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Reason or Revelation?

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him a cordial welcome and assure him of our good wishes and prayers.

Our former dean, Dr. John H. C. Fritz, has now relinquished his office, which he filled in so efficient and faithful a manner for the past twenty years, and will devote all his time to his lecture work in the very important branch of Homiletics, the art of preaching. Once more we thank him for his most excellent service to our institution for so many years and bespeak for him God's blessing in his field of labor, which is already quite familiar to him.

Our Professor Frederick E. Mayer has rounded out twenty-five years in the service of our Church, first as pastor of churches in Central Illinois, then as instructor in our sister institution at Springfield, and for the last three years as professor of theology in our Seminary. We all rejoice that the Lord has blessed him so richly in his work, and we implore the Head of the Church that He will continue to bless him, and we say with David: "Thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever."

L. FUERBRINGER

Reason or Revelation?

(Concluded)

Satan's paramour is the mistress of a thousand wiles. We cannot conclude this study of the evils of rationalism without studying the more subtle methods by which Satan would beguile us and lead us away from the truth of Christ and the certainty of His Word. If he cannot get us to falsify the Word, he will aim to keep us from applying the Word, from exercising our faith, from putting our sole reliance on the teaching of Scripture and the promise of the Gospel.

One of the wiles which Satan's paramour employs to keep us away from the Word and to install herself as the mistress of theology is to exhibit herself as the defender of the truth of the Christian religion. Marshaling a great array of rational proofs for it and overstressing their value, she aims to win men for the idea that reason is superior to revelation. We are speaking of Christian apologetics and its abuse at the hands of Satan's paramour. Apologetics is a legitimate branch of Christian theology.¹⁾ It

1) We are not speaking of the illegitimate apologetics employed by the English deists, the old rationalists, and now by the Modernists for the purpose of demonstrating "the reasonableness of Christianity." We do not agree with Georgia Harkness's judgment "It merits high respect." (*The Faith by which the Church Lives*, p. 58.) Such apologetics serves no good purpose. Making Christianity "reasonable" is divesting it of its essential teachings. The doctrine of Christ is "reasonable" only if Christ is divested of His deity. "Resurrection" becomes "reasonable" only when it is denied.

serves a good purpose in placing before the unbeliever the "evidences of Christianity," the philosophical arguments for the existence of God, the rational proofs for the divine origin and nature of Holy Scripture (its style, its contents, the fulfilment of its prophecies, its blessed effect on individuals and nations, etc.), for immortality and an eternal life, etc. Make him listen to these arguments of reason and philosophy, and "reasonable reason will be forced to conclude that Holy Scripture is of divine origin and to confess that it is more reasonable to admit this than to deny it" (F. Pieper, *Chr. Dogmatik*, I:375). And if he will not admit it, his unbelief is unmasked as being not only unreasonable but also dishonest. It is dishonest for a man to pretend that intellectual difficulties stand in the way of his acceptance of the teachings of Christianity when all that stands in the way is his hatred of these teachings. And that is always the case. See John 3:20 and 5:40. The pride of the unbeliever needs to be put down. And the flesh of the Christian, which makes common cause with the scoffing unbeliever, needs the same treatment. (See Pieper, *l. cit.*, p. 376.) Apologetics serves a good purpose.

But do not attach too much importance to it. Satan's paramour would have us do that, but here, as always, she makes fools of her dupes. Those who imagine that they can win men for Christianity through rational argumentation and set out to establish the truth of any Christian teaching by proof from reason and philosophy, are engaged in futile work. These proofs cannot produce the true faith, *fides divina*. At best they can produce a *fides humana*.

At best—commonly they do not produce even this. Philosophical dissertations seem to be unable to produce firm, unwavering convictions. When men engage in disputations on the basis of reason, the disputations usually are endless. Reason has the habit of siding with both parties to an argument. Dr. Walther makes this strong statement: "Nur Gottes Wort gibt Gewissheit. Was aus der Vernunft kommt, kann auch mit der Vernunft bestritten werden." (*Proceedings, Syn. Conference*, 1884, p. 49.) When God speaks, the matter is settled. But when men agree to argue on the basis of reason, the opponent will usually have an answer to what the proponent offers as an invincible argument. No two schools of philosophy will agree. Often the philosopher will not agree with himself. Kant was able to prove and to disprove the same thing, and he is the prince of philosophers. If you think that Walther's statement "What reason asserts may also be denied by reason" is too strong, read what Francis Bowen writes in *Modern Philosophy*, p. 233 f.: "We find ourselves involved in what Kant calls the Antinomy of Pure Reason, or Conflict of Transcendental Ideas,

whereby the doctrine which we seek to establish, denominated the thesis, and its opposite, or contradictory, doctrine, denominated the antithesis, are both found to rest on demonstrative, or incontrovertible, arguments, leaving us utterly at a loss which to choose between them. Thus, we seek to prove, first, the thesis, namely, that the world had a beginning in time and is also limited in regard to space; and we succeed in doing so to our entire satisfaction. But then we are dismayed to find that the antithesis, or contradictory doctrine, that the world had no beginning in time and has no limits in space but is infinite in regard both to time and space, may also be perfectly made out by equally satisfactory arguments. . . . I will give a specimen of this fencing with contradictory arguments. The thesis that the world had a beginning in time is thus proved. . . . We prove the antithesis thus," etc. It is not worth while to write out the arguments. You may not agree with some of the argumentation. But you have seen that the philosophers agree with Walther's statement. Emil Brunner also agrees with it. "Who will prove to be right in the end, the realist or the idealist, the pantheist or deist or theist, I do not know. Nobody does know" (reason being the guide), "and I have good grounds for believing that their quarrels will remain unsettled till doomsday. For, of course, they cannot be settled. It seems to me to be characteristic of the human situation that with an equal stringency of logic you can defend one standpoint as well as the other. In any period when metaphysics is alive, it is alive in every one of its different types." (*The Word and the World*, p. 15.)

Philosophical arguments and proofs of reason do not accomplish very much in the way of producing firm convictions. What about the proofs of God's existence? "The ontological proof argues from the existence of the idea of God in man to the actuality of His existence." But if a man is not willing to believe in the existence of God, he will have a counter-argument ready. "Was aus der Vernunft kommt, kann auch mit der Vernunft bestritten werden." Joseph Stump lists and presents those arguments and adds: "None of these arguments is actually demonstrative and coercive. One who denies that there is a God cannot by means of these arguments be compelled to acknowledge God's existence." (*The Christian Faith*, p. 34.)²⁾ L. Boettner tells us the same, partly in

2) Discussing these arguments, Dr. Pieper said: "Man muss solche Beweise fuer das Dasein Gottes nicht ueberschaetzen. Wir gruenden innerhalb der Kirche unsern Glauben an Gott nicht, und zwar auch nicht zum Teil, auf diese Beweise. Wir gebrauchen diese Beweise nur im apologetischen Interesse: wenn die unvernuenftige Vernunft, sei es bei uns, sei es bei andern, sich geltend macht." (From a student's notebook.) We use them only to show that "it is more reasonable to admit than to deny" the existence of God.

the same words: "The attempt to prove the divine origin of the Bible from these external criteria is similar to that of proving the existence of God from the external world. We may cite the ontological, the teleological, the cosmological, and the moral arguments, and the evidence seems convincing enough to the believer. Yet none of these arguments are demonstrative and coercive, and they usually leave the skeptics unconvinced. When we consent to stake the authority of Scripture on external arguments, we are consenting to fight the battle on the field of our opponents' choosing, and we then simply have to make the best of a vulnerable position." (*The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 83.) Georgia Harkness, professor of philosophy and a liberal theologian (now professor of Applied Theology), should be in a position to speak authoritatively on this matter. She tried out the philosophical approach and now tells us: "I do not propose to set forth a list of arguments for the existence of God. In earlier days I was prone to do this, and they may have some usefulness." "Students in college have often told me that they were intellectually convinced of the existence of God on philosophical grounds, but that the whole idea left them unmoved." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 134, 71.)

Are the philosophical arguments for the immortality of the soul demonstrative and coercive? Hase, himself a rationalist, knew all about them; the rationalists cultivated them assiduously. He says: "Because each one of these proofs may be opposed by counter-arguments, the belief in an eternal life must be based on Christ and not on philosophical demonstrations and dubious stories. You will, therefore, find a more vigorous faith in the hut of the poor peasant than in the lecture-halls of great philosophers." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, III: 619.) Cicero lets Atticus study Plato's proofs, turn away disappointed, and say: "Nescio, quomodo, dum lego, adsentior; cum posui librum et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum coepi cogitare, adsensio omnis illa elabitur." (*Tusc. Disp.*, Lib. I.) And that represents a universal experience (Cicero then takes up the proof, and his arguments convince as little as those of Plato). Left to its own devices, reason seldom gets beyond doubt.

You do not get very far with arguments of reason. Karl Scheele, a Lutheran theologian, gives us the reason for this. "All assurance of the truth of Christianity which is based on scientific demonstration is *human work*, which can be overthrown in a moment by *other human work*. The only proof is the God-given faith." (*Die trunkene Wissenschaft*, p. 241.) And the philosopher J. H. v. Kirchmann speaks in a similar strain: "Die Fundamente, auf denen die Religionen ruhen, sind durchaus andere als die, auf welche die wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis sich stuetzt; deshalb ist es unvermeidlich, dass jede Hilfe, welche von dieser Seite der Religion

geboten wird, nur den Glauben erschuettern muss und dass, umgekehrt, jeder Angriff von seiten der Wissenschaft gegen den Inhalt der Religion an dem Gemuete des Frommen so unschaedlich abprallt wie die Hiebe mit scharfen Schwertern gegen das Spiegelbild an der Wand. Auf diesem Wege kann der Friede zwischen Religion und Philosophie nicht erreicht werden, so sehr dies auch von den Kirchenvaetern bis auf Hegel versucht worden ist." (*Katechismus der Philosophie*, p. 227.)

Rational arguments for the truth of Christianity do not, usually, produce firm, unwavering convictions. And those that do produce convictions—there are such arguments—produce at best only a human conviction, *fides humana*. But what is needed is the *fides divina*, an absolute assurance of the truth of the Christian religion that defies all the objections of philosophy and all the sneers of Satan, an assurance, moreover, that is satisfied, fully, absolutely, satisfied, with the bare word of Scripture. And how does God produce this *fides divina*? Through nothing else than the bare word of Scripture. The promise of the Gospel produces saving faith, and the faith produced by the Word is divinely convinced that the Word, every word of Scripture, is the divine truth. So if you want to gain men's assent, assent based on real conviction, to the teachings of Christianity, preach the word of Scripture to them. Preach it, proclaim it,—and your work is done. The declarations and assertions of Scripture need not be bolstered up by arguments drawn from reason. The *fides divina* is not produced, *neither is it supported*, by philosophical and scientific demonstrations. "Wir gruenden unsern Glauben nicht, und zwar auch nicht zum Teil, auf diese Beweise." We want to produce *divine* assurance in our hearers and therefore adopt St. Paul's method: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," 1 Cor. 2:4. Apologetics has a legitimate function to perform, but never forget: "The best apology of the Christian religion is its *proclamation*." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, I:123: "In diesem Sinne ist das Axiom gemeint 'Die beste Apologie der christlichen Religion ist ihre *Verkuendigung*.'") In case you still think that these external proofs are of some value, at least for *confirming* the Christian faith, and imagine that the axiom quoted by Pieper is the refuge of helpless orthodoxy, you should hear how theologians of the liberal school elaborate the axiom. Edwin Lewis: "The voice of the Church is prophetic. Its task is to announce, not to debate; to take its stand on the revealed will and Word of God and declare to the world what that will and Word are." "Your business as a preacher is not to prove Christian truth by much elaborate ratiocination, but to allow it through full testimony to demonstrate

the reality of its saving power." (*The Faith We Declare*, pp. 45, 227.) H. Kraemer: "To demand a rational argument for faith is to make reason, that is, man, the standard of reference for faith and ends in a vicious circle. Ultimate convictions never rest on a universally lucid and rational argument, in any philosophy and in any religion, and they never will." (*The Chr. Message*, etc., p. 107.) E. S. Jones: "Afraid that the scientist will explain away things that have become precious to us, we clasp our faith to our bosom to protect it, forgetting that *our faith does not need protection*,—it *needs proclamation*. If it is real, it is its own protection." "Jesus used no syllogisms. He announced self-verifying truths. He did not argue them but left them to argue themselves—as light appeals to the eye, . . . as love goes straight to the heart." (*The Christ on Every Road*, pp. 30, 63.) What kind of apologetics did Jesus use in dealing with the doubter? Luther: "John 3:9. *How can these things be?* Reason would like to comprehend, does not want to believe. We cannot win the unbeliever by argument, and the good cause of faith need not be upheld by demonstration. Christ here calls Nicodemus to faith and does not answer his question: 'How can these things be?'" (XI:1866.)³⁾

To sum up: Christian apologetics is a good thing; but when men busy themselves with the "evidences of Christianity" with the idea that they are somehow confirming the *fides divina* thereby, giving the Christian faith a needed support and winning men for the truth, they are committing a great folly. "Nur Gottes Wort gibt Gewissheit." And: "The entire apologetic activity available to us is powerless to change the human heart and win it for the Gospel of Christ." (Pieper, *op. cit.*, I:72.)

They are engaged in a futile, foolish business and, more, in an evil and harmful business. It is a subtle form of rationalism. When H. Kramer says: "To demand a rational argument for faith is to make reason, that is, man, the standard of reference for faith," he

3) We must find room here for two more fine testimonies. Marcus Dodds: "Plato philosophizes, and a few souls seem for a moment to see things more clearly; Peter preaches, and three thousand souls spring to life." (Quoted in W. H. Johnson, *Who Is This King of Glory?* p. 119.) Ph. Mauro: "I had no notion at all that intellectual difficulties and questionings could be removed in any way except by being answered, one by one, to the intellectual satisfaction of the person in whose mind they existed, but my doubts and difficulties were not met in that way. They were simply removed when I believed in the Crucified One and accepted Him as the Christ of God and as my personal Savior. The explanation of this is that the seat of *unbelief is not in the head but in the heart*, Rom. 10:9. It is the *will* that is wrong; and the bristling array of doubts and difficulties which spring up in the mind are mere disguises and pretexts supplied by the enemy of souls, behind which the unbelieving heart tries to shelter itself and to justify its unbelief. This is the explanation of those words of our Lord, who knew what was in man, 'Ye will not come unto Me,' John 5:40." (*The Fundamentals*, p. 112.)

is speaking of gross rationalism and the illegitimate apologetics of the gross liberals. But his words apply also, in a degree, to those who imagine that rational arguments will *help to win* men for any Christian teaching. They are asking reason to support faith. We heard L. Boettner say: "When we consent to stake the authority of Scripture on external arguments we are consenting to fight the battle on the field of our opponent's choosing." He goes on to say: "These arguments in themselves are of such a nature as to invite doubt in the unregenerate mind and they can never permanently settle the question." And now: "When we consent to fight the battle on these grounds, we are making a concession to rationalism." We are not, indeed, consenting to stake the authority of Scripture on external arguments when we use them for the purpose of showing up the unreasonableness of unbelief. But take care! If you give the impression that the truth of Scripture depends in the least degree on the validity of your rational arguments, you are making a concession to rationalism. We will have to agree with the judgment of a writer in the *Journal of the Am. Luth. Conference*, May, 1939, p. 16: "So long as you imagine that you can formulate irrefutable proofs by means of reason, you are a rationalist, whether your brain-child is dressed in the garb of orthodoxy or of Modernism."

Take care, lest you taint your apologetic work, legitimate in itself and useful, with the pride of reason and thus illegitimize it. Beware of the wiles of Satan's paramour! She would stir up our vanity and self-esteem by persuading us that we can add to the power of the Word by drawing on the resources of reason, our own resources. Our proud flesh does not like to have its noblest faculty, reason, so totally ignored. It is not willing to play the role of a pupil who simply repeats the words of the master. What, shall we, in dealing with the philosopher and with the scoffer, take the position that the one and only convincing argument is this: Scripture says so? Why, he would laugh us to scorn.⁴⁾ — By all means employ Christian apologetics; employ it for the purpose of stop-

4) Follow Luther's advice in this matter: "They say the Scriptures are much too feeble to overthrow heretics; that must be done with reasons from our brain; in that way you must prove that faith is right. Never! For our faith exceeds all reason, and it alone is God's power. Therefore, when people will not believe, keep silent; for you are under no obligation to compel them to regard the Scriptures as God's Book or Word. It is sufficient if you have taken your stand on the Scriptures. . . . When you meet with people who are so utterly blinded and hardened as to deny that this is God's Word or cast doubt upon it, just keep still; do not say a word to them and let them go. Only say this to them: I will offer you proof enough from Scripture; if you will believe it, well and good; if you will not believe it, I shall not offer you anything else. But you say: If I act thus, God's Word will make a poor showing. I say: Leave that to God!" (IX:1071 f.)

ping the mouth of the braggart. But take heed lest you yourself fall prey to the pride of reason.

And now consider the harm of attaching too much importance to apologetics. Satan's ulterior purpose in stirring up our prideful use of apologetics is to keep us away from Scripture. He would have us lay aside our chief, our only weapon of spiritual warfare or use it as little as possible. Summarizing Dr. Walther's attitude towards science as set forth in the foreword of *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 21, Dr. Pieper writes: "Science serves theology only as hand-maid; if she aspires to be more, away with her. To begin with, Scriptural theology suffers when one thinks he must help out the word of Scripture with scientific proofs." (*Op. cit.*, I:210.) It will be sufficient for our present purpose to point out, first, that such an attitude militates against the certainty and sufficiency of Scripture. Dr. Walther puts it this way: "We hate this sort of apologetics with all our heart, for it presupposes that there is something more certain than God's Word." (*Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 21, Foreword, p. 41.) And, secondly, the more time we devote to scientific demonstration, the less time we have for Gospel-proclamation. There must be time given to apologetics, but give it sparingly! The one thing that counts is Scripture. And Satan would have us use Scripture sparingly. And any neglect of Scripture results in harm to theology and the good cause of faith.⁵⁾

5) Speaking of Christian apologetics, where do those belong who defend the inerrancy of Scripture not on the basis of the claim of Scripture to that effect but on the basis of scientific investigation? Christian apologetics, as we have seen, does not presume to establish the truth of the Christian teachings but, accepting the truth on the basis of Scripture, shows the unreasonableness of the objections of reason. The illegitimate apologetics of the rationalists consists in making the "Christian" teachings palatable to reason and calls for the acceptance of these "Christian" teachings because of their reasonableness. Now, why do we teach that Scripture does not, and cannot, contain any error? Because Scripture says so. There are theologians, however, who, while teaching the inerrancy of Scripture, will not proclaim its inerrability. They will not admit *a priori* that all of Scripture is infallible. Whether the historical, scientific, and similar statements of Scripture are true needs to be investigated and established by the painstaking research of the theologian. They find, usually, that Scripture is right, and they are ready to proclaim the inerrancy of Scripture—because they have scientific proof for that. We shall have to say that such a procedure is not legitimate apologetics but verges closely on the rationalistic kind of apologetics. We, too, make it our business to apply the most painstaking historical research when any historical statement of Scripture is questioned. We do it for the purpose named above, never with the idea that Scripture and any statement of Scripture needs scientific confirmation. What do you think of the following statements? The article "The Bible as the Word of God," published in the *Journal of the Am. Luth. Conference*, Dec., 1938, states: "I believe that it will be possible (partly now, ever increasingly, some day perhaps fully) to prove that the historical record in which God's revelation in the narrower sense is embedded is, as we now have it, substantially true; that it is found true in its contacts with secular history;

This does not exhaust the armory of the old evil Foe. He is the master of a thousand "wiles" (Eph. 6:11 — "expert methods"). He would keep us away from the Word by the more indirect method just examined. But he also employs more direct methods, methods fraught with infinitely greater peril. He employs the blandishments and plausibilities of carnal reasoning to keep faith from grasping the Word, to keep us from believing. In the opening paragraph of this study we said: "In our spiritual struggles we are inclined to heed the insidious logic of reason more than the sure Word of Scripture, the certain promise of the Gospel." (P. 322.) Let us study four of these Satanic wiles in order to realize the mortal danger of subtle rationalism.

There is the matter of Christian prayer. We have God's gracious promise that He will hear our prayer for Jesus' sake. He assures us that He rules the world in our interest. He pledges Himself to do the impossible in order to help us. But Satan's

that it is found true in the light of archeological discoveries; . . . that for every seeming discrepancy there is a possible solution, a solution even probable in most instances, which squares fully with the high claims made by Scripture for its own trustworthiness. . . ." That is substantially correct. (We object only to such phrases as "substantially true.") But what of this? "There are two parts to the Bible — the human framework, or the body, and the divine soul, which is the revelation of God and of His will and Word in Christ. Let us look at these two parts one at a time. *How can we know that the human framework of the Bible is true — the history, the geography, the biography, the science . . . ?* We not only may but we must study these things critically, just as we would similar details in any other ancient document, to see if the Bible statements are supported or contradicted by known facts from other sources. . . . Oh, what freedom came into my own soul twelve years ago when God drove me through doubt to the more thorough study that left me with this settled conviction that 'the Word they still shall let remain!' . . . It is my growing conviction that it is possible to arrive at a reasonable faith in the substantial truthfulness of the human framework of the Bible." (Italics ours.) *Theologische Quartalschrift*, April, 1939, pp. 147 f., passes this judgment on the above — and we must agree with it: "Every Christian must object most vigorously to these statements: 'How can we know,' etc.? 'To see if the Bible statements,' etc. The treacherous deception of this position. . . . The inerrancy of the Bible concerning its 'human framework' does not rest on any assurance given to our faith by God; it rests on critical investigation by man! Although the article . . . maintains that the Bible has victoriously come out of every critical investigation, this does not alter the case: theoretically the possibility of error is granted. . . . If these people have no Scripture ground on which to stand, then their assumption of inerrancy is merely a human opinion and not an article of faith." In addition, we would point out that this "reasonable faith" is not faith at all. It cannot be a lasting conviction. Tomorrow's scientific investigation may shatter it. And must the Christian go without "faith" so long as science has not given him assurance in a given case? Luther says, on Gen. 11:27, 28: "Bei Abraham verlieren sich sechzig Jahr." (I:721.) The chronologists have not yet found them. There seems to be something wrong with Moses' chronology on this point. How long must I wait till I can say: This part of the Bible is absolutely true? Am I left meanwhile to struggle with the fearful thought that a part of the inspired Bible is unreliable?

paramour takes pleasure in questioning and ridiculing these glorious promises. She tells us: These things are unreasonable; they are impossible. Speaking through the mouth of Dr. Shailer Mathews, she says: "Prayer is the asking of favors from a definite personality, who, it is hoped, can be induced to do favors to the petitioner. . . . But such an attitude is quite impossible for one who in any way is acquainted with the forces of the universe and the laws which describe their operation. The belief in cosmic reason and will does not yield itself to pleas for forgiveness. . . . If prayer cannot effect changes in actual situations, what is the use of prayer?" (*New Faiths for Old*. See *Conc. Theol. Month.*, VIII: 940.) Kirsopp Lake, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* of 1924, assures us: "Probably few educated men believe in the efficiency of prayer. The laws of life—which is the will of God—are not changed in their working by prayer, sacrifices, or fasting." Does God give rain as a result of prayer? In 1930, the year of the drought, H. E. Fosdick told the readers of the *Christian Century*: "Of course prayer does not affect the weather. . . . We can expect results in a law-abiding universe only when we fulfil appropriate conditions for getting them. . . . The crude, obsolete supernaturalism which prays for rain is a standing reproach to our religion and will be taken by many an intelligent mind as an excuse for saying, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be an atheist.'" ⁶⁾ And then, even if God could control the forces of the universe and of humanity, how could he answer *all* prayer, seeing that one Christian or one group of Christians is asking for the very opposite of what another individual or group is praying for? The spokesmen for carnal reasons make much of this. In the tract *Shall We Stop Praying in War-time?* written during the first World War, Paul Lindemann writes: "Again the scoffers say: 'Why, both sides cannot win. The Germans are praying for the success of their arms, and so are we praying for the success of our arms. If there were a God ready to hear and answer,

6) Yesterday (Sept. 11) we read in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "In a paper read yesterday to the Conference of Science, Religion, and Philosophy, Albert Einstein said: 'It seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life and the fear of death and blind faith but through striving after rational knowledge. . . . In their struggle for the ethical good, teachers of religion must have the stature to give up the doctrine of a personal God, that is, give up that source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests. . . . The more a man is imbued with the ordered regularity of all events, the firmer becomes his conviction that there is no room left by the side of this ordered regularity for the causes of a different nature. For him neither the rule of human nor the rule of divine will exists as an independent cause of natural events.'" Is there any difference between the Fosdick-Mathews-Lake faith in a God who has no control over the cosmic law and the creed of Einstein, which because of this same "ordered regularity of all events" calls for the abdication of a personal God?

would it not put Him in a sore dilemma as to which petition He should grant? . . . Stop the nonsensical practice. Prayer is more than useless. If there is a God, He will do as He sees fit, regardless of the prayers of man.'” Again, how can you keep on trusting in the promise of God to hear all prayer when you have found many of your prayers unanswered? Experience and reason prove the futility and folly of prayer.

Prayer is “a mild form of insanity.” Kant, the great philosopher, said that. Satan’s paramour goes into paroxysms of laughter when she sees the Christian bow his head and pray: “give us this day our daily bread.” Luther should have had more sense than to write this: “Each single Christian accomplishes such great things that he can rule the whole world in divine matters, help all men and perform the greatest works that ever were done on earth. . . . God sustains the world for the Christian’s sake. If there were no Christians on earth, no city or nation would have peace; yea, in one day Satan would destroy everything on earth. That grain still is growing on the farms and people enjoy health, have their living, peace and protection, they owe to the Christians. We are indeed poor beggars, says St. Paul, 2 Cor. 6:10, ‘yet making many rich.’ . . . What the world has and can do it has as a loan from those beggars. . . . All that is given the world by God He gives because of these beggars, so that all gifts are declared to be works and miracles of the Christians. . . . I shall, says Christ, make of you who believe in Me such lords that you shall bring about and achieve whatever you desire, and shall with Me rule both spiritually over the souls for their salvation and also through your prayer obtain and preserve all that is on earth, that men must receive these things at your hands and, though they know it not, live on you.” (VIII:350 f.) When Luther declares: “Just as the Christian Church is preserved through God’s Word and the ministry, so also it is preserved through the prayer of every Christian. We Christians are mighty warriors; first, we who preach, and then you who pray. Diese zwei Stuecke tun dem Teufel das Herzeleid an, wo man also fleissig predigt und ernstlich betet” (XIII:2000 f.), and declares this: “Though Turk, Pope, Emperor, and all the gates of hell should oppose us, they could not accomplish anything. . . . Since we can kill the devil with prayer, why should we not be able to drive off Turk and Pope?” (II:1645), yes, and this: “Durch sein Koenigreich ist der Christenmensch aller Dinge maechtig; durch sein Priestertum ist er Gottes maechtig. Denn Gott tut, was er bittet und will, wie da steht geschrieben im Psalter, Ps. 145:19” (XIX:998), Kant and Einstein and Fosdick cry out: Luther, thou art beside thyself; thy talk indicateth a mild form of insanity.

These are the spoutings of Liberalism, of unbelief,—and the

ratiocinations of our own flesh. When our carnal mind thinks of divine things, it produces Kantian thoughts. The Christian will never say that prayer is useless, that God is subject to the cosmic laws; but in practice we often agree with Kant's and Fosdick's thesis, neglect prayer, and think: It is useless; events must take their natural course. When insurmountable difficulties confront us, we are not always ready to take God at His word and ask Him to do the impossible. Our reason keeps down our fervor. Our past experience of prayers "unanswered" discourages us to continue in prayer,—but it is our blind reason that speaks of unanswered prayers. And sometimes our reason speaks the truth. It tells us that we have no right to ask favors of God in view of our sinfulness and ingratitude. And then it adds the lie: You have no right to pray at all.

How shall we overcome these temptations of Satan to cast away prayer because of its unreasonableness? It will help somewhat if we remind him that his arguments are here, too, as all along the line, unreasonable. There would be some sense in decrying prayer only if there were no personal God. But as long as reason admits the existence of God,—and it does that,—it must admit that God can hear prayer and perform miracles. God means Omnipotence and Omniscience. A god who is bound by the rule that $2 \times 2 = 4$ is not God. "Do not tell Jesus that common arithmetic and the laws of supply and demand will not permit Him to feed five thousand men with five loaves." (See p. 758 above.) God's arithmetic and economics is Higher Arithmetic and Higher Economics.⁷ To say that God cannot hear prayer, is not even sound reason.

But that is not enough. We need, in addition, to realize the wickedness our rationalizing flesh is perpetrating. Harboring the thought that God cannot hear every prayer is setting reason above revelation and making our puny intelligence the measure of God's wisdom and might. That is a form of idolatry. And when our flesh thinks it does not need God's almighty help in every work we undertake, even the least, and takes up the chant: "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul," we are again committing

7) See also Walther, *Gnadenjahr*, p. 169 f.: "To many people it seems a vain thought to expect their prayer to be granted. From eternity, they say, that which is to happen has been determined. Who, then, can be so presumptuous as to imagine that his prayer will bring about a change in the divine government of the world? Who can hope that his prayer will influence the immutable God and induce Him to change His will? But these people do not consider that God can grant all our petitions without setting aside His eternal counsels; for, since God is omniscient and all-wise, He has known from eternity, not only that and how we are going to pray, but from eternity He has arranged all things in such a manner, and given them such a place in His plans for the government of the world, that just those events must come to pass which we ask for."

self-deification. Moreover, all this gives the lie to Christ's sweet promises.

And consider the harm of it. We are depriving ourselves of great and wonderful blessings through listening to Satan's paramour and failing to ask for these blessings. Worst of all, our faith is in mortal danger. Faith lives on God's Word, and when Satan aims to put God's Word and promise out of our mind, he is aiming a mortal stroke at the life of faith. And faith cannot live unless it is exercised. Doubt, if unchecked, will ultimately destroy faith. "The old evil Foe means deadly woe."

Nor is that enough. The strategy of the Christian warfare consists in doing the very thing Satan would dissuade us from doing. The more he ridicules God's promise, the more stubbornly we shall cling to it. The more he deals in common mathematics and common economics, the more we make of the Higher Mathematics and Economics at the disposal of God — and of the believing petitioner. Do not parley with Satan, but "take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," Eph. 6:16.

A second fiery dart: Satan would have us base our assurance of salvation, of the grace of God, of the forgiveness of sins, on our feelings, sensations, and experience, and not on the bare promise of God's Word. That strikes at the very vitals of faith. For faith lives on the Word.

The opinion is widely spread that we cannot be sure of God's grace unless we feel "grace" in our hearts. When a man admits that he feels nothing but the wrath of God and cannot evoke joyful sensations, he is told that he is, at least for the time being, in the state of wrath. Great churches, great preachers, take this view of the matter, and Satan would have every Christian take this view. All of us are inclined to do it. Our carnal heart would rather believe in what it sees and feels than in what God's Word tells us.

That is because the theology of our flesh is the theology of rationalism. It is a most reasonable assumption that, if your sins are forgiven and heaven is opened to you, nothing but heavenly joy can be in your heart. And reason takes nothing on trust. It must see and feel before it can be sure of a thing. — We are here dealing with a subtle form of rationalism. In a sermon on 1 Cor. 15:1 ff. Luther declares: "If you are not ready to believe that the Word is worth more than all you see and feel, then *reason has blinded faith*. So the resurrection of the dead is something that must be believed. I do not feel the resurrection of Christ, but the Word affirms it. I feel sin, but the Word says that it is forgiven to those who believe. I see that Christians die like other men, but the Word tells me that they shall rise again. So we must not be

guided by our own feelings but by the Word." (Quoted in A. Koeberle, *The Quest for Holiness*, p. 79.) When a man refuses to believe any Christian truth unless he sees and feels it, and when the Christian hesitates to trust the Word of absolution in the Gospel and the Sacraments because his senses do not confirm it, reason is dominating the thoughts of both of them. It is certainly a form of rationalism when a believer makes his own experience and his own judgment based thereon the basis of his trust. And it is the pride of reason, inherent in our flesh, that tempts us to do so.

We shall not elaborate this last point—the pride of reason—but use all our time to point out the deadly harm resulting from the reliance on feeling. Only the Word of God can sustain faith and produce divine assurance. Our feelings, our heavenly sensations, cannot serve as the foundation of faith. For they are variable. At times they completely vanish, and the man who makes them his trust must despair. "My friends, do you think you can control your feelings? I am sure, if I could control my feelings, I never would have any bad feelings; I would always have good feelings. But bear in mind: Satan may change our feelings fifty times a day, but he cannot change the Word of God; and what we want is to build our hopes of heaven upon the Word of God. When a poor sinner is coming up out of the pit and just ready to get his feet upon the Rock of Ages, the devil sticks out a plank of feelings and says, 'Get on that'; and when he puts his feet on that, down he goes again. Take one of these texts: 'He that *heareth My Word* and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life and *shall not* come into condemnation but is *passed* from death unto life.' That rock is higher than my feelings. And what we need is to get our feet upon the rock, and the Lord will put a new song in our mouths." (D. L. Moody, quoted in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1936, p. 186.)⁸⁾ Again, our feelings are often deceptive. Men have committed great crimes as a consequence of taking their feelings, *their* sense of right, for their guide. And not every feeling of devotion, not every religious emotion, not every song in the heart,

8) The same thoughts are expressed in *The Riches of His Grace*, pp. 143 ff., by John Schmidt (Lutheran pastor in Blacksburg, Va.): "Nor am I more successful when I seek to build upon my feelings. As the plantation Negroes sang, 'Sometimes I'm up; sometimes I'm down.' Our feelings are too inconstant, too variable, to give me the assurance I seek. . . . So long as we seek security in ourselves, we shall fail. No permanent assurance and consequently no lasting peace of heart can be found until we can find a certain footing beyond ourselves. . . . Our certainty lies here: 'Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins,' 1 John 4:10. The foundation upon which the Christian life rests is not my love but His, not my faith but His faithfulness, not my goodness but His mercy. These things do not change. My love and devotion may be cooled by some wind of temptation," etc.

is a product of the Holy Spirit. The Evil Spirit can produce a counterfeit.⁹⁾ And what will happen in the hour when you find nothing in your heart but fear and doubt and despair? Such dark hours come to all Christians. "I said in my haste: I am cut off from before Thine eyes," Ps. 31:22. "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. . . . Why hast Thou forgotten me?" Ps. 42:7, 9. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me," Ps. 116:3. He is undone who takes his feelings for his guide. It is impossible that faith should endure if it is based on feeling, and so Satan would persuade us to plant ourselves upon this foundation. "He is indeed the Wicked One; that is, he is crafty, and fiery are his darts; he is most subtle in drawing man away from that which is not seen in order to hold him to that which is seen. He would have him be guided by what he feels, not by that which he does not feel. But he feels that he is forsaken [by God]; he does not feel that he is elected. If, then, he goes by his feeling, it is impossible that he can maintain himself." (Luther, IV:1268.)

There is only one foundation of our faith: God's Word and promise, and so Satan aims to keep us away from the Word. Let those who think that it does not accord with reason to build their assurance on the Word, unseen and unfelt, and would rather rely on their senses and sensations, realize that their faith is in mortal peril. Let them take Luther's—and Christ's—warning to heart: "God will not permit us to rely on anything or to cling with our hearts to anything that is not Christ revealed in His Word, *no matter how holy and full of the Spirit it may seem. Faith has no other ground on which to take its stand. . . .* We should remember that we must seek Christ in His Father's house and business: we must simply cling to the Word of the Gospel alone, which shows us Christ aright and teaches us to know Him. . . . You must say with Christ: What does it mean that you are running hither and thither, that you torment yourselves with anxious and sad thoughts, imagining that God will not keep you in His grace and that there is no longer any Christ for you? Why do you refuse to be satisfied unless you find Him in yourselves and have the feeling of being holy and without sin? You will never succeed; all your toil will be labor lost. . . .

9) "Forsaking the *terra firma* of objective certainties, where God has revealed the truth in definite terms, where the truth of God's own Word guarantees absolute certainty, this method of arriving at the truth (basing on the believer's experience and judgment, on the judgment of a fallible human being) sets the soul adrift on the sea of subjective uncertainty and unreliability. . . . The sinner is looking for the saving truth and is told to listen to the song in his heart. How shall he know whether it is the sweet voice of Jesus or the deceptive word of Satan? And what shall he do in the day of distress when he finds nothing in his heart but doubt and despair?" (CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY, X:579.)

You are being guided by your feeling and think you can apprehend Him with your thoughts. You must come to the place where there is neither your own nor any man's business, but God's business and government, namely, to His Word." (XI:453 f.)¹⁰⁾

We repeat it. Faith lives on the Word, and Satan is aiming to destroy our faith by diverting us from the Word to something in ourselves. Hear Luther once more: "Another quality of faith is that it waives previous knowledge and assurance of its worthiness to receive the grace of God and to be heard by Him. That is what doubters do who reach out after God and try Him. They are groping after God similarly to a blind man groping along a wall; they first of all want to feel and be certified that He cannot escape them. The Epistle to the Hebrews, in chap. 11, says: 'Faith is a sure confidence in things hoped for, not judging things by what they appear to be.' That means, faith clings to things that it does not see, feel, or apprehend by means of the senses. It is rather a trusting reliance on God, on whom it is willing to risk and stake everything, not doubting that it will come out winner. The outcome certifies the correctness of such trust and the feeling and sensation will come to him unsought and undesired in and through this same believing." (XI:1577.)¹¹⁾ Oh, what fools Satan and his paramour make of us—getting us to make the result of our assurance the basis of our assurance!

"Diese Erfahrungen oder die besonderen Vorgaenge und Gefuehle in der Seele . . . sind gar herrliche Gaben Gottes; aber wer darauf die Vergebung baut, hat auf Sand gebaut." (Walther, *Die luth. Lehre von der Rechtf.*, p. 85 f.) It is a foundation of sand for the reasons mentioned. But also for this additional reason: Trusting in your feelings is trusting in something within yourself, something of your own. These Spirit-wrought feelings are blessed gifts, gifts indeed, but they come under the category of *gratia infusa*, and building salvation on the *gratia infusa* is making the certainty and

10) Read the entire passage! You will find it, in translation, in Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, p. 205. And be sure to study the entire section in Walther's book treating Thesis IX: "The Word of God is not rightly divided when sinners who have been struck down and terrified by the Law are directed not to the Word and the Sacraments but to their own prayers and wrestlings with God in order that they may win their way into a state of grace; in other words, when they are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace," pages 127—207.

11) "The feeling and sensation will come." God gives His children seasons of refreshment, when they taste and feel His goodness, sweet peace filling their hearts and the fire of love and zeal bursting forth in mighty flames. We thank God for these experiences. But do not turn these blessings into a curse by making them the ground of your faith.

hope of salvation dependent on something in which you have a part. It is virtually the deadly poison of salvation through the Law; it leads men to trust in their acquirements and achievements. Do you not see Satan's wiles and guile? The *opinio legis* inheres in us by nature. Reason can see nothing but salvation through works. And it flatters our pride to feel that we have contributed something to our own salvation. And if Satan can get us to take this position and retain it, we are undone. Faith which trusts in any degree in a human achievement, and let it be a *Spirit-given* acquirement, is not the Christian faith. Hear Dr. Pieper on this point: "It is necessary to call attention to the fact that also those Christians who theoretically teach correctly on the means of grace and, as a rule, also believe correctly nevertheless in their practice as to themselves only too often forget the means of grace. This happens whenever they attempt to base the certainty of grace, or the remission of sins, on the feeling of grace, or the *gratia infusa*, instead of basing it on God's promise in the objective means of grace. We are all born enthusiasts. . . . We look into our own heart and seek to measure God's disposition to us by our own thoughts and moods. . . . Christianity is a most singular religion, not natural, native, indigenous to us. . . . Innate in us is the *opinio legis*, the religion of the Law. If we observe virtue in us, we regard God as gracious. If we see sin in us and our conscience condemns us because of it, we imagine that God is minded to reject us. . . . Then only do we live our spiritual life on the right basis and in agreement with the singularity of the Christian religion, if we, to speak with Luther, 'flee out of ourselves,' and base our faith in the grace of God on the means of grace lying outside of us." (*Op. cit.*, III:154 f. W. Albrecht's translation, III:85 f.) Hear Bishop W. Alexander: "The origin of emotionalism is the desire of having the feelings touched, partly from sheer love of excitement, partly from an idea that, if and when we have worked up certain emotions to a fixed point, we are saved and safe. This reliance upon feelings is in the last analysis reliance upon self. It is a form of salvation by works; for feelings are inward actions. . . ." (*The Epistles of St. John*, p. 194, on 1 John 3:16-18.) And Dr. Walther closes his discussion of Thesis IX with the words: "In the last analysis it would mean that I make myself my savior. (*Op. cit.*, p. 207.) Back of the reliance on feeling is the *opinio legis*. There is deadly peril in it.

As we value our soul's salvation, we must be guided by John 20:29: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," and 1 John 3:20: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart." Against these fiery darts "You are in grace, for you feel grace; you are under wrath, for you feel God's wrath" we need to take up the shield of faith and, though the arguments

of Satan sound plausible and flatter our flesh, stubbornly¹²⁾ cling to the bare Word and declare: "I cling to what my Savior taught And trust it, whether felt or not."

Again, Satan assaults our faith by creating doubts in our hearts as to the truth and reliability of God's gracious promise to keep us in faith, and this dart, too, is dipped in the lethal poison of rational considerations and logical objections. He reminds us of the many temporary believers and asks us: Are you any better than these other Christians who did not persevere? And when we admit that we are not, he asks: What guaranty have you that God will preserve *you*? That promise: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1:6, cannot be taken at its face value; otherwise those other believers would not have fallen away. Satan further asks us: Have you never read Phil. 2:12? There is something said there about "fear and trembling"; there is something wrong with your "assurance." You are "persuaded that neither death nor life nor any other creature shall be able to separate" you from God? (Rom. 8:38). Paul could not have meant real assurance, full certainty; just read 1 Cor. 9:27: "lest that by any means I myself should be a castaway." Paul knew that he might fall away. How, then, can a man, Satan triumphantly concludes, be sure of his final salvation when he knows, absolutely, that the danger of apostasy is a real one? That would be contrary to all laws of human psychology. Men are not so constituted that they can know that they may fall away and can know that they will not fall away.

There is force in these argumentations of Satan. They trouble the Christians, raise doubts in their hearts, doubts which are aflame with hellish torment. And if these arguments are not answered, we shall cast away those glorious promises. How, then, shall we answer them? We cannot answer them by means of logic. But we have an answer and that is: We spit upon logic. When Satan's paramour told us that the teachings of the Bible are against reason and logic, we said: "I spit on the philosophy that cannot see beyond "two plus two equals four." There are ways to truth other than the way of logic." (See p. 759 above.) And when she now tells us that according to the laws of psychology fear, real fear, and trust, real trust, cannot be in the same heart, that consequently either those passages of Scripture which warn against defection or those passages (preferably those) which guaranty

12) Luther: "Wenn der Mensch nun handelt nach seinem Fuehlen, so ist es unmoeglich, dass er erhalten werde. Darum handle er nach dem Glauben, das heisst, ohne auf sein Fuehlen zu achten, und werde gegen diese Laesterungen, welche der Satan in seinem Herzen erregt, wie ein unbeweglicher Klotz." (IV:1268.)

against defection must be eliminated or modified, we say: We spit upon psychology. There is a Higher Psychology guiding the Christian. According to Christian psychology we take both series of passages at their full value. God's warnings and God's promises are both true, and He has created in His Christians the wonderful faculty to take both to heart. The Christian has learned the wonderful art of distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel. And through the power of the Holy Spirit he applies the warnings when he finds himself beset by carnal security, and the promises when he needs comfort. We cannot solve the difficulty intellectually, but God solves it for us miraculously. In spite of the protest of Satan that it cannot be done we fear and we trust. We trust God's promise to keep us though reason insists that He has not always kept His promise.¹³⁾

13) What we are trying to say is this: "So, then, the Christian is divided into two times. In that he is flesh, he is under the Law; in that he is Spirit, he is under grace. . . . Wherefore, if thou behold nothing but the flesh, thou shalt abide always under the time of the Law. But these days must be shortened, or else no flesh should be saved. The Law must have his time appointed; it must have his end. The time of the Law, therefore, is not perpetual, but hath his end in Jesus Christ. . . . Thus doth Paul very well distinguish the time of the Law and grace. Let us also learn rightly to distinguish the time of them both, not in words but in the inward affections, *which is a very hard matter*. For albeit these two things are separate far asunder; yet are they most nearly joined together in one heart. Nothing is joined more nearly together than fear and trust, than the Law and the Gospel, than sin and grace; for they are so united together, that the one is swallowed up of the other. Wherefore there is no mathematical conjunction" (relation known to logical thinking) "like unto this." (Luther, IX:452 f.) And this: "Damit der Christ diese rechte Mittelstrasse innehaelt, muss er zwischen der 'Zeit des Gesetzes' und der 'Zeit der Gnade' unterscheiden koennen. 'Zeit des Gesetzes' ist, wenn in meinem Gewissen oder in meinem Fleische die Suende aufwacht. 'Zeit der Gnade' dagegen ist, wenn Herz und Gewissen befriedet und erfreut sind durch das goettliche Verheissungswort. Zwischen diesen beiden 'Zeiten,' die, moegen sie auch begrifflich aufs klarste unterschieden sein, doch in der *Wirklichkeit des psychischen Lebens aufs innigste verbunden* sind, muss der Christ allmaechlich unterscheiden lernen; denn in der 'Zeit des Gesetzes' muss er sich an die Gnade halten, um nicht der Verzweiflung preisgegeben zu sein; in der 'Zeit der Gnade' muss er sich an Gesetze pruefen, um nicht vermessen zu werden." (E. Schott, *Fleisch und Geist nach Luthers Lehre*, p. 79.) Also this: "We have here confronting a difficulty which cannot be dealt with by logical deduction but only *realistically*. Logical considerations cannot serve because we here have before us a relation which—in the words of Luther—has no counterpart in all mathematics. We must remember that not only the Law but also the Gospel deals with the Christian. And our difficulty will be solved by distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel. The Christian realizes the danger of defection . . . and is filled with fear. But according to God's will and command *this state of mind must cease* as soon as the warnings against defection have accomplished their purpose, caused the Christian to despair of his own powers and to completely humble himself before God. And such a one must now take up the Gospel. That *promises* him that God will, *solely through grace*, keep him in faith. He is to believe this promise and *he does believe* it.

Let us ever be on our guard! Satan is enticing us to leave our safe retreat, the Word of God, and argue out the matter with him on rational grounds. That would be our undoing. Listen to Luther: "I have learned through sad experience that, when Satan catches me away from Scripture, when I begin to indulge my own thoughts and let them teach me heavenly things, he will get me into a place that I no longer know where God is and where I am. God would have us learn and retain the truth in this way, that we disregard reason and all own thoughts and feeling and cling to the Word alone." (Sermon on John 16:17.) Mixing reason with Scripture, interpreting the Gospel by the Law, — to Scripture-logic that is a form of sophistry, — is "mixing heaven and hell, life and death"; "it is making hell out of heaven and heaven out of hell" (Luther, XVIII:1787; XXII:497).

And now for the fiercest, the deadliest and the most insidious assault of Satan: he mobilizes all the forces of carnal reason to keep us away from the Gospel, to keep us from accepting the free forgiveness of our sins. It is his fiercest assault, for he hates nothing so much as the article of justification by grace, through faith. The deadliest, for this is the very life of faith; that by which a man becomes God's child and the Christian remains God's child is trust in the gracious, the free Gospel-promise. And the most insidious, for he operates with the truth; he uses and misapplies the truth of

... This practical solution of the logical difficulty will not satisfy the dialectician. Men will still imagine that, if the possibility of defection is granted, there can be no assurance of salvation; and *vice versa*, if a man is certain of his perseverance, he will not seriously consider the possibility that he may fall away. But such manipulations are contrary to Scripture and contrary to Christian experience. . . . The blessed truth is that according to God's will the Gospel remains the Christian's retreat, to which he ever returns as to his spiritual home. And dwelling in the Gospel, he is confident of his preservation." (Pieper, *Lehre u. Wehre*, 27, p. 559 f.) The Christian's logic is able to say to Satan when he brings up the matter of the temporary believers: That is a foreign matter, and I shall simply not listen. *Apology of the Formula of Concord*: "They object that we weaken the general promises in that the *Book of Concord* declares that some of the converted are lost, while confessing that the salvation of the believers is assured. *This is bringing in a foreign matter.*" (Quoted in *Proceedings, Western Dist.*, 1879, p. 103.) In these same *Proceedings* Dr. Walther says, p. 65 f.: "Now, it is said, against this doctrine of the certainty of election the fact that there are such as believe for a time is a veritable iron wall. . . . That objection is nothing but a mere rationalistic inference [*ein blosser Vernunftschluss*], which shall not overthrow these precious promises. True, we cannot solve the seeming contradiction concerning temporary believers; for we are wretched [*arm-selige*] creatures. But this should not move us to overthrow the clear Word of God and rob us and Christendom of such an exceedingly comforting doctrine. . . . The apostle is not at all concerned about temporary believers. Yes, that is the correct treatment of temporary believers: Do not trouble yourself about them; only in so far as you take them for a warning example that you may not become a temporary believer." (Translation in *Proceedings, Texas Dist.*, 1936, p. 19 f.)

the Law to cast doubt upon the truth of the Gospel. His argument is: Since the Law is God's eternal truth and the Law declares that the sinner is damned, a Gospel which offers free salvation to the sinner cannot be true. And at once our reason sides with Satan.

Human reason cannot accept the truth that God is both holy and gracious, that He hates the sinner and loves the sinner. Reason finds such a contradictory statement intolerable.¹⁴⁾ It cannot accept it, mainly because it *will* not accept it. Logic is not so much in the way as the aversion of the flesh to the concept of a gracious God, of salvation by grace alone. Carnal reason knows of no other way of salvation than by way of the Law. Proud reason will hear of no other way. "Human reason naturally admires these [works] . . . and dreams accordingly that these works merit remission of sins and justify. This opinion of the Law (*opinio legis*) inheres by nature in men's minds. . . . Human wisdom gazes at the Law and seeks in it justification" (*Apology*, pp. 197. 183.)¹⁵⁾ And the flesh within the believer harbors the same sentiments, the same illusion. We will not utter these thoughts after the manner of gross rationalism (see June number, p. 422 ff.), but the creed of the rationalist Paulus and the Modernist Fosdick and the pagan Fronto expresses the faith of our carnal reason, our proud flesh. The consequence is that the satanic logic: The Law condemns every transgression; thou hast transgressed the Law: therefore thou art damned, is invincible — so long as we are fools enough to fight it out with Satan on the lines of logic, so long as we give reason a voice in divine matters.

Luther was not fool enough to do it. He employed, and we need to employ, a Higher Logic. "Satan is such an accomplished juggler that he can easily abolish the difference and make the Law force itself into the place of the Gospel and *vice versa*. We often

14) "Luther says of the Law and the Gospel that 'they are disparate in the highest degree and are more than contradictories.' Luther is entirely correct. Law and Gospel are absolute opposites. Their relation is that of yes and no. . . . According to His justice God sentences sinners to hell; according to His grace He opens heaven to the same sinner in the same condition. How both attributes, or 'Bestimmtheiten,' form a 'higher unit' in the one indivisible God is beyond our intellectual cognition." (Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 268, 295.)

15) Luther: "As touching the words, the distinction [between Law and Gospel] is easy, but in time of temptation thou shalt find the Gospel but as a stranger and rare guest in thy conscience; but the Law, contrariwise, thou shalt find a familiar and a continual dweller within thee, for reason hath the knowledge of the Law naturally." (IX:161.) H. Diem: "Darum gehoeren Gesetz und alter Mensch zusammen; das heisst, das Gesetz ist der Dauergast in unserm Gewissen und ist mit unserer Vernunft verschworen. Luther, Weimarer Ausg., 40, I, 44 und 209." (*Luthers Lehre von den zwei Reichen*, p. 163.) Luther: "This evil is so deeply rooted in us that human reason is unable to rid itself of the phantasm of active, its own, righteousness." (IX:18.)

meet with people in their last agony who with a stricken conscience seize a few sayings which they suppose to be Gospel, while in reality they are Law, and thus forfeit the consolation of the Gospel, for instance, the statements in Matt. 19:17 and 7:21. . . . Theoretically this distinction is easily made, but in the hour of death and in perils we find that we are but poor dialecticians and cannot stand our ground when the question is raised what we have done and what we ought to have done, when the Law accuses us: This the Lord has commanded you to do, but you did the very opposite; therefore thou wilt be damned according to the sentence of the Lawgiver (Deut. 27:26). But a good dialectician distinguishes between the Law and the Gospel; he admits that he has not fulfilled the Law, but declares: From this premise the conclusion does not follow that I must despair and be damned. For the Gospel bids me to believe in Christ and trust in His works and righteousness." (IV:2077 f.) "Be a good dialectician and tell the Law: Stay where you belong; you are in charge of the flesh; but do not dare to touch my conscience." (IX:26.) The logic of faith operates with Rom. 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:11; Gal. 3:23 f. The Gospel is the "Higher Word," and the conclusions of the "lower word" no longer count. "Therefore, when the Law accuses me that I have not done this or that, that I am unrighteous and written down a sinner in God's debt-book, I must confess that all of it is true. But the conclusion 'Therefore you are damned' I must not admit but in strong faith struggle against it and say: According to the Law, which imputes my guilt to me, I am indeed a poor, lost sinner, but I appeal from the Law to the Gospel; for God has given another word over and above the Law, called the Gospel. . . . The Law has come to an end. For as the lesser work it should and must give place to the Gospel. Both are God's Word; but one is lower, the other is higher; one is weaker, the other stronger; one is lesser, the other greater. When, now, they wrestle with each other, I follow the Gospel and say, Good-by, Law!" (IX:806 ff.) That is the logic of faith. And unless we employ it, we are undone.

But it is so hard to employ it. Reason, our own reason, our flesh, rises in all its might against this strange logic.¹⁶⁾ Our self-

16) Luther: "We have against us even the one half of ourselves, that is to say, reason and all the powers thereof." (IX:95.) "He that thinks it is a simple matter might learn something from what has happened to me. On several occasions Satan caught me when I was not thinking of this chief thing and troubled me with Scripture-passages so that heaven and earth became too narrow for me. There all man's work and laws were right, and there was nothing wrong with the Papacy. . . . Therefore, dear brother, be not puffed up; be not too sure and secure, thinking you know Christ well. You are hearing what I am confessing, what Satan achieved against me, who surely should be a Doctor in this art." (V:1171. See also XXII:766, etc.)

righteous reason spits upon these words of Luther: "The true knowledge of Christ, or faith, disputeth not whether thou hast done good works to righteousness or evil works to condemnation, but simply concludeth after this sort: If thou hast done good works, thou art not therefore justified; or if thou hast done evil works, thou art not therefore condemned." (IX:619.) Our sanctimonious flesh declares that Luther blasphemed when he wrote: "It is wonderful. And the world cannot conceive of it that Christians should be instructed not to know the Law and so to live before God as though there were absolutely no Law." (IX:20.) It is hard, in the hour of temptation and affliction, to employ the logic of faith. We must fight to the death to do it.

Indeed, it is a life-and-death struggle. Reason must die,¹⁷⁾ or faith dies. If a man is not willing to crucify his reason, blind it, kill it, he cannot retain the Gospel of the free forgiveness of sin; his faith will die.

Ratio inimica fidei! Luther is not speaking of gross rationalism, which destroys every single article of faith. He is speaking of the rationalistic poison Satan is ever injecting into the heart of the Christian. The entire passage reads: "Wherefore in this case away with reason, which is an enemy to faith, which also in temptations of sin and death leaneth not to the righteousness of faith (for thereof it is entirely ignorant) but to her own righteousness, or, at the least, to the righteousness of the Law. Now, as soon as the Law and reason join together, faith loseth her virginity, for nothing fighteth more strongly against faith than the Law and reason. And these two enemies cannot be conquered but with great labor and difficulty; which we must conquer notwithstanding if we will be saved." (IX:157.) "*Nos occidimus rationem!*"

Let us pray. "Lord, our God, most graciously didst Thou give us Thy holy, unerring Word to be a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our path. Preserve us from making our blind reason or the opinion of the wicked world our guide. Grant us grace that by the aid of Thy Holy Spirit we may follow Thy Word alone, departing from it neither to the right nor to the left, until, having escaped all the dangers that threaten our souls, we shall have arrived at the end of our pilgrimage and have come into blissful communion with Thee in heaven. Grant our prayer for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, our Lord and Savior. Amen." (Walther, *Church-membership*, p. 90.)

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17) Luther: "*Si ratio sol mich leren, quare non abiicimus evangelium et librum scripturae? Nos praedicamus aliquid hoher quam ratio et OCCIDIMUS RATIONEM.*" (Weimar ed., 47, p. 844.) H. Diem adds the remark: "Die Vernunft muss sterben, wenn anders die Predigt des in Christus vom Himmel auf die Erde gekommenen Gottes gelten soll. Aber sie stirbt nicht durch Selbstmord, sondern wird getoetet." (L. c.)