerning the place of man's reason especially in the field of theology? This study will not answer the questions fully, but may open a door for further interest in them.

Methodology and Area of Research

The main concern of this study is to gather correct data on this given subject, to learn what Luther and Calvin have to say concerning man's reason. This study seeks not to rely too heavily on secondary sources. Primary sources are the actual writings, sermons, commentaries, letters, and speeches either of public or private. This study endeavors to collect appropriate data from these sources first.

It is also our purpose to consult some outstanding scholars in the fields of study of Luther and Calvin. Their works are carefully examined.

After the data have been collected from various sources, this study attempts to present them as correctly and faithfully as possible. Then

⁴³J. Gresham Machen, The Christian Faith in the Modern World (New York: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1936), p 75.

it analyzes these data as objectively as possible. Though it avoids unnecessary comments, it does speak out whenever there seems to be a need.

The areas of man's reason as to its total relationships are so broad and vast there is no possible way to touch all these items, such as man's reason in regard to emotions (sorrow and joy), philosophy (epistemology, logic, aesthetics), music and art. These concerns are, however, very generally implied in the chapters dealing with man's reason in science and social structure.

Of course, neither Luther nor Calvin sprang out of the ground in a moment. They grew in a society which was not built in a day. It was fashioned by many generations through various struggles and windings. This study would require more than this paper is designed to provide, and, in fact, volumes of books would not sufficiently cover this subject, namely the social and cultural, as well as theological, worlds of Luther and Calvin.

This study, then, is very much limited in its research. It simply seeks to discover what Luther and Calvin have taught from their own hearts, either publicly or privately, on human reason in its relationship to science, social structure, theology, and apologetics.

My purpose in writing this thesis is not to offer a total discussion of every aspect of Luther's or Calvin's views on human reason and its powers and functions, but rather to compare the positions of the two Reformers after presenting an adequate summary of the position of each.

In order to understand human reason correctly, this study has divided it into two aspects as these two Reformers saw it, reason before

regeneration and after regeneration. Human reason which includes both a process and a capacity according to its Latin word, Ratio, has been used with very little distinction.

Even though each chapter must be regarded as important, the last two chapters dealing with theology and apologetics are considered to be the focal points, since both Luther and Calvin spent most of their energies on this subject.

Finally, this paper wishes to present its argument upon the following conviction: That the theology of the Reformation on this point manifested by Luther and Calvin is the correct presentation of the Christian faith.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF HUMAN REASON

Unregenerate Reason

Luther

Even though Luther sees man's reason as a totality,¹ a careful study shows that he distinguishes man's reason into two kinds, namely unregenerate and regenerate reasons.² These two are very different.³ For example, unregenerate reason must be confined to the earthly matters,⁴ while regenerate reason can be applied to the heavenly matters to some extent.⁵

Luther sees that even the unregenerate reason is still a gift of God. Man ought to thank God, says Luther,

for all the gifts and benefits that he has received above others; who, nevertheless has sufficient reason to praise God for the coat or cloak that he wears every day, (to say nothing about his life, his health, his honour, his riches, his use of reason, his friends, and numberless other benefits of God.)⁶

¹Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 64.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Martin Luther, Select Works of Martin Luther, translated and edited by Henry Cole (London: Published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1926), II, 424. Hereafter this reference will be cited as SW.

Reason, according to Luther, separates man from beasts. It is a real advantage of man over all the animals.⁷ Man's reason is a unique attribute of mankind since it is implanted by God to become the source of man's wisdom.⁸

Man's reason became corrupt through the Fall. The right will and understanding which mankind had before the Fall, laments Luther, were lost through that tragic event. He says:

Since the Fall the will, the understanding, and all the natural faculties are corrupt; so that man is no longer upright but warped by sin; he has lost his right judgment in the sight of God, and does everything perversely and contrary to the will and law of God; he no longer knows God and loves Him, but flees from Him, and saith in his heart that He is not God, that is merciful and good, but a judge and a tyrant.⁹

Needless to say, the Fall was a real tragedy. Through it, mankind lost the enlightened reason as well as the beauty of it.¹⁰ The effect of the Fall was inclusive and exhaustive in man. Luther adds:

Therefore that image of God was most excellent, in which were included eternal life, everlasting freedom from fear, and everything that is good. However, through sin this image was so obscured and corrupted that we cannot grasp it with our intellect.¹¹

So, through sin man's intellect has been hopelessly paralyzed. In other words, mankind is blinded by sin.¹²

⁷Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), II, 135. Hereafter this reference will be cited as LW.

⁸LW, IV, 180.

⁹SW, I, 61.

¹⁰LW, I, 141.

¹¹LW, I, 65.

¹²SW, IV, 69.

The ability to reason, even after the Fall, still remains in man. "Man after the Fall," asserts Luther, "did not lose his rational capacity to understand, regulate, and shape the world to some extent."¹³ Reason, however, lost its original character. Unregenerate reason now misuses its rational capacity. It exalts man. It is proud. It is autonomous.¹⁴

Unregenerate reason is evil. Autonomous reason, Luther points out, seeks only that which is carnal and only that which benefits the flesh.¹⁵ This is exactly what the Devil anticipated. As a matter of fact, according to Luther, man's unregenerate reason together with its wisdom have been a real instrument of Satan,¹⁶ just as the Serpent seized and employed man's reason in the Garden to achieve his goal.¹⁷

Man's reason has been hostile to the Gospel. Reason, according to Luther, persistently interprets the Gospel according to its own fashion. Reason refuses to accept the claims of God. Reason argues that God must be limited.¹⁸ Its God must meet the conditions of human reason. Ceaselessly man's reason leads man to legalism. Unregenerate reason, then, is "man's Tower of Babel by which man seeks to force an entry into

¹³Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar Edition, edited by J. K. F. Knalke, G. Kawerau, E. Thiele and others (Weimar: Hermaun Boehlaus, 1883-), XXXIX, ii, 375. (Also cited in Althaus, p. 65).

¹⁴Althaus, p. 66.

¹⁵LW, XXX, 119.

¹⁶SW, II, 267.

¹⁷LW, XLV, 201.

¹⁸Althaus, p. 68.

heaven."¹⁹ Because legalism is rejected by God, man's reason "is not worth a thing for the purpose of salvation."²⁰ Man, grieves Luther, follows this blind leader until he finds himself at the point of despair and darkness. "Natural reason and human wisdom cannot transcend that view-point," Luther furthers, "according to their process of reasoning, we must rely on our strength. This we do until we discover that we must despair of our own deeds."²¹ Reason, Luther asserts, certainly is a spiritual as well as an intellectual darkness.²²

Human reason also seeks to pervert religion. According to the Scripture, affirms Luther, every imagination of man's thoughts is evil; so is man's reason and free will even though it may be "of the highest quality."²³ Luther emphasizes that unregenerate reason, in a religious value, is unprofitable and dead before God.²⁴ In fact, man's reason is very harmful because it seeks to pervert religion.²⁵ Man has followed reason and came to worship idols. "Our reasoning deceives us," warns

¹⁹B. A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 103.

²⁰LW, XXIII, 80.

²¹Ibid., XXII, 145.

²²SW, II, 41.

²³LW, II, 41.

²⁴Ibid., IV, 347.

²⁵SW, I, 62.

Luther.²⁶ Reason lies, so that man cannot believe the Gospel. Reason is a deadly poison, Luther stresses;

This arises from our nature which is so filled with deadly poisons; and from the forwardness of our reason, which is ever measuring the kingdom of God according to its own apprehension; and imagining that those things which appear vile in its own eyes, are vile in the eyes of God.²⁷

Therefore, poisonous reason is destructive in its practice. "For this is the destruction," says Luther, "of the ungodly--their being prudent in their own eyes and in their own esteem"²⁸

Man's reason must be restrained. The Scriptural command, "mortify the flesh," applies also to man's unregenerate reason. Luther views, "Here we see that every Christian is an high priest. For first, he offereth up and killeth his own reason and the wisdom of the flesh."²⁹ Reason is so carnal and fleshy, that even in its best forms, it seeks nothing but that which is carnal.³⁰ Hence, says Luther, "we must order it to be dead."³¹ This is very important, insists Luther, because the glory of God demands it. "The evening sacrifice is to kill the reason, and the morning sacrifice is to glorify God."³² Luther urges that reason must be killed so that man's heart clings to rest in God.³³

Finally, man's reason must be regenerated. The only hope, sees Luther, for man's autonomous reason is regeneration. It needs the light

²⁶Ibid., I, 282.

²⁷Ibid., I, 402.

²⁸Ibid., III, 13.

²⁹Ibid., I, 253.

³⁰Ibid., I, 210.

³¹LW, XXXIII, 168.

³²Ibid., XXVI, 233.

³³Ibid., IV, 360.

of the Word as a leader and guide.³⁴ It must be illumined by faith before it can become a real service.³⁵ Only after it is miraculously renewed, it will receive the Gospel.³⁶

Calvin

Over against Luther, Calvin makes a clear distinction in human reason.³⁷ He sees man's reason in three different stages or conditions:

(1) The reason before the Fall which is naturally "implanted in us which cannot be condemned without insult to God."³⁸ Calvin adds,

(2) There is another kind of vitiated reason, especially in a corrupt nature, manifested when mortal men instead of receiving divine things with reverence, wants to subject them to his own judgment. This reason is the intoxication of the mind, a kind of sweet insanity, at perpetual variance with the obedience of faith.³⁹

(3) But there is a third kind of reason, Calvin furthers, "which both the Spirit of God and the Scripture sanction."⁴⁰

³⁴Ibid., VIII, 83.

³⁵Ibid., XXVI, 268.

³⁶Althaus, p. 69.

³⁷John Calvin, Tracts and Treatises, translated by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), II, 512. Hereafter this reference will be cited as Tracts.

³⁸John Calvin, Theological Treatises, translated and edited by J. K. S. Reid (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 272. Hereafter this reference will be cited as Treatises.

³⁹Ibid., I, 273.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Unregenerate reason is a gift of God to be man's source of perception. In spite of its corruption, man must not condemn man's reason. "When we so condemn human understanding for its perpetual blindness as to leave it no perception of any object whatever," advises Calvin, "we not only go against God's Word, but also run counter to the experience of common sense."⁴¹ Man's reason is a gift of God, and, in fact, it distinguishes man from beasts.⁴² Man's reason, even after the Fall, maintains its rational capacity. "Still, even those who are not regenerated by the Spirit of God enjoy some rationality; which shows that man was made not only to breathe but also to understand."⁴³

The Image of God in man was not destroyed in man even after the Fall. To be sure, the divine image in man is corrupted, affirms Calvin, but it is not completely eliminated.⁴⁴ "For some sparks of reason remain in men even when they have become blind by Adam's Fall and the corruption of their nature."⁴⁵

⁴¹John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeil, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 271. Hereafter this reference will be cited as Institutes.

⁴²Ibid, I, 270.

⁴³John Calvin, Calvin: Commentaries, translated by Joseph Haroutunian, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), XXIII, 131. Hereafter this reference will be cited as Commentaries.

⁴⁴Institutes, I, 189.

⁴⁵Commentaries, XXIII, p. 144.

Human reason must be a guideline. Calvin believes that human reason even after the Fall should be promoted. "Human understanding," says Calvin, "then possesses some power of perception, since it is by nature captivated by love of truth."⁴⁶ Calvin points out that human reason though it is corrupt still leads and guides man to a holy and upright life.⁴⁷ Man's reason is still good in judgment, Calvin insists, but man acts quite often contrary to it.⁴⁸

Unregenerate reason is the only light which the natural man possesses. Human reason, Calvin warns, is most unreliable. Many philosophers erred greatly by trusting their reasonings "as a significant guide for rightful conduct."⁴⁹ Human reason, after all, is the only light which "natural man" possesses,⁵⁰ and natural man has erred constantly.

Through the Fall man's nature is completely depraved. Even though the image of God is not completely eliminated, according to Calvin, "it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity."⁵¹ Man's intellect cannot be seen without a factual reference to this reality. Man's integrity, purity and understanding are lost.⁵² Man's reason and

⁴⁶Institutes, I, 271.

⁴⁷Ibid., I, 244.

⁴⁸Ibid., I, 286.

⁴⁹Ibid., I, 258.

⁵⁰Ibid., I, 280.

⁵¹Ibid., I, 189.

⁵²Ibid., I, 291.

understanding became sinful.⁵³ As a matter of actual fact, every affection of man's heart is depraved.⁵⁴

Thus the Fall has done a complete damage to man's reason. Calvin grieves,

The light of reason which God gave men is obscured by sin; so that in the deep darkness of dreadful ignorance and the abyss of errors there are hardly any sparks which are not utterly put out.⁵⁵

"After man was alienated from God," Calvin proceeds, "his mind was oppressed by such ignorance that any light left in him was quenched and useless."⁵⁶ Unregenerate reason, asserts Calvin, is simply blind. It is even worse, "because he does not recognize his own blindness."⁵⁷ Consequently, man's reason is miserable and void.⁵⁸

Man's reason, in its blindness, goes consistently contrary to God's ways. "The intellect of man," says Calvin, "is indeed blinded, wrapped with infinite errors and always contrary to the wisdom of God; the will, bad and full of corrupt affection, hates nothing more than God's justice."⁵⁹ So, reason is not only helpless but also harmful in seeking and finding truth. Because of its dullness, man's reason cannot hold to the right

⁵³John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959-), IV, John 3:6.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Commentaries, XXIII, 133.

⁵⁶Ibid., XXIII, 131.

⁵⁷Institutes, I, 281.

⁵⁸Commentaries, XXIII, p. 31.

⁵⁹John Calvin, Instruction in Faith, translated and edited by Paul T. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1949), p. 21.

path, but wanders through various errors and stumbles repeatedly, as if it were groping in darkness, until it strays away and finally disappears.⁶⁰ In other words, man's reason leads man to no gain.⁶¹

Ironically, asserts Calvin, man's reason is foolish. "It grievously labors under another sort of vanity often it cannot discern those things which it ought to exert itself to know."⁶² It certainly is "foolishly proud."⁶³ It has been crucifying the light.⁶⁴ It has been dashing violently against the rock of offence and making shipwreck.⁶⁵

Like Luther, Calvin insists that human reason must be regenerated. Man's corrupt, blinded, intoxicated, carnal, helpless, foolishly proud, and suicidal, reason must be overthrown, "because in this way it will not obscure the glory of God."⁶⁶ Then, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ be duly established.⁶⁷ Every Christian, Calvin urges, must reduce reason

⁶⁰Institutes, I, 271.

⁶¹John Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, translated by Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1860), I, 67.

⁶²Institutes, I, 271.

⁶³Calvin, Instruction in Faith, p. 21.

⁶⁴John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), IX, 1 Cor. 2:7-8.

⁶⁵Tracts, II, 442.

⁶⁶Commentaries, XXIII, 296.

⁶⁷John Calvin, Letters of John Calvin, compiled and edited by Jules Bonnet (Edinburgh: n.p., 1855-1857), II, 204.

to nothing.⁶⁸ Calvin contends that the human mind must be regenerated and illuminated, "It, therefore, remains," says Calvin, "that the Kingdom of God is open only to him whose mind has been made new by the illumination of the Holy Spirit."⁶⁹ Man's reason must be renewed in order that faith might be generated in him.⁷⁰

Summary

Interestingly enough, Luther and Calvin, as far as this particular subject is concerned, look almost like twin brothers. For instance:

- (1) Both Luther and Calvin teach that human reason is a gift of God.
- (2) Both Luther and Calvin say that through the Fall man lost his original character. In spite of its corruption, man's reason is still capable of reason, and helps man in understanding things and making decisions over matters.
- (3) Hence, man's reason, according to Luther and Calvin, is still a real advantage of man over the beasts.
- (4) Unregenerate reason, both Luther and Calvin assert, misuses its rational capacity. Natural reason, they point out, is antagonistic to God's wisdom. Now, say both Luther and Calvin, man's reason lies under God's judgment because it persistently seeks its own fleshly desires and sinful pride.
- (5) Both Luther and Calvin see that unregenerate reason is nothing but a stark darkness both morally and intellectually. This, Luther and Calvin called "a blind." Sadly, notice both Luther and Calvin, man follows after this blind leader until he finds himself in darkness and despair.

⁶⁸Commentaries, XXIII, 319.

⁶⁹Institutes, I, 279.

⁷⁰Ibid., I, 578.

- (6) Especially in the realm of religion, both Luther and Calvin warn, man's unregenerate reason is very destructive in its character. They insist that Scripture commands that man's reason must be overthrown or reduced to nothing, for man would not embrace the Gospel as long as his reason has a control over him. Both Luther and Calvin conclude, the only hope remaining for man's reason is regeneration or renewal.
- (7) On this subject these two Reformers do not disagree with each other. Even the terms and styles of expression are very alike.

Regenerate Reason

Luther

Regenerate reason, according to Luther, is a product of a regenerate heart. Man's heart must be changed before his reason and perception can be changed. Because, Luther explains, the way of the Lord is opposed in every sense to the wisdom of the flesh, unless God changes man's heart that wisdom is judged to be defiled.⁷¹ God, points out Luther, does change man's heart by His incredible power in the Word.⁷² In other words, regenerate reason, according to Luther, is a renewed reason of a renewed heart.

Regenerate reason is enlightened by the Word of God. Now reason after being renewed by the power of God humbles itself, confesses its own faults, and embraces the enlightening Word of God.⁷³ It begins to see

⁷¹SW, IV, 248.

⁷²Ibid..

⁷³Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, translated and edited by James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957), pp. 46-47.

and perceive rightly. In this sense, Luther characterizes, regenerate reason is sensible; it does not presume upon its own righteousness, (which has no existence), but begins to know God and itself.⁷⁴ Regenerate reason, desires to be taught. To be sure, it is taught by God.⁷⁵ Its intellect is not self-accumulated but embraced. Hence, Luther sees this reason as a real wisdom.⁷⁶

Luther sees regenerate reason as an efficient "tool" which every Christian can gratefully appropriate. This "tool" is what only the regenerate can have. This, indeed, is a real advantage of Christians. As far as unregenerates are concerned, they do not have this "weapon," so that they try their utmost with what powers they have; that is violence and deceit.⁷⁷ Luther wishes to make himself quite clear on this point. This is seen so clearly through his conversation with Dr. Henning. The conversation went something like this:

Dr. Henning asked, "Is reason to hold no authority at all with Christians, since it is to be set aside in matters of faith?" The Doctor replied: Before faith and the knowledge of God, reason is mere darkness; but in the hands of those who believe, it's an excellent tool.⁷⁸

Regenerate reason, even though Luther praises and esteems it highly, should not be regarded as an authoritative guide-line or principle. It is, warns Luther, quite unsafe to trust this reason for

⁷⁴SW, I, 84.

⁷⁵Ibid., IV, 413.

⁷⁶Ibid., IV, 412.

⁷⁷Ibid., III, 543-544.

⁷⁸Martin Luther, The Table Talk of Martin Luther, edited by William Hazlitt (London: James Clark & Co. Ltd., 1848), p. 34.

it still possesses human infirmities. Sure enough, Luther urges, man's reason even though it has been renewed must be watched and guarded constantly. "Here, unless we oppose and fight with all of our efforts, there will be a danger lest these corrupt affections should gain strength and draw us away into our old ways of sin."⁷⁹ Just as man's regeneration cannot be perfected in this life, man's reason, understands Luther, possesses a tendency to sin and it must be restrained and guarded. "Because," Luther furthers, "the defilement of the spirit is ever present; neither does our reason or Satan ever cease, who with their united powers are ever aiming at this--to make us set aside the Word and govern ourselves by our own imagination."⁸⁰

Regenerate reason, according to Luther, is weak. Like regenerate man, regenerate reason is not evil but still imperfect. Luther characterizes this reason by the term "weak." It, hence, needs God's constant mercy and unflinching care. Interestingly enough, Luther connects his argument with David's prayer, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak."⁸¹

Calvin

It has been already pointed out, according to Calvin, regenerate reason is the third kind of reason.

Regenerate reason is sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. Both the Spirit of God and Scripture sanction man's regenerate reason.⁸² The Holy Spirit

⁷⁹SW, I, 89.

⁸⁰Ibid., I, 90.

⁸¹Ibid., III, 312.

⁸²Treatises, p. 273.

not only sanctions man's reason after he has been regenerated but also the Spirit gives a light to him. "Those who have been regenerated by the Spirit," adds Calvin, "partakes of the life-giving light."⁸³ Here, "life-giving light," means the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. The Holy Spirit, Calvin greatly rejoices, does open the mind which was dark and blind to understand the mysteries of truth.⁸⁴

Regenerate reason is believing. This kind of reason, says Calvin, humbly accepts Christ as the Light. It desires to submit itself to the reign of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, regenerate reason, Calvin describes, is pure and sound in its character.⁸⁵ "Christ is fittingly called light," asserts Calvin, "in relation to the faithful whom he has rescued from their natural blindness and has raised up to be ruled by His Spirit."⁸⁶

Regenerate reason becomes an indispensable tool of understanding truth. According to Calvin, faith rests not on ignorance but on knowledge.⁸⁷ Regenerate reason plays an important role even in doctrinal matters. First of all, reason challenges and motivates a believer to climb up higher and examine the mysteries of the working of the Holy

⁸³Commentaries, XXIII, p. 133.

⁸⁴H. H. Meeter, The Basic Ideas of Calvinism (4th edition; Grand Rapids: International Publications, 1956), p. 43.

⁸⁵Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, IV, John 5:25-29.

⁸⁶Commentaries, XXIII, p. 144.

⁸⁷Institutes, I, 545.

Spirit.⁸⁸ Thus, Calvin expresses a very lofty view on man's reason after he has been regenerated because his reason is now enlightened by God.⁸⁹ While the unregenerates cannot grasp the spiritual matters, the regenerates are "proper judges" of these matters.⁹⁰ Since high intelligence is not only desirable but even indispensable for the understanding of profound truths of God's Word, Calvin, as a matter of historical fact, has applied this reason to some extent in dealing with some crucial doctrinal matters. For instance, as it is quite well known, Calvin did not agree with Luther on the Lord's Supper. Calvin felt that the Lutherans held to their position "more from obstinacy than reason."⁹¹

Regenerate reason is not infallible. Even though Calvin is considered to be somewhat "rationalistic" at the point where he replied to Luther why he could not agree with him on the physical presence of the Lord at the Supper, it must be made very clear, however, that Calvin never placed regenerate reason even in its highest form on the same level with the Word. As a matter of actual fact, Calvin always held the Scripture as the only infallible source of Christian doctrine.⁹² Interestingly enough, however, Calvin sets a formula. According to Calvin, assertion equals the witness of the outward Word plus the persuasion of the

⁸⁸Ibid., I, 537.

⁸⁹Meeter, p. 56.

⁹⁰Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, IX, 1 Cor. 2:14-15.

⁹¹Calvin, Letters of John Calvin, III, 154.

⁹²Institutes, I, 71, 72.

indwelling Spirit.⁹³ Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper would not meet this principle, on Calvin's terms, not because it has no basis in Scripture, but because there is no inner testimony of the Holy Spirit for it. In other words, Calvin has never measured truths on the basis of reason, but the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit is a measure for such truths.

Man's reason even after it has been regenerated is still weak. Even in its purest form, man's reason is still weak. Like Luther, Calvin sees that man's regeneration cannot be perfected in this life. Man's reason, as a whole, must be seen as severely limited. "Our reason," says Calvin, "is overwhelmed by so many forms of deceptions, is subject to so many errors, dashes against so many obstacles, is caught in so many difficulties, that it is far from directing us right."⁹⁴ Hence, Christians should not lean heavily on reason, Calvin warns. The lives of biblical saints, Calvin points out, witness to the fact that they (David and Paul) "prayed the Spirit of God should direct them every day."⁹⁵

Summary

Both Luther and Calvin agree that regenerate reason is quite different from unregenerated reason. For instance, they both teach that:

⁹³Ibid., I, 92.

⁹⁴Ibid., I, 284.

⁹⁵Ibid., I, 285.

- (1) This reason is changed by the Spirit and the Word.
- (2) This regenerate reason is not autonomous; it trusts and embraces God's Word as its guidance.
- (3) This reason now sees because the Holy Spirit has opened its eyes. The veil of darkness has been removed by the power of God. Now it sees, senses and understands truths.
- (4) Regenerate reason can be a real help to study the truths. Both Luther and Calvin assert that regenerate reason is a "privileged tool" as far as Christians are concerned in perceiving truths.
- (5) This reason is not perfect. Regenerate reason even in its purest form is still weak. It should not be trusted without limit. This reason needs the leading and protection of God without ceasing.

Seemingly Luther gathers every particle of energy to stress the authority and clarity of the Scripture while Calvin divides his emphasis between the outward witness of the Scripture and the inward witness of the Spirit in knowing and communicating truth. This must be held in mind, however; Calvin holds the Scripture as authentic and clear as Luther does. The Scripture, Calvin would claim, is clear and simple objectively. The indwelling Spirit makes the Word clear and simple subjectively. In this process, the Holy Spirit uses regenerated reason to some extent. On this point, Luther and Calvin would not disagree. It is, therefore, baseless to claim that Calvin is "rationalistic" in his theological approach.

Calvin's teaching on the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit exposes a problem. While one might agree with Calvin that the inward persuasion of the Spirit is a very important element existing in the hearts of the believers, it is in an ultimate sense a subjective phenomenon. Then to what extent can this subjective phenomenon and/or experience be regarded

as an acceptable or genuine work of the Holy Spirit. On this point, Calvin's argument looks rather "irrational."

At any rate, both Luther and Calvin agree quite well with each other in principle on man's regenerate reason. Any seeming difference (if there is any) can not be regarded as essential. Significantly enough, even the styles of expression and descriptions do resemble each other quite a bit.

Man's regenerate or regenerate reason. Rather he employs the term in a sort of neutral sense, meaning simply the powers to think and employ intellectual skills and processes.

Science is a proper field of human reason. It has been pointed out earlier that Luther sees man's reason as a gift of God and a real advantage over the beasts. "What man cannot do with his strength," explains Luther, "he accomplishes with his skill and the power of his reason." Activities such as sewing, plowing, building, baking, etc. require reason and diligence.²

Man's reason plays the role of authority in the field of science. Ratio to Luther is more than a "tool" in the field of science. It is much more than that. "Reason is the source and fount of all cultures. It has discovered all arts and sciences, all medicine and law, and it legislates them."³ As a matter of actual fact, man's reason dominates

²Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut G. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), II, 135.

³Ibid., III, 325.

⁴Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Soltau (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 64.

CHAPTER III

THE PLACE OF HUMAN REASON IN SCIENCE AND ART

Luther

When Luther speaks of reason (ratio) in relation to sciences, arts, and social structure it is not clear in every context whether he had in mind the regenerate or unregenerate reason. Rather he employs the term in a sort of neutral sense, meaning simply the powers to think and employ intellectual skills and processes.

Science is a proper field of human reason. It has been pointed out earlier that Luther sees man's reason as a gift of God and a real advantage over the beasts. "What man cannot do with his strength," explains Luther, "he accomplishes with his skill and the power of his reason."¹ Activities such as sowing, plowing, building, belong to reason and diligence.²

Man's reason plays the role of authority in the field of science. Ratio to Luther is more than a "tool" in the field of science. It is much more than that. "Reason is the source and bearer of all cultures. It has discovered all arts and sciences, all medicine and law, and it administers them."³ As a matter of actual fact, man's reason dominates

¹Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), II, 135.

²Ibid., III, 320.

³Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 64.

in this field. "Reason knows the solar system, weather, storms, violent rains, whirlwinds, thunderclaps, lightening flashes, thunderbolts and earthquakes."⁴ Hence, man's reason must be recognized to be the authority in the field of science since it is the inventor and mentor of all arts and techniques which men utilize in this life.⁵

Man's reason is not infallible. Luther points out that human reason must be limited even in the field of science. He sees the problems in man's corrupt nature. Man's reason cannot avoid the evil effect caused by the Fall. Not the science per se but the scientists must be blamed for wrong prescriptions and/or treatments occurred not unfrequently. Man's reason, according to Luther, cannot be seen separately from man's corrupt nature. Luther explains,

Nay, the very sight of our eyes, our ears, and all our other organs, have contracted corruption from sin, and are not sound and whole as they were before the fall. This corruption of the faculties is manifested even in natural things.⁶

Calvin

Man's reason is the gift of God to be exercised in science. God has given every man, pious and impious, indiscriminately, the gift of

⁴Luther, Luther's Works, III, 295.

⁵Ibid., XXXIV, 137.

⁶Martin Luther, Select Works of Martin Luther, translated and edited by Henry Cole (London: Published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1926) I, p. 62.

science. Calvin sees this as one of many "natural gifts."⁷ God has given man according to Calvin, the gift of revealing God's wisdom and goodness.⁸ This "gift" is real and great. It is a mere grace of God. For instance, referring to human art, Calvin comments:

Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts.⁹

Man's reason as the gift of science is bona fide, authentic and beneficial reality. Calvin wishes to defend this "natural gift" of God given to every man. This gift is genuine, acceptable and producing. Hence, man's reason ought to be highly admired and praised in the field of science. Calvin asserts,

Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their fine observation and artful description of nature? Shall we say that those men were devoid of understanding who conceived the art of disputation and taught us to speak reasonably? Shall we say that they are insane who developed medicine, devoting their labours to our benefit? What shall we say of all the mathematical sciences? Shall we consider them the ravings of madmen? Let us accordingly learn their example how many gifts the Lord left to human nature after it was despoiled of its true good.¹⁰

Man's reason must not be trusted as an infallible guide. Even though Calvin sees man's reason so highly in the field of art and science, he

⁷John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeil, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 273.

⁸John Calvin, Calvin: Commentaries, translated by Joseph Haroutunian, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), XXIII, 356.

⁹Calvin, Institutes, I, 273.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 275.

clearly warns that man must not rely on his reason to be irreprehensible even in the matters of natural things. Science, in the final analysis, is an earthly pursuit¹¹ undertaken by man whose heart is corrupt and deceptive.¹² Man, Calvin holds, after all, is blind not only toward God but also to other truths.¹³

Summary

Interestingly enough, Luther and Calvin agree quite thoroughly on this subject. For instance, both say that:

- (1) Man's reason is a privileged endowment of God to be used fully in science.
- (2) This gift is genuine and commendable.
- (3) Man's reason, as the "authority" in science, has done considerable good for mankind.
- (4) Even though man's reason shows the goodness and greatness of man's ability and accomplishment in the scientific field, it is quite impossible to expect to have a perfect science. The problem is not, in a real sense, a matter of science. It is rather a matter of scientist. Natural man, regardless of who he might be, is a sinner. His heart is corrupt. His mind is blind. No perfect thing is expected to come out from him. Even though God has allowed man's reason to play a major part on the stage of science, autonomous reason must not be trusted to play an honest part consistently even in the field of science. In other words, man's reason must be watched and guarded even in this field.

Both Luther and Calvin might agree that science is an earthly matter which holds a limited axiomatic system. It is most probably to believe

¹¹Calvin, Calvin: Commentaries, XXIII, 132.

¹²Calvin, Institutes, I, 284.

¹³Calvin, Calvin: Commentaries, XXIII, 133.

that both Luther and Calvin see science as the activity of the autonomous reason in a fallen world, a world in which the relation to God is regarded as deistic and characterized by carnal necessity.¹⁴

Not only the thoughts and ideas narrated by both Luther and Calvin on this subject but also the styles of expression and terms used throughout their arguments are significantly congenial if not truly identical.

¹⁴Thomas F. Torrance, "The Place and Function of Reason in Christian Theology," Evangelical Quarterly, V (1941), 28.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLACE OF HUMAN REASON IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Luther

Man's reason is a gift of God to make and execute social orders. "All men," says Luther, "have a certain natural knowledge implanted in their minds (Rom. 2:14-15), by which they know naturally that one should do to their [neighbours] what he wants done to himself (Matt. 7:13)."¹ Luther adds, "This principle and others like it, which we call the law of nature, are the foundation of human law and of all good works."² This was the Creator's plan that Adam could take care of earthly things perfectly by the use of his reason.³ "Already in creation," Luther would say, "God gave man that gift of reason, making it possible for him to establish families and states."⁴

Man's reason must rule in social structure. From reason man ought to learn how to control and conduct himself personally and socially. On this basis one must decide what is right and wrong in the world.⁵ Luther

¹Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), XXVII, 53. Hereafter this reference will be cited as LW.

²Ibid., XXVII, 53.

³Ibid., XII, 308.

⁴Lennart B. Pinomaa, Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology, translated by Walter J. Kukkonen, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 147.

⁵LW, XXI, 239.

insists that Christ has left the division of property and business to the teaching of human reason.⁶ "To Luther," comments Pinomaa, "it is self-evident that the Bible does not provide instructions for legislation and governmental functions, since all laws are the product of human wisdom and reason."⁷ Accordingly, to Luther, social orders must be carried out by reason.⁸ Man's reason, Luther asserts, is capable of determining between good and evil in social life.⁹ In the earthly matters, Luther adds, "men must act on the basis of reason wherein the laws have their origin--for God has subjected temporal rule and all of physical life to reason (Gen. 2:15)."¹⁰ God has not sent the Holy Spirit from heaven for this purpose.¹¹

Luther wishes to make himself quite clear on this point that man's reason must be the authority in social structure. "For the things," says Luther, "having reference to the political or economic order are subject to reason."¹² As a matter of fact, there exists no law higher

⁶LW, XXI, 115.

⁷Pinomaa, p. 7.

⁸Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, translated by Martin Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 268.

⁹Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 239.

¹⁰LW, XLVI, 242.

¹¹Ibid., XLVI, 242.

¹²Ibid., XIII, 141.

than human reason in this field.¹³ According to Luther, comments Althaus, reason is the final authority within earthly government; it contains within itself the basis for judging and deciding about the proper regulation and administration of earthly matters such as economics and politics.¹⁴

Social structure belongs to the Kingdom of Darkness. Like Augustine, Luther sees two kingdoms, regnum Christi and regnum mundi. Political and social matters belong to the Kingdom of this World or the temporal sphere, and in this kingdom, the Gospel cannot be applied directly.¹⁵ Instead, social structure rests primarily upon natural reason and is not to be derived from the law of God.¹⁶

It must be very clear that reason according to Luther, is the sine qua non only in this sphere. "Therefore," Luther contends, "it was wicked for the sophists to drag these political and domestic statements into church. For the realm of reason must be separated as far as possible from the spiritual realm."¹⁷ Only in the earthly sphere,

¹³Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar Edition, edited by J. K. F. Knalke, G. Kawerau, E. Thiele and others (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus, 1883-), XIX, 637-639. Also cited in George Forell, "Luther's Conception of Natural Orders," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XVIII (April 1945), p. 171.

¹⁴Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 65.

¹⁵Pinomaa, p. 179.

¹⁶Luther, Weimar Edition, XXX, 11, 578. Also cited in Pinomaa, p. 180.

¹⁷LW, XXVI, 174.

reason is a "complete excuse."¹⁸ "For God endowed man with reason," Luther furthers his argument, "with which to reign on earth; that is, it should be competent to establish laws and ordinances . . ."¹⁹

Natural Law is authentic and beneficial. "The law of nature is the law of God," and no one will be excused.²⁰ Commenting on Ps. 111:3, Luther says that natural laws or orders have been established by God and that stability, peace and justice may be preserved. Natural law, insists Luther, is righteous and permanent.²¹ Man, however, acts contrary to this law. "The noble gem called natural law and reason is a rare thing among the children of men."²² For Luther, Lex Naturae represents a divine mandate.²³

Luther points out some benefits harvested by a rightful use of man's reason in social structure. Man's reason has preserved to some extent common welfare and tranquility.²⁴ It earnestly sought to

¹⁸Ibid., V, 303.

¹⁹Ibid., XXIV, 175.

²⁰Ibid., XIV, 22.

²¹Ibid., XIII, 369.

²²Ibid., XIII, 161.

²³Martin E. Marty, "Luther on Ethics," Accents in Luther's Theology, edited by Heino O. Kadai (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), p. 213.

²⁴LW, XXVI, 262.

maintain peace, honor, and moral course.²⁵ Reason endeavors to improve the world's condition.²⁶

Man's reason is evil and cannot be trusted. Luther explains that man's reason is essentially evil "even when it is engaged in thoughts about God and is occupied with the most honorable tasks, whether political or civil."²⁷ He wishes to relate this to the Fall, saying:

Through the Fall man's will, understanding, and all natural powers were so corrupted that man was no longer whole, but was diverted by sin, lost his correct judgment before God, and thought everything perversely against the will and Law of God.²⁸

Even in civil matters, man's reason is not perfect.²⁹ No wonder, this world which is ruled by reason, ceases not to see troubles.³⁰ As a matter of fact, since the Fall, man's reason has done some of the vilest acts such as crucifying the Lord. Luther warns, "it exercises oppression."³¹

In the final analysis, man's reason even in the matters of the temporal sphere cannot be trusted. Man ought to trust in God always.

²⁵Ibid., XXIV, 37.

²⁶Althaus, p. 65.

²⁷LW, II, 123.

²⁸Ibid., XII, 308-309.

²⁹Ibid., XII, 309.

³⁰Martin Luther, Select Works of Martin Luther, translated and edited by Henry Cole (London: Published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1826), II, 544.

³¹LW, II, 119.

Luther concludes that we should let God rule "us according to His wisdom and not according to our reason."³²

Calvin

Man's reason is to be the main guiding and controlling factor in the earthly matters. Like Luther, Calvin sees that man lives under two spheres--heavenly and earthly. Government, household management, all kinds of skills, liberal arts, and other similar things belong to the earthly sphere.³³ Man's reason, according to Calvin, is able to "taste" some of the "heavenly" matters to some extent, but it is more inclined to think and handle the things below. "When it turns its attention," says Calvin, "to the things below, its efforts do not always become so worthless to have no effect."³⁴ In other words, man's reason manifests its great effectiveness when it is applied to the things below.

Every man has the inner light through which he can rightly conduct in the society. Calvin sees that God has implanted "some seed of political order" in all men, and this is an ample proof that "in the arrangement of this life no man is without the light of reason."³⁵ No

³²Luther, Select Works, II, 506.

³³John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeil, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 272.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., I, 273.

man is denied this natural endowment. Calvin observes, "there exist in all men's minds universal impressions of a certain civic fair dealing and order."³⁶ This natural endowment, according to Calvin, constitutes man "a social animal," who tends through it to foster and preserve society.³⁷

This natural instinct or endowment is a law of God to be obeyed. According to Calvin, any act contrary to this natural instinct is against man's manifest reason. Crimes, for example, are contrary to man's manifest reason.³⁸ Man can maintain rightful conduct by following his own manifest reason. Man's reason is a natural law which God gave to mankind to follow. Calvin contends, "There is nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a right standard of conduct by natural law."³⁹ "It is a fact," Calvin furthers, "the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of man."⁴⁰

Man's reason, in the final analysis, is blind and does not measure even the natural law correctly. Man's rational faculty is held very highly by Calvin as it has been observed; however, he makes himself quite clear that man's reason even in the field of political and social events fails. Man must not, under any circumstance, consider man's reason to be sound and whole in every respect, discriminating between good and evil.⁴¹

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., I, 281.

⁴⁰Ibid., II, 1504.

⁴¹Ibid., I, 283.

Summary

Both Luther and Calvin teach that man's reason must be the rule which every man must follow. They assert that every man is endowed with "natural light" which is the source and basis of human laws. Man's reason, according to Luther and Calvin, is sufficient to direct man to follow rightful conduct in society. Man's reason, according to Luther and Calvin, is a law given by God to regulate and execute rules and orders of human society. There is no higher law than this in the earthly sphere.

Both Luther and Calvin see the authenticity of "natural law" in its place in human life. It is the voice of rightness in man's inner heart. In his innermost part, man knows what is "right" and what is "wrong," but man willfully ignores and despises this "crying." Man very frequently acts contrary to his reason. Hence, man is without excuse.

Man's reason, however, according to Luther and Calvin, is not infallible even in the field of human welfare. While they both hold such a lofty view of man's reason in this regard, they are quite critical about the character of human reason. They insist that man's reason is blind. Man must not forget the fact that man's nature which includes both will and reason has been ruined by the fall. Therefore, man's reason must be guarded, watched and limited even in the sphere of the earthly kingdom. Man would not choose or act contrary to his perverse nature. In the final analysis, it is the grace of God alone which restrains a total chaos.

CHAPTER V

THE PLACE OF HUMAN REASON IN THEOLOGY

Luther

Luther sees the incapacity of reason in this field, because the theology of Luther sees two realms. One is physical and the other is spiritual. They ought to be kept distinct and separate from each other and each is specifically instructed and restricted to its task.¹

Matters pertaining to God belong to the spiritual realm and human reason cannot apprehend this.² Theology is spiritual and heavenly. Man is physical and earthly. Hence, man's speculations concerning the matters of the other world are mere "vapors." Luther explains, "It is utterly impossible that human reason should apprehend even the least article of faith."³ Theology, according to Luther, must come from revelation.⁴

Human reason cannot understand God's works. God's works are of such a nature that they surpass all understanding of human

¹Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), XLVI, 266. Hereafter this reference will be cited as LW.

²Ibid., XXIII, 93.

³Martin Luther, Select Works of Martin Luther, translated and edited by Henry Cole (London: Published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1826), II, 22. Hereafter this reference will be cited as SW.

⁴Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar Edition, edited by J. K. F. Knalke, G. Kawerau, E. Thiele and others (Weimar: Hermaun Boehlaus, 1883-), IX, 62-65. Also cited in M. Reu, Luther and the Scripture (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1944), p. 16.

nature.⁵ Human reason, as a matter of fact, shuts up the wisdom of God. "What folly and rashness it is," Luther groans, "on our part to want to shut up the wisdom of God within those narrow confines of human reason."⁶

It is impossible for human reason to understand the doctrines of faith. For instance, the Doctrine of the Incarnation has been rejected by human reasoning. Reasoning questions, "How can it be that God should give any other that eternal power, which so properly belongs to Himself . . . ?"⁷ Man's reason does not accept the true God. It turns man to idols.⁸ The Doctrine of the Trinity, reason contends, is very unacceptable.⁹ This picture, Luther points out, is clearly seen in the errors of Jews and Mohammedans. The truth concerning the Deity of Christ is not permitted by their reasoning to be accepted. Human reason cannot enter "within the veil of these mysteries."¹⁰ Luther explains how he learned the Deity of Christ. "I learn from the scripture," says Luther, "for the judgment and penetration of human reason can avail nothing here."¹¹ Instead, man's reasoning likes to ridicule this doctrine. "How could a person born of a virgin Mary be God?" Man's ratio shakes its head.¹² The truth of God is placed "far above the reach of human capacity."¹³

⁵LW, VII, 137.

⁶Ibid., VII, 317.

⁷SW, II, 211.

⁸Ibid., III, 511.

⁹LW, IV, 72.

¹⁰SW, II, 226.

¹¹Ibid., II, 240.

¹²LW, XXIII, 377.

¹³SW, II, 352.

Reason also denies the truth that man is immortal. This truth is so high and lofty that human reason does not perceive it. "Indeed, human reason," says Luther, "cannot avoid being overwhelmed by the grandeur of this subject matter and coming into conflict with it."¹⁴ When we come to deal with this subject matter--man's immortality--"all our reasoning ceases to function and neither knows nor understands how the transition from this life to that one takes place, much less how and what means it is to be attained."¹⁵ Luther asserts, "Therefore, if we follow the lead of reason, we understand neither the resurrection nor the precreation."¹⁶

Man's reason is corrupt and sinful and seeks to disregard the truth. Luther observes that reason does not feel the gravity of sin. "Human reason cannot comprehend the magnitude of God's anger over sin."¹⁷ As a matter of actual fact, "reason cannot believe there can be such wrath," says Luther.¹⁸ Consequently, "man's reason would fain bring and present to God a feigned and counterfeit sinner, which is nothing afraid nor has any feeling of sin."¹⁹ According to Luther, "The head and sum of the Christian doctrine is this,--that God sent His Son into the world, and gave Him unto us; and that it is through Him alone that He pardons our sins, makes us righteous, and saves."²⁰ Man's reason, of course,

¹⁴IW, I, 4.

¹⁵Ibid., XXIV, 38.

¹⁶Ibid., IV, 330.

¹⁷Ibid., XXII, 111.

¹⁸Ibid., II, 64.

¹⁹SW., I, 273.

²⁰Ibid., II, 570.

does not understand this. Contrarily, "when reason heareth this, by-and-by it is offended; it rageth and uttereth all her malice against God; saying 'Are then my good works nothing?'"²¹

Human reason is the main cause of false teachings. Who are the false teachers and prophets? "They are the offspring of reason, and perfectly agreeable unto it; and moreover, it is that which pleases us, because it teaches all such works as are our own, and which we understand and perform."²² According to Luther, man's reason seeks to pervert the Gospel after its own imagination.²³ This perversion is compared to "spiritual sorcery." There are some who claim to be saints even though they are far from the truth. They perform "holy things" such as monastic habit, diet, and whole conduct according to their own imagination.²⁴ "The Lord never gave such counsel," Luther contends, "but Satan."²⁵ Thus human reason tries to save himself according to the flesh.²⁶ Hence, it is dead with respect to salvation.²⁷

Reason and Gospel do not get along with each other. As a matter of fact, reason has been an "irreconcilable enemy to the Gospel of

²¹Ibid., I, 250.

²²Ibid., II, 542.

²³Ibid., I, 217.

²⁴LW, XXVII, 85.

²⁵SW, IV, 137.

²⁶LW, XXVI, 120.

²⁷Ibid., XXIV, 144.

Christ."²⁸ Man's reason, Luther points out, has been the "right hand of Satan."²⁹ As Satan deceived Eve in the Garden, the devil deceives men through reason even today.³⁰ Luther advises,

This, then, is the mark of the true and divine promises, that they are in conflict with reason, and that reason does not want to accept them. Because those of the devil, on the other hand, are in agreement with human reason, they are accepted by reason readily and without hesitation.³¹

Why is the doctrine of the devil easily swallowed? Luther replies, "Because it sounds reasonable."³²

The Scripture cannot be interpreted according to man's reason. Man's reason, because of the fall, is weak and blind. It cannot interpret the Scripture correctly. Luther firmly opposes any kind of "rationalistic interpretation" of the Bible. Reason ought to be subject to the Word.³³ Because God's ways are beyond man's reach, reason cannot comprehend them.³⁴

The Doctrine of the Eucharist, for instance, has suffered much because of the "rationalistic interpretation" of the Scripture. "When men try to measure the Words of Christ," says Luther, "such as the

²⁸Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, translated and edited by James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957), pp. 150, 154, 178.

²⁹LW, XIV, 261.

³⁰Ibid., III, 282.

³¹Ibid., II, 267.

³²Ibid., XXIII, 291.

³³Ibid., II, 13.

³⁴Ibid., III, 173.

Eucharist, by mathematical standards, they never understand the proper force of the words of Christ, for they have been driven by the blind judgment of reason."³⁵ Luther contends, "Not a single article of faith would remain if I followed the rancor of reason."³⁶

Luther urges every Christian to avoid reason.³⁷ With respect to theology reason is a "whore" and "idol."³⁸ "But, O Reason!" cries Luther, "rather go thou to perdition, together with thy opinion than that I should trust my salvation unto thee."³⁹

The regenerate reason is beneficial. Man's reason can be purged only by the Word of the Son of God.⁴⁰ After the baptism of this reason, it might be invited into the field of theology. This kind of reason, Luther calls, "The reason of faith."⁴¹ It is not a merely rational process. It is an act of faith. It receives the gift of God in Jesus Christ.⁴²

This kind of reason which is of regeneration can be a real service to faith. "I make this distinction; reason corrupted by the devil is harmful, and the cleverer and more richly endowed it is, the more harm it does, as we see in wise men who are led by their reason to reject the Word; but reason informed by the Spirit is a help in interpreting the

³⁵LW, VII, 105.

³⁶Ibid., XXXVI, 53.

³⁷SW, II, 21.

³⁸SW, LI, 374-376.

³⁹SW, II, 543.

⁴⁰LW, LI, 377.

⁴¹Ibid., XXVI, 262.

⁴²Ibid., XXVI, 34.

Holy Scriptures."⁴³ This reason might be properly viewed as ratio ministerialis. This kind of reason, Luther points out, is ready for a real service to faith.⁴⁴ The ratio ministerialis is a real gift of God for an eloquent proclamation and a proper understanding of the scripture.⁴⁵

This believing-reason, Luther views, in a completely different frame of mind. This experience of faith brings man together with his ratio and wisdom in captivity unto God.⁴⁶ This ratio willingly exposes its incapacity and accepts the scripture as the fountain of knowledge.⁴⁷ This regenerate reason associates closely with God's Word.⁴⁸

This kind of ratio is associated closely with the Spirit of Truth.⁴⁹ This has been clearly shown in Luther's testimony at the Diet of Worms, "unless I am proved to be wrong by the witness of the scripture or by evident reason (ratione evidente)."⁵⁰ It is a faithful pupil of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ Because of these two lights--the Word and the Spirit--it sees

⁴³Martin Luther, Conversations with Luther, translated and edited by Preserved Smith and Herbert P. Gallinger (Boston: The Pilgrim's Press, 1915), p. 115.

⁴⁴Martin Luther, The Table Talk of Martin Luther, edited by William Hazlitt (London: James Clark & Co. Ltd., 1848), p. 115.

⁴⁵Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 71-72.

⁴⁶SW, III, 112.

⁴⁷Skevington A. Wood, Captive to the Word (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 33.

⁴⁸SW, IV, 259.

⁴⁹LW, XXIII, 168.

⁵⁰Ibid., XXIII, 169.

things from a different perspective.⁵¹ These two lights are inseparably related. Without the Spirit of God, nobody sees a jot of what is in the scriptures.⁵²

Luther wishes to point out another important truth along this line. Jesus Christ is the fountain of all wisdom. Only through Christ can men apprehend the Father and the things eternal.⁵³ Only those who know Christ, know the whole of the prophetic scripture and the mysteries hidden.⁵⁴ To know Christ, according to Luther, is to know the cross.⁵⁵ Unregenerate reason with all of its cleverness does not apprehend the theology of the cross. Man's wisdom is offended by this truth of the cross. Man's reason in the field of theology is "left handed." It cannot grasp this truth.⁵⁶ Only believing can know this.⁵⁷

Calvin

Calvin sees a great value of reason in theology. Man's perverted and degenerate nature, according to Calvin, still gleams some

⁵¹Luther, Bondage of the Will, pp. 73, 124, 125.

⁵²Ibid., p. 73.

⁵³SW, II, 34.

⁵⁴Ibid., II, 309.

⁵⁵Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, translated by Martin Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 44.

⁵⁶LW, XXII, 153.

⁵⁷SW, IV, 466.

sparks.⁵⁸ This is a natural and universal gift of God to be used in every field of human life lest God might punish him for neglect.⁵⁹

Human reason, to some extent, can examine the validity of doctrine.⁶⁰ Some doctrines which disregard reason must be rejected.⁶¹ For instance, Calvin rejects the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist, because he feels that this particular doctrine does not "transcend the reach of reason."⁶²

Correct understanding of the scripture, Calvin sees, requires man's intelligence. Human reasoning, therefore, is a great asset to interpret the scripture correctly. If revelation, Calvin would say, is the communication of truth to the mind,⁶³ it demands an intellectual apprehension.⁶⁴ Hence, human reasoning is necessary in theology.⁶⁵

Calvin rejects "rationalism." If "rationalism" is meant the system or theory which assigns undue authority to reason in matters of

⁵⁸John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeil, in the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 270.

⁵⁹Ibid., I, 275.

⁶⁰Ibid., I, 17.

⁶¹John Calvin, Tracts and Treatises, translated by Henry Beveridge, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), II, 422.

⁶²John Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, translated by Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1860), II, 249.

⁶³Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1873), I, 49.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

religion⁶⁶ Calvin must be left out. This, to be sure, does not doubt Calvin's ability to speculate and rationalize. But, the fact is, he does not lean on these gifts in forming and moulding his theology.⁶⁷

In fact, Calvin insists that his theology is not based on philosophy or on man's reason.⁶⁸ Man's ratio, according to Calvin, is too little to measure the measureless God.⁶⁹ "God's works are indeed beyond the faculties of human mind," asserts Calvin, "human mind cannot comprehend them."⁷⁰

Human reason cannot be regarded as an authority. Calvin holds the scripture to be the authority. Only the scripture, Calvin claims, "lies beyond the sphere of our judgment."⁷¹ Calvin wishes to make himself quite clear on this point: "The scripture is superior to all human wisdom."⁷² Human reason, therefore, cannot accept the matters of

⁶⁶Ibid., I, 34.

⁶⁷Benjamin B. Warfield, Calvin and Augustine (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1956), p. 481.

⁶⁸Calvin, Tracts and Treatises, II, 512.

⁶⁹Calvin, Institutes, I, 146.

⁷⁰John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans's Publishing Co., 1959-), IX, 1 Cor. 2:14-15.

⁷¹Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, I, 29.

⁷²Calvin, Institutes, I, 82.

supernatural realm.⁷³ The Scripture was absolutely necessary in as much as the truths it contained were such as man's reason could not possibly discover.⁷⁴ Then, "the Bible is the primary subject of faith seeing that it alone presents the positive will of God as He has revealed it to man."⁷⁵ Therefore, in theology, man must proceed not Natura duce et magistra but Scriptura duce et magistra.⁷⁶ To Calvin, the scripture is not a supplement to the general revelation. As a matter of fact, General Revelation is ineffective without the scripture.⁷⁷

Precisely, it is faith in the Word of God, Calvin views, which enables man to know God and man himself.⁷⁸ Faith is the only way to know God.⁷⁹ "Whither the Bible took him, thither he went," and where the Bible stopped, there Calvin stopped.⁸⁰ "It is written," as far as Calvin was concerned, was sufficient to settle any point in question.⁸¹

⁷³Adam M. Hunter, The Teaching of Calvin (2nd edition; Glasgow: McClehorse, Jackson & Co., 1950), pp. 81-82.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 71.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Thomas F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 15.

⁷⁷Benjamin Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 69.

⁷⁸Etienne Gilson, Christianity and Philosophy, translated by Ralph MacDonald (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), p. 18.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 54-55.

⁸⁰Warfield, Calvin and Augustine, p. 481.

⁸¹James MacKinnon, Calvin and the Reformation (London: Logmans, Green and Co., 1936), p. 217.

Man's reason seeks to pervert the truth. Like Luther, Calvin argues that many false teachings have crept in the churches through the abuse of reason. "Scholastic doctrine," as an example, is false because it leans on human reason and not on the Word of God.⁸² This kind of "vain philosophy," Calvin complains, "has ruined the church."⁸³ Man's reason has persistently attempted to pervert the Gospel of Christ.⁸⁴ Therefore, Calvin urges, Christian faith must not be founded on human testimony, not propped up by doubtful opinion, not depended on human authority, but engraven on our hearts by the finger of the living God, so as not to be obliterated by any human speculations.⁸⁵

The Holy Spirit illumines the believer's reasoning. Calvin's notion of ratio as far as Christian is concerned, is very different from human logic. Because it is regenerate reason subjects itself to the authority of the divine Word.⁸⁶ It is a religious entity or "the finger of the Living God" engraven in the heart of the believer. This kind of reason, as far as Calvin is concerned, is a different kind of reason all together. It is so closely related with the testimony of the Holy Spirit. It is the guidance of the Holy Spirit which correctly interprets the Gospel.⁸⁷

⁸²Calvin, Institutes, I, 623.

⁸³John Calvin, A Reformation Debate, edited by John C. Olin (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 65.

⁸⁴Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, I, 33.

⁸⁵Calvin, Reformation Debate, pp. 78-79.

⁸⁶Gilson, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁷Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, IX, 1 Cor. 2:14-15.

Like Luther, Calvin asserts man can know God only through Christ. In fact, any true knowledge must be Christological. Calvin explains, "No man hears and learns of God without at the same time believing on Christ; and that motion of the Holy Spirit is so efficacious that it always begets faith."⁸⁸ Only when man knows Christ, Calvin would say, he knows himself.⁸⁹

Finally, the cross, according to Calvin, is the focus of all theology.⁹⁰ Man may know God only through the cross. The chariot of the cross, "there by faith we may apprehend those things which the eyes have never seen, the ear never heard, and which far surpass our hearts and minds."⁹¹ The cross has been a "foolishness" to human wisdom, and only faith receives and apprehends this.⁹²

Summary

The incapacity of human reason in theology. Both Luther and Calvin teach that theology cannot be reached by human capacity. It must be revealed. God has done so in His Word. The Holy Spirit leads man to the true understanding of His Word. The Scripture is the only authoritative means through which man can know God for sure.

⁸⁸Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, III, 113.

⁸⁹Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man, p. 14.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 177.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 171.

⁹²Ibid., p. 178.

The focal point of human history and understanding is the Cross where the Word is so clearly manifested. This is a real mystery which far passes where man's sense and reason can reach.

Unregenerate reason persistently rejects the Word. It seeks to substitute something appealing to man's reason. Man's mind, consequently, accepts "idols." Man's reason, in the realm of theology, has been the main cause of numerous errors. The devil has manipulated man's reason in ruining truths even within the churches. Hence, reason must be limited in the field of theology.

The value of the regenerate reason. Both Luther and Calvin highly esteem the worth of regenerate reason. It seems much more so in the case of Calvin. They, both, believe that regenerate reason can be a real minister in interpreting and proclaiming the Scripture.

Regenerate reason believes in the Word as the authority. While Calvin urges that Christians in particular should exercise their reason to a full extent, he does not say that Christians reasoning is a mere logic. It is a religious experience. It is the instructing and guiding activity of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the believers. This Spirit of God leads man to all truths. Hence, it is far from a truth to make Calvin a "rationalist."

Gilson, a noted Catholic scholar, is correct when he says, "Calvin is more supple than Luther on the natural power of fallen reason but on the question of God, or of the future life, he was no less firm than Luther."⁹³ Here, Gilson is correct.

⁹³Gilson, pp. 16-17.

As a matter of fact, it is the Scripture alone, for both Luther and Calvin, that leads man to understand the truths pertaining to God, salvation, and eternal life. Man's part is to believe the Scripture. Man's reason can neither establish nor destroy truths. Truths are objectively sustained. Hunter, a student of Calvinism, had paraphrased quite well on this point:

Peculiarly the Gospel, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the truth about God, and the method He resorted to for the saving of men, Scripture alone provided the key and the entrance. This was in full accord with Luther's attitude.⁹⁴

It is, however, admitted by some that Calvin was influenced by Erasmus and other humanists to some extent,⁹⁵ but the spirit in which Calvin constructed his theology is evangelical and like Luther's.⁹⁶

Perhaps Luther wishes to emphasize more on the evil aspect of unregenerate reason while Calvin tries to defend the value of regenerate reason in the field of theology.

⁹⁴Hunter, p. 72.

⁹⁵Otto W. Heick, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), I, 442.

⁹⁶McKinnon, 217.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLACE OF HUMAN REASON IN APOLOGETICS

Luther

Man's reason can know that there is a God. According to Luther, man can know through the use of his reason that there is a God, but who or what He is man cannot know.¹ In other words, man's reason accepts the fact that there is a God of some sort even though this kind of knowledge is not necessarily correct. Man needs no logical persuasion to believe that there is a God because he knows it by himself.²

The true or correct knowledge of God cannot be attained by human reasoning. Luther points out two reasons why human reason cannot attain the true knowledge of God. First, man must know God "theologically"; otherwise he knows nothing. As far as Luther is concerned, to believe in God does not mean that there is a God but to believe that He is my God.³ Man's reason refuses to accept the fact that he is a sinner and

¹Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar Edition, edited by J. K. F. Knalke, G. Kawerau, E. Thiele and others (Weimar: Hermaun Boehlaus, 1883-) I, 557. Also cited in Lennert B. Pinomaa, Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 38.

²Martin Luther, Select Works of Martin Luther, translated and edited by Henry Cole (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1826), I, 64-65. Hereafter this reference will be cited as SW.

³Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, translated by Martin Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 66.

God is the Savior.⁴ Second, man's reason has a bias against the truth. Man seeks to promote his own ideas even in sacrifice of truth.⁵ Hence, man cannot find the true God by his own searching. "For if you do," Luther advises, "you will encounter the devil."⁶ So, it is very impossible, according to Luther, for human reason to understand what God is.⁷

The only and true way to know God correctly is by God revealing Himself to man. Luther argues, "there was need of revelation and doctrine, wherein He might reveal Himself to our view; for of ourselves, and by our own wisdom, we were not able to penetrate that heavenly mystery, nor by searching to find out what God is, nor what is the nature of the divine essence."⁸ Luther's emphasis lies in the fact that worldly wisdom denies the things of the invisible world.⁹ These knowledgable facts about the invisible world comes only from the scripture.¹⁰

The scripture must be the starting point in Christian apologetics. Luther sees human reason as totally useless in defining God. Man wishes to deal with God according to his own fashion.¹¹ Man's reason seeks to

⁴SW, I, 64-65.

⁵Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), XVI, 311. Hereafter this reference will be cited as LW.

⁶SW, II, 246.

⁷LW, XXIV, 56.

⁸SW, II, 246.

⁹Ibid., IV, 414.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 64-65.

¹¹LW, IV, 62.

reveal its own glory by every means even in sacrificing the glory of God.¹² Therefore, a Christian must not appeal to man's reason in the hope of converting a sinner to Christ. He must take the scripture as the starting point. Only the scripture is the point of contact.¹³ To be sure, God is everywhere, but Luther points out, God meets man only in the scripture.¹⁴

Luther does not reject the fact that nature reveals God. He firmly believes that nature reveals God to man. The things in nature are used by God "to reveal Himself unto us."¹⁵ Man does attain a knowledge of God from the world of nature.¹⁶ This knowledge is open to all men including even the idolaters.¹⁷ This knowledge of God is perhaps even broader than what Gerrish and Pinomaa have observed. It includes God's manifested attributes in nature such as His power, wisdom, and goodness.¹⁸ Hence, it is not necessary to argue with heathens that there is God. They know it. They know the nature of God to be powerful,

¹²SW, IV, 391.

¹³Lennart B. Pinomaa, Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology, translated by Walter J. Kukkonen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 106.

¹⁴George W. Forell, "Luther's Conception of Natural Orders," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XVIII (April 1945), pp. 167-168.

¹⁵SW, II, 247.

¹⁶B. A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 38.

¹⁷Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, translated and edited by Wilhelm Pauch, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), Romans 1:19,20.

¹⁸Ibid.

invisible, righteous, immortal, and good. They are without excuse.¹⁹

"Natural Theology" does not exist. As far as Luther is concerned theology cannot be built upon nature. Surely, Luther goes on, the heavens and the firmament do show the power and the glory of God, but these are seen only through a "spiritual mind."²⁰ He asserts, "For the glory that is of God alone is not seen, nor does the fact that we are made by the hands of God openly appear; they are only believed by faith."²¹ While the universe declares God objectively, man subjectively cannot see Him. Man is blind by nature. Reason speaks concerning God just as a blind man discusses color.²² Without the operation of the Word, man's wisdom is nothing but mere darkness.²³ Hence, "natural theology" is impossible for Luther. He sees that man needs the preaching of the Word of God.²⁴ Luther says further, "Our nature is so corrupt that it no longer knows God unless it is enlightened by the Word and the Spirit of God."²⁵

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰SW, IV, 392-393.

²¹Ibid., IV, 393.

²²LW, XXII, 153.

²³SW, IV, 241.

²⁴Ibid., IV, 250.

²⁵LW, II, 124.

"Natural Theology" denies the fact that man is blind. It seeks to promote man instead of the Word. To Luther, "natural theology" is nothing but a human speculation. It is the abuse of reason by philosophers and scholastic theologians to put man's reason in the place of God's Word. Against this Luther consistently cried out. He felt, "natural theology was blasphemous in principle and bankrupt in practice."²⁶ This was a constant and more annoying trouble than the Papists. "The devil rages against me personally with all his power and gives me wounds hard to heal."²⁷ Theology which has been conceived by human reason is a degenerated philosophy and cannot have a true knowledge of God.²⁸ God has not prepared any path through which man's philosophical contemplation can lead men to Himself.²⁹

"Natural Theology" cannot know God because it rejects the Gospel. Luther holds that "only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can truly reveal the nature of God and the meaning of human existence."³⁰ Natural theology leads men away from the Christ. It despises and ignores the "theologia crucis, the gospel doctrine which sets Christ forth."³¹

²⁶Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, translated and edited by James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood, New Jersey; Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957), p. 46.

²⁷Rudolf Thiel, Luther, translated by Gustav K. Wienche (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955), p. 352.

²⁸LW, II, 124.

²⁹Bornkamm, p. 63.

³⁰LW, XLIV, 22.

³¹Luther, Bondage of the Will, p. 46.

Natural theology also conceives God wickedly and contrary to the Word.³² In other words, natural theology is a great harm to the cause of Christ. "The longer, the harder man searches God after reason," warns Luther, "the farther he is from his goal."³³

Therefore as far as Luther is concerned, only the theology of the Word exists in a true sense. Man ought to seek wisdom and knowledge from God in His Word. "Wisdom gained anywhere else is nothing but stupidity before God."³⁴ Christians should take hold of and firmly retain the Word. They must bear in mind that they have been baptized, absolved, and taught by the Word of God.³⁵ Faith comes only through the Word.³⁶

Then, according to Luther, natural revelation can serve Christian apologetics in two ways. First, it clearly teaches that man is without excuse. Second, it shows that man is blind and that he needs to have his eyes opened by the Word.³⁷ Luther sees little value of theistic proofs. As long as man is blind, there is no way to deliver him from destruction. Natural man is completely captivated by the foremost

³²LW, XXVI, 400.

³³Ibid., XXIV, 72.

³⁴Ibid., IX, 56, 57.

³⁵Ibid., V, 354.

³⁶Ibid., V, 133.

³⁷SW, IV, 393.

whore, reason.³⁸ She is beyond man's control.³⁹ Luther sees then that only the grace of God, sola gratia, is the solution. "Grace," according to Luther, "is the beginning and the middle and the end of salvation."⁴⁰ Only the triumphant grace of God in Jesus Christ can deliver man from the inescapable despair.⁴¹

Calvin

Man even after the Fall still bears God's image. This is a light implanted by God in every man's heart. "The chief parts of the light which remain in our corrupt nature are two: first, every one has a certain seed of religion, semen religionis, implanted in him; and second, every man's conscience is capable of distinguishing good from evil."⁴² Calvin clearly sees every man has a knowledge of God in his heart.⁴³

³⁸LW, II, 374.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Theology of Reformation," Biblical Review, II (October 1917), p. 500.

⁴¹SW, I, 14.

⁴²John Calvin, Calvin: Commentaries, translated by Joseph Haroutunian, in the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), XXIII, 132.

⁴³John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeill, in the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 61-62.

and this is true even in the case of "atheists."⁴⁴ "God's character is engraved in every man's heart."⁴⁵

God reveals Himself to man also through nature. "God sowed in men's minds," says Calvin, "that seed of religion, but also revealed Himself in the whole workmanship of the universe."⁴⁶ He continues, "God has not been obscured but has left so many hints of His glory in the handywork. Since God has engraved such plain marks everywhere, they can be known also by the touch of the blind."⁴⁷ "God fills all things."⁴⁸ "Thus He has revealed Himself in the design of the universe," Calvin adds, "allowing Himself to be recognized every day, so that men cannot open their eyes without seeing the traces of His presence."⁴⁹

Man is without excuse. Precisely because of these two reasons man ought to seek God. Calvin argues, "Therefore let us remember that all those who do not bend their energies to seeking God, are gravely abusing this life, and do not deserve to dwell on the earth."⁵⁰ He says, "There is certainly nothing more absurd than for men to be

⁴⁴Ibid., I. 48.

⁴⁵John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, translated by Ross MacKenzie, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), VIII, Rom. 1:19-20.

⁴⁶Calvin, Institutes, I, 51,52.

⁴⁷John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, translated by John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), VII, Acts 17:27.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Calvin, Institutes, I, 52.

⁵⁰Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, VII, Acts 17:27.

ignorant of their creator."⁵¹ The light which God has implanted in man is not an empty speculation merely flitting in the brain, but something deeply rooted in the heart.⁵² Men ought to perceive God since they possess some sense of a deity (sensus deitatis).⁵³

Calvin, however, does not believe in "natural theology" of any form. According to Calvin, the knowledge of God revealed in nature cannot be a sufficient basis for theology.⁵⁴ Any form of theology based upon nature consequently produces nothing but idols.⁵⁵ The purpose of the ordo naturae is to render man inexcusable.⁵⁶ Torrance is correct in saying, "Natural theology based on the reason of the Catholic is impossible for Calvin."⁵⁷ To those who might still believe that Calvin approved some sort of natural theology, according to Harold Knight, "it could be better for such people to content themselves with their own ideas and leave Calvin alone."⁵⁸

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Calvin, Institutes, I, 61,62.

⁵³Ibid., I, 43.

⁵⁴Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, VII, Acts 14:17.

⁵⁵Harold Knight, The Theology of Calvin (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 49.

⁵⁶Calvin, Institutes, I, 282.

⁵⁷Thomas F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), pp. 173-174.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 41.

What Calvin wishes to say along this line is that the ordo naturae is set and real but the ratio naturalis is corrupt through the fall.⁵⁹ "It would be fully real for us if Adam had not fallen but had remained in his primal perfection."⁶⁰ Now, man's reason is ill-effected, and it cannot lead man into the right path.⁶¹ In other words, man, with his senses and powers of understanding will never reach the true knowledge of God.⁶² To be sure, man's reason has done some good things in the areas of human life but not in the area of theology or dealing with the ultimate truth such as God and man's salvation. In this area man's reason has failed. Calvin affirms that here and there the philosophers give us various opinions about God very shrewdly and even cleverly; but they are always under a cloak of ignorance.⁶³ Man needs a supernatural means to know God. The purpose of the ordo naturae is to show man's need which is none other than the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ.⁶⁴

If men should follow "natural theology" as some have, the consequence would be very tragic. "If men were taught only by nature,"

⁵⁹Edward A. Dowey, The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 65-66.

⁶⁰Knight, p. 44.

⁶¹Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine, p. 172.

⁶²Knight, p. 44.

⁶³Calvin, Institutes, I, 277.

⁶⁴Knight, p. 50.

Calvin argues, "they would hold to nothing certain or solid or clear-cut, but would be so tied to confused principles as to worship an unknown God."⁶⁵ For it is completely impossible for man's ability to come near to God.⁶⁶ As a matter of fact, human rational faculties have been a factory of all the errors.⁶⁷ "Human reason, therefore, neither approaches nor strives toward, nor even takes a straight aim at this truth; namely, to understand who the true God is or what sort of God He wishes to be toward us."⁶⁸ Man's intellect cannot ascend the creation level.⁶⁹

The source of theology is twofold: the Word of God and the Spirit of God. According to Calvin, true knowledge of God is a grace (gift).⁷⁰ Man comes to know God because of this special grace and not by a common endowment of nature.⁷¹ Only for those in whom the Spirit works, does God also restore His image.⁷² The restoring of God's image in man and the illumination of man's mind, the Holy Spirit does through the

⁶⁵Calvin, Institutes, I, 66.

⁶⁶Calvin, Calvin: Commentaries, XXIII, 131.

⁶⁷Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, VII, Acts 17:16.

⁶⁸Calvin, Institutes, I, 278.

⁶⁹Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, VII, Acts 17:24.

⁷⁰Ibid., VII, Acts 17:27.

⁷¹Calvin, Institutes, I, 278.

⁷²Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, VII, Acts 17:19.

scripture. "God raises man up high by the guidance of His Word."⁷³
 Man knows and finds the profound truths of God only by faith in the
 Word.⁷⁴

Like Luther, Calvin sees that man knows God only through Jesus
 Christ. "We find God nowhere else but in the Mediator."⁷⁵ In order to
 know God man must know Christ. To know Christ, according to Calvin,
 means to know the cross.⁷⁶ This is the essence of the Scripture. This
 is then the very reason why Calvin cannot accept natural theology. To
 him theology must be based on the Scripture.

Summary

Both Luther and Calvin contend that man has a natural knowledge of
 God in his heart. God has implanted it so deeply and firmly that no one
 can root it out. Calvin called this, "Sensus Deitatis," or "Semen
Religionis." Both Luther and Calvin relate this with the Imago Dei in
 man. Man's knowledge of God is a priori and prima facie.

God has also revealed Himself in nature. According to Luther and
 Calvin, nature depicts bounteous marks of His presence, and man sees,
 feels, and lives in it. Certainly God fills all.

Man is without excuse. These two facts do show that man ought to
 seek and serve God accordingly. These two witnesses are so clear and

⁷³Ibid., VII, Acts 17:24.

⁷⁴Calvin, Institutes, I, 92.

⁷⁵Knight, p. 51.

⁷⁶Calvin, Institutes, I, 341.

self-evident that no theistic argument is needed. Man's knowledge of God, as a matter of fact, must not be debated. Man must admit it.

Theology cannot be established upon the natural revelation. As far as Luther and Calvin are concerned, theology based upon nature is impossible. Even though nature manifests God's wisdom and power it was never intended to be the basis for theology. The Ordo Naturae is objectively clear, Luther and Calvin contend, but it is not subjectively real. Man is blind. Man is deaf. It is totally impossible for a blind man to see the glory and wisdom of God in nature. So it is beyond the natural man to know or see the handiwork praising the Creator.

The necessity of the Scripture. Man needs, therefore, a revelation from God. God must show man Who and What He is. God has done this in the Scripture. The only way by which man may know God is the Scripture. Even though God is everywhere, He meets man only through the Word. Theology, according to Luther and Calvin, is no other than the revealed truth in the Scripture.

Both Luther and Calvin wish to further their arguments in order to defend the common position that they cannot accept any form of natural theology. They relate this with man's fall. Sin, both Luther and Calvin observe, has done a terrible thing to man. It corrupted man completely. Man's reason and will are decayed. Man is alienated from God. He is alienated from truth. Man seeks facts contrary to truth. Man seeks his own glory in sacrifice of truth. In other words, man, and everything pertaining to him, is evil. Man's reason, for instance, produces evil fruits if it should be applied to the matters determining truth. It misinterprets God's Word. It leads man to idols, for man does not want

truth. He goes after untruth. The natural man is under the control of the devil. As long as man remains in this state, there is nothing gained in sweet arguments and clear proofs concerning God. Man cannot and will not accept these. Human reason can do nothing in bringing a man to God. Human reason is too weak and too severely perverted to persuade a man to accept the truth. In other words, man's reason cannot know the truth. It cannot persuade man to accept the truth. Man, first of all, must be changed. Man's eyes must be opened. His ears must be unfolded. This no man's effort can achieve. It is a work of God. In fact, the Holy Spirit illumines the mind to see the path of the truth. The Holy Spirit works through the Word. In a true sense, apologetics is not a man's work. It is an operation of God through His Word. Another important point which both Luther and Calvin wish to make along this line is that nature cannot tell the true meaning of knowing God. To them, to know God means much more than an intellectual assent. Man ought to know God in a personal way. Man comes to a real and living union with God through Jesus Christ. God reveals Himself to man in Jesus Christ. This is exactly what the Scripture aims. The Scripture, both Luther and Calvin point out, focuses its attention on the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ. Christ, according to both Luther and Calvin, cannot be known outside of the cross. Not only historically but also theologically man ought to know the cross. Both Luther and Calvin hold only one theology, that is "theologia crucis."

Christians must remind the natural man that he is without excuse. This, both Luther and Calvin see, is the important task of Christian apologetics. Even after the fall, there still remains little "sparks"

in man. These "sparks" constantly cry within man that there is a God and that man ought to worship Him. Christian apologetics must strike hard and persistently because the natural man seeks willfully and stubbornly to suppress this inner cry. This inner cry must be the point of contact.

At this point, Luther and Calvin are most emphatic and are in agreement. They both teach that man's reason has very little use in demonstrating God and defending the truth. Nature cannot be the basis for theology. Their theological methodology and apologetics is no other than the authority of the Scripture. Man's reason and intellect are depraved. Only the Scripture speaks with certainty. Man as a lost sinner cannot find God by his own effort. God must find man. Like Augustine, Luther and Calvin teach that only the grace of God enables man to come to God. Here Luther and Calvin stand along side Augustine on the teaching of Paul. This is especially true on the matter of salvation in the Epistle to the Romans.

Man's reason is not beyond human control. Both Luther and Calvin point out the awful consequences of sin. Human nature which is corrupted by sin, controls man's will and reason. Man, since the Fall, misuses his rational capacity. Reason uses its ability to seek and promote man's selfish desire. It is antagonistic toward God. Man's reason is now very autonomous and allows no higher authority. Hence, it is spiritually blind. Man's reason has been an effective tool of Satan to promote untruth. It now lies under God's judgment.

Regenerate reason, according to Luther and Calvin, is a changed reason coming out from a changed heart. The Spirit of God changes man's nature through the Word. Regenerate reason is now under the influence

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Review and Analysis

Points of agreement

Both Luther and Calvin teach that man's reason must be seen according to the condition of the man. In other words, man's reason before the regeneration is quite different from the one after the regeneration. These two are different in character and function.

Man's reason, both Luther and Calvin contend, is a gift of God. Reason separates man from animals. Man's reason must be held highly. Man, as a matter of fact, is still "rational" even after the Fall. God's image has not been completely removed from man. It still alerts man constantly though weakly.

The Fall has corrupted man's reason beyond human control. Both Luther and Calvin point out the awful consequence of sin. Human nature which is corrupted by sin, controls man's will and reason. Man, since the Fall, misuses his rational capacity. Reason uses its ability to seek and promote man's selfish desire. It is antagonistic toward God. Man's reason is now very autonomous and allows no higher authority. Hence, it is spiritually blind. Man's reason has been an effective tool of Satan to promote untruths. It now lies under God's judgment.

Regenerate reason, according to Luther and Calvin, is a changed reason coming out from a changed heart. The Spirit of God changes man's nature through the Word. Regenerate reason is now under the influence

of the Spirit of God. In fact, it has been sanctioned by both the Word and the Spirit of God. It now seeks to be ruled both by the Word and the Spirit.

Science, both Luther and Calvin affirm, must be governed by man's reason. They see that man's reason is a genuine and authentic gift of God to be used and developed in this field. Man's reason, to be sure, is corrupt and is entitled to err. In fact, numberless scientists have erred. Thus both Luther and Calvin warn, not necessarily against science, but against the unregenerate men who seek to control science.

In social order both Luther and Calvin see man's reason as a sine qua non. Man's reason is not only able to rule the world of political and economic affairs but also is the foundation of human government. God intended that man's reason should rule in the social orders. But there lies a danger in the fact that man cannot act contrary to his nature. Man is entitled to err. History has verified this. Reason has crucified the Lord.

Interestingly enough, both Luther and Calvin see the world in its wholeness in two aspects; earthly and heavenly. Arts, sciences, economics, and politics belong to the earthly sphere. Man knows by nature how to distinguish between good and evil. A little "spark" still shines in man. Man ought to follow these "sparks" on this earthly sphere since reason has been implanted deeply by God. Man's reason and conscience must be obeyed. Men could have avoided many troubles if they had followed this ordo naturae. Man's reason, as long as it resides in a corrupt nature, cannot be trusted. It cannot speak with authority. God's Word must be the authority even in the earthly sphere.

Both Luther and Calvin argue that man's reason cannot be followed in the heavenly or spiritual sphere. They firmly reject any form of "natural theology." Theology is beyond and above the reach of man's reason. Outside of the Scripture, they contend, no theology can exist. Regenerate reason, on the other hand, can know God and is captive to the Word, for it holds that the Scripture is its only authority. It seeks a constant guidance from the Holy Spirit. This reason, both Luther and Calvin assert, is necessary in interpreting and proclaiming the truths. The important point, according to both Luther and Calvin, is that this reason is grounded in the Scripture and guided by the Holy Spirit. Unregenerate reason, therefore, finds no place either in theology or apologetics. Autonomous reason consistently depicts God who is so foreign to His true character.

Both Luther and Calvin insist that God can be known only through Jesus Christ. God meets man in Christ. It is the only way to know God. To know Christ, according to Luther and Calvin, means to know the Cross. Man cannot reach to this knowledge by his own efforts. This knowledge comes to man only by grace. It is the grace of God which enables a helpless sinner to come to know Him through the cross of Jesus Christ. Man's reason, to be sure, does not apprehend this.

Not only the contents of their theology but also the terminology of these two men is quite similar. Significantly, both Luther and Calvin applied the same methodology. While it is apparent to most scholars that both Luther and Calvin have benefited from Augustine, their doctrines really go back to St. Paul. They do not indicate any reliance on contemporary schools as the source of their doctrines. They have

come to that point through the Scripture. It is true that both Luther and Calvin held the Scripture as the beginning, the middle, and the end of their theologies. It is easily seen in the fact that they both not only appealed to the Scripture as the determining voice in theological debates, but also argued in very much the same way in making their points.

Difference--not in principle but application

In general, Luther is more negative toward man's reason than Calvin. Man's reason is evil in every sphere.¹ Man's reason in the field of theology is gravely harmful. Man's reason should not in any sense stand in judgment of it. Calvin, on the other hand, wishes to express the tremendous value of man's reason in the field of theology, but only as the regenerate reason serve the theological enterprise. This is true in what Calvin says of hermeneutics; namely that it should not disregard common sense. To him true hermeneutics should "make sense." The task of hermeneutics is not for "idiots."

Unfortunately, Francis Pieper has misunderstood Calvin here. "The Reformed theologians," Pieper argues, "frankly state that reason must have a voice in determining Christian doctrine."² Pieper furthers his argument by saying that the followers of Calvin "set aside the Scripture

¹Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), II, 123.

²Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 25.

principle and operate instead with rationalistic axioms."³ Pieper concludes that Reformed theology forsakes the Scripture principle.⁴

It is probably true that some "Calvinists" have set aside the Scripture principle. But as far as Calvin is concerned, he has never "operated with rationalistic axioms." Pieper seemingly has not carefully observed the fact that regenerate reason, according to Calvin, is grounded in the Scripture and guided by the Holy Spirit. This is completely different from humanistic or scholastic notion of ratio. They hold man's pure reason apart from the influences of the Scripture and the Spirit.

Needless to say, neither Luther nor Calvin hold man's reason as a source of truth. To them, Scripture is the only source of theology. Scripture is the only standard of truth for both Luther and Calvin. They, as has been pointed out, believed in the great value of the regenerate reason in interpreting and proclaiming the Gospel revealed in the Scripture. If they have differed in any point, it was a matter of application rather than principle.

Man's reason is inseparably connected with his will

Both Luther and Calvin connect man's reason with man's will. Luther explains this more in detail. He sees that man's will is totally enslaved by Satan. Man, therefore, is not free. Man now must will according to his own nature which is evil. Man can only will evil.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

Human reason has to act accordingly. It can seek and act only contrary to good. Man's reason cannot separate from man's will. Man's reason, Luther points out, is spiritually dead. It cannot see truth. It cannot find God. If man is to know truth, the initiative must be in God. Man can do nothing to save himself. This is exactly what God has done. He reveals Himself to man. He opens the eyes of man. God generates faith in man through the Word. God does everything for man. Salvation is the work of God, but as far as man's part is concerned it is all grace.

Here Luther and Calvin do not differ from Augustine.⁵ It was Augustine who clearly saw the total corruption of man through the Fall. Man's corrupted will controls man's reason. Only the faith in the "Eternal Logos" cures man's fallen reason. It is not the "wisdom of the world" but the "foolishness of the preaching" that leads man to salvation. Credo ut intelligam. Faith apprehends the gracious offer from God. It is not man's effort but God's grace that determines everything.

Theologies of Luther and Calvin on man's ratio are strictly Pauline.

So called, "theistic proofs" based on man's logic, according to Luther and Calvin, do not possess much value in Christian apologetics. First, it has been pointed out, both Luther and Calvin contend that man by nature knows that there is a God even though he persistently seeks

⁵Robert E. Cushman, "Faith and Reason," A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine, edited by Roy W. Battenhouse (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 288-306.

to deny this truth. Second, man's intellect which has been blinded by sin can not and will not apprehend truth. Man's autonomous reason cannot accept truth which does not meet his frame of thought.

Here both Luther and Calvin stand with Paul of Tarsus. Paul reminded the Romans that even the pagans were very much aware of the existence of God. God has left innumerable marks both in man and nature that there is a wise and just God, "So that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20b). Paul's famous sermon on Mars Hill clearly shows that men ought to know God and worship Him accordingly. Paul argues, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:27,28a). Paul sets forth another important reason why the Gospel does not communicate through the channel of the unregenerate mind. As far as he is concerned, spiritual things must be understood by the Spirit. Unregenerate reason does not and cannot apprehend the things of the Spirit. These things must be taught by the Holy Spirit. "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because he is spiritually judged" (I Cor. 2:14).

Luther and Calvin did exactly what Paul had done to denounce man's ability to establish the truth and exalt the Spirit of God to teach and guide a man into the truth.

As far as the use of human reason in social structure is concerned, both Luther and Calvin do agree with Paul that man's reason and conscience are given by God to be applied in the worldly governments.

Paul in his letter to the Romans points out that God's law (referring to the ordo naturae) has been implanted in every man's heart. We quote:

For when the gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another (2:14,15).

Theologies of Luther and Calvin are Christological and revelatory

Both Luther and Calvin have emphasized over and over again that no man can know God in a correct sense outside of Jesus Christ. The Son, they contend, reveals the Father to whomsoever He wishes. Man's reason and efforts cannot obtain a true knowledge of God. The theology according to Luther and Calvin has to be Christological and revelatory.

This teaching, to be sure, coincides with what our Lord had uttered:

I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him (Matt. 11:25-27).

Possible influence of Luther on Calvin

Finally, it would be safe to say that many evidences such as contents, styles, and materials seem to indicate that Calvin has benefited from Luther to a great extent on this subject, that is, man's reason.⁶

⁶See Appendix; Cf. James MacKinnon, Calvin and the Reformation (London: Logmans, Green and Co., 1936), p. 216.

Final Remarks

The Protestant Reformation, according to a noted theologian, was precisely "the substitution of one set of theological doctrines for another."⁷ Both Luther and Calvin wished to present four very vital truths to the world.

(1) The authority of the Scripture. It is only the Scripture, according to Luther and Calvin, which speaks with authority on doctrine and life. Over against the voices of man, the Scripture is the voice of God. It is, hence, the voice of truth. It is the voice of determination. All men's teachings and doctrines must be tested by it. Even though Luther and Calvin showed some difference in application, they firmly held the sola scriptura principle as the most important doctrine of Christian faith.

By and by, however, the Protestant theologies, at least promoted by some, have bluntly rejected the sola scriptura principle. They say that the Scripture is not the authority. It is man's rational analysis that determines truth.⁸ According to them, individual experience must be the criterion of all truths. Truth, then, is merely a personal matter. There is no objective truth. Each person must manufacture his own truth which must satisfy his own autonomous mind. No wonder that they have rejected all carnal doctrines of the church.

⁷Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Theology of Reformation," Biblical Review, II (October 1917), p. 492.

⁸Bernard Ramm, The Pattern of Authority (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 74-79.

The Reformers were very zealous to see that the Scripture was upheld above man's reason and intellect. Man's autonomous reason must be reduced. Unregenerate reason, or the unbelieving mind, has no room in theology. Only the believing reason which firmly accepts God's Word as the infallible authority and seeks to apply it rightfully through the leading of the Holy Spirit must be admitted in theology.

(2) Only the grace of God establishes man's salvation. It is the grace of God that originates and perfects man's faith. Both Luther and Calvin saw the total helplessness of man in saving himself. Man's will is enslaved by Satan. Man cannot will contrary to Satan's mind. Man is blinded in respect to truth. He could not see even himself correctly. Man was not only powerless and hopeless but also dead and corrupt by sin. Man could not find God by his own efforts. They were totally fruitless. God had to deliver man if man should be saved. God revealed Himself to man in His Son. God delivered man through Jesus Christ. Both Luther and Calvin held the sola gratia principle. It is God's infinite grace sending His only Son to pay man's debts on the cross that actually saves man from eternal death.

By and by this spirit of the Reformation theology lost its original savor. Instead of the sola gratia principle, it is man's goodness that "saves" man. The goodness of man is found in every man everywhere. The task of theology, then they would say, is to promote this goodness of man.

The Protestant theology must continue to deny man's abilities. No one should be allowed to steal the credit which is due only to the

cross of Christ. "It is the grace of God that brings man to salvation" (Titus 2:11).

(3) Faith is the only condition of salvation. Salvation, both Luther and Calvin insisted, excludes man's merits. God gives eternal life not to those who labor but to those who trust only in His Son. Faith receives the gracious gift from God in Jesus Christ. The solafidi principle rejects man's hypocritical religious activities. Man's self-righteousness must be overthrown. The righteousness of God must reveal the cross.

(4) The glory of God is the ultimate goal of man's salvation. The solideo gloria principle rejects any praise of man in his salvation. God alone is worthy of praise. God has done everything in saving man. All that man did was to reject Him. Man's power and reason must be exposed as nothing. Luther and Calvin were very much concerned over this matter. They insisted that man's reason ought to be totally condemned since the Fall, even in its understanding of the highest and the noblest good. On this essential point there is no disagreement between Lutheranism and Calvinism.⁹

These four vital teachings of Luther and Calvin, must be emphasized over and over again. Especially today there is an urgent need to revive the spirit of the Protestant Reformation. "Do we not stand in urgent need of such teaching as Luther here (Bondage of the Will) gives us--

⁹Etiene Gilson, Christianity and Philosophy, translated by Ralph MacDonald. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), p. 48.

teaching which humbles man, strengthens faith, and glorifies God--and is not the contemporary church weak for lack of it?"¹⁰

Therefore, in the final analysis, man's unregenerate and autonomous reason and intellect must be decreased in the Christian faith. The "foolishness of preaching" must prevail even today. "The preaching of the cross" which might sound "foolish" to the rational minds, is still "the power of God unto salvation."

Only the regenerate reason, which holds the Scripture as the only authoritative Word of God, submits itself to the Holy Spirit for guidance, cleaves to the Christ of the cross for salvation, and seeks God's grace to resist daily temptation, must be accepted in Christian faith.

There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12). Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil (Proverbs 3:6-7a).

¹⁰Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, translated and edited by James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston. (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957), p. 60.

APPENDIX

LUTHER AND CALVIN ON MAN'S ENSLAVED WILL

Luther

Man's will decides what he is. Man's will, according to Luther is the fountain of life. Man's will, Luther compares to the root of a tree.¹ Man's thoughts and actions are sprung out of his will.²

Man's will is not free. Sadly enough, Luther grieves, this important will is not free. "Man may imagine that his will is free and his reason independent, but in reality he is a captive and slave of Satan."³ As a matter of fact, Luther argues, man's will is a permanent prisoner and bondsman.⁴ No human being under heaven has a "free will."⁵ Man cannot choose or act contrary to his inclination or natural senses.⁶

¹Martin Luther, Select Works of Martin Luther, translated and edited by Henry Cole (London: Published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1826), III, 27. Hereafter this reference will be cited as SW.

²Ibid., III, 24.

³Lennart B. Pinomaa, Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology, translated by Walter J. Kukkonen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 33.

⁴Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, translated and edited by James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957), p. 104.

⁵SW, III, 21.

⁶Ibid., IV, 162.

Luther points out very emphatically, "Where now then is free-will! It is nothing but the depravity of nature."⁷

Man's will is nothing but sinful. It is not man's hand, feet, or eye, but the will itself devises all iniquity. Luther contends that everything that pertains to man is sinful.⁸ This will stands against God's will.⁹ It seeks to harden its heart against truth.¹⁰ "Therefore," Luther asserts, "all those praises of the free will are mere nonsense."¹¹ Look at what man's free will could establish! It willed to loose Barabbas instead of Christ.¹²

Man cannot will his own salvation. In fact, according to Luther, man is totally unable to will good.¹³ Man's will must be crucified in order that he might be saved.¹⁴ The important truth lies on this fact that man is not saved because he wills but because God shows grace.¹⁵ Man must be made and not that he must make.¹⁶ It is the passive voice which expresses the kernel of the Gospel.

⁷Ibid., IV, 71.

⁸Luther, Bondage of the Will, pp. 250, 263.

⁹SW, III, 21.

¹⁰Ibid., IV, 381.

¹¹Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-), XXVI, 323.

¹²SW, II, 409.

¹³Luther, Bondage of the Will, p. 199.

¹⁴SW, III, 22.

¹⁵Ibid., IV, 90.

¹⁶Ibid., IV, 392.

Luther sees another kind of will. "But a free will is that which has no will of its own," Luther explains, "but commits itself wholly to the divine will; by which also, it remains free, being fixed and bound to nothing in particular of itself."¹⁷ This is the regenerated will. This regenerated will "beholds the law of the Lord, and sees it to prohibit and command those same things which he, being now inflamed by the Spirit, desires and loves."¹⁸ It loves to do good. It wills after God's will. Luther further says:

Hence it is not only a love of the law but that loving delight in the law, which no property nor adversity, nor the world, nor the prince of it, can either take away or destroy; for it victoriously bursts its way through poverty, evil report, the cross, death, and hell, and, in the midst of adversities, shines the brightest. And this will springs from faith in God through Jesus Christ.¹⁹

This is a free, spontaneous and happy will.²⁰

Calvin

Man's will is not free. Calvin relies on Augustine's doctrine on man's will. Calvin argues, "We maintain with Augustine, that man, by making a bad use of free will, lost both himself and it (Lib. iii, Ad Bonifac). Again that no will is free which is subject to lusts which

¹⁷Ibid., II, 406.

¹⁸Ibid., IV, 417.

¹⁹Ibid., III, 21, 22.

²⁰Ibid.

conquer and enchain it. Likewise, with Ambrose (De Fuga Seculi), that neither our heart nor our thoughts are in our own power."²¹

Man wills nothing but sinful. Again Calvin relies on Augustine, "Nothing is ours but sin."²² For the whole man since the Fall lies under the power of sin.²³ Man, Calvin contends, is nothing but concupiscence.²⁴ Because man's heart is totally imbued with the poison of sin, Calvin asserts, he can do nothing but sin.²⁵ It strongly hates the whole righteousness of God and fervently loves all kinds of evil.²⁶ Man, therefore, has no power to choose anything good. "He does not have the free power to choose between good and evil--which is called free will."²⁷

Man's will, in fact, is captivated by Satan. Because man's will is chained by Satan he must follow wherever the master leads. "It remains rather that the will, captivated by Satan's wiles, of necessity

²¹John Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, translated by Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1860), I, 70.

²²John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeil, 2 vols. in the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 289.

²³Ibid., I, 288.

²⁴Ibid., I, 252.

²⁵John Calvin, Instruction in Faith, translated and edited by Paul T. Fuhrmann (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1949), p. 22.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

obediently submits to all its leading."²⁸ Man as a slave of sin²⁹ possesses no ability to act aright.³⁰ Man sins by necessity, but without compulsion.³¹ "Because of the bondage of sin," says Calvin, "by which the will is held bound, it cannot move toward good."³² Calvin adds, "For, man sins with the consent of every prompt and inclined will."³³

This enslaved will hardens itself. There nothing but darkness and blindness remains. Until the day of judgment it will persistently carry out Satan's will as a minister of his wrath.³⁴

Only the Son of God can free man's will. Men will be slaves until the Son makes them free.³⁵ Calvin restates, "We can do nothing but sin until He Himself creates in us a new will."³⁶ "For it always follows that nothing good can arise out of our will until it has been reformed; and after its reformation, in so far as it is good, it is so from God,

²⁸Calvin, Institutes, I, 310.

²⁹Calvin, Instruction in Faith, p. 22.

³⁰Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, I, 145.

³¹Calvin, Institutes, I, 295.

³²Ibid..

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., I, 312.

³⁵Calvin, Tracts Relating to the Reformation, III, 148.

³⁶Calvin, Institutes, I, 270.

not from ourselves."³⁷ This is the working of the Holy Spirit. "Now where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."³⁸ It certainly is an act of God's grace.³⁹

³⁷Ibid., I. 300.

³⁸Ibid., I, 265.

³⁹Ibid.

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