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### Predestination According to Ephesians 1, 3-14

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**PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS 1, 3-14**

**A Thesis presented to the  
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary**

**in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of**

**Bachelor of Divinity**

**by**

**Delvin E. Ressel**

**Concordia Seminary,  
April 15, 1938**

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## INTRODUCTION

A new experience awaits the student who examines this section of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians with the view of determining what it teaches regarding God's eternal Election of Grace. He begins by assuming that in these verses he will find the doctrine of Election only partially revealed, its supplement to be drawn from other portions of Holy Scripture. But as his investigation progresses he comes to the realization that here the entire doctrine of Election is revealed, that this is truly a "locus classicus," a "sedes doctrinae" with regard to Predestination.

The doctrine of Election occupies a unique position among both clergy and laity in the Church. Pastors sometimes hesitate to preach on it because they consider it a doctrine not only very difficult to present, but apt also to produce misunderstanding or even to engender anxiety and uncertainty among simple folk concerning their soul's salvation. Among the laity this doctrine has the distinction of being the least clearly understood of all Scriptural teachings. Doctrinal discussions in public and in private among our people often bring to light a wholly inadequate comprehension of this article of faith. It is also common knowledge that the doctrine of Election has been the source of heated religious controversy in the recent past. These facts together perhaps are responsible for the widespread conception of Predestinat-

ion as an unclear doctrine of Holy Writ. But as Dr. Stoeckhardt has so aptly pointed out: "The fact that the doctrine of the Election of Grace has actually become controverted to a great extent, both in former days and especially in our time, surely is no proof that in this instance we have before us an obscure or semi-obscure chapter of doctrine, --a chapter which, in the last analysis, is a mere problem of theology. If this were true, we should have to relegate also the article of the Holy Supper and of the divinity of Christ to the category of problems of theology. For these, too, have ever been greatly contested articles of doctrine." 1)

God  
React!

Instead of discouraging the clergy from bringing this matter to the attention of their people, the general uncertainty regarding the Election of Grace should rather indicate to them a definite need on the part of the people for enlightenment, and at the same time present a distinct challenge to them to supply that need. Any pastor who fails to expound also this part of the divine Counsel to Christian people becomes disloyal to the Great Commission of his Lord to teach "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." 2) Uncertainty and misconception cannot exist in the mind of the Bible student who in simple faith accepts the statements of the Sacred Scriptures, word for word. Furthermore, the Election of Grace is of such tremendous value for the faith and life of clergy and laity alike that they simply cannot afford to ignore it.

What is Predestination? The following definitions serve to give a general overview of the subject.

"The entire work of leading those who shall constitute the Church Triumphant from a state of sin and wrath and spiritual death, through a state of faith and grace and spiritual life, to a state of glory and eternal life, is the divine

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1) G. Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief, p. 83  
2) Matt. 28, 20.

execution of that eternal decree whereby God, before the foundation of the world, and prompted only by His grace in Christ Jesus, purposed to call, enlighten, and sanctify, keep and preserve, by the means of grace, according to the counsel of His will, all those whom, by eternal election of grace in Christ, the Redeemer of the world, He had chosen from fallen mankind and predestinated to eternal glory." 1)

"The decree of predestination is an eternal act of God, who for His godness' sake, and because of the merit of the foreordained Redeemer of all mankind, purposed to lead into everlasting life, by the way and means of salvation designated for all mankind, a certain number of certain persons, and to procure, work, and promote what would pertain to their final salvation." 2)

"Election is the eternal act of God with respect to all who are saved, by which, out of pure grace and for Christ's sake (Praedestinatio gratuita et libera est), He purposed to endow them in time with the spiritual blessings of conversion, justification, sanctification, and preservation unto life eternal." 3)

"Holy Scripture thus traces all the spiritual blessings of conversion, justification, sanctification, and preservation back to God's eternal election of grace in Christ Jesus." 4)

The last of these expressions shall form the basis for the outline of the present treatise, in this slightly altered form: "Eternal election of grace in Christ Jesus responsible for all the spiritual blessings of justification, conversion, sanctification, and preservation." Part One will deal with the Decree of Election, or Election in Eternity, while Part Two will deal with the Execution of this Decree, or Election in Time. Each part will treat the respective terms of the definition according to "Definition" and "Proof."

1) A.L. Graebner, Doctrinal Theology, p. 222.  
2) Ibid., p. 44  
3) J.T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics, p. 585.  
4) Ibid., p. 586

PART ONE  
THE DIVINE DECREE OF PREDESTINATION  
(Election in Eternity)

"E T E R N A L"

Definition.

When we say that the divine Decree of Predestination is eternal, we mean that it is a decree which was formulated by God in eternity, before He had made the first beginnings of the creation of the universe. It was then that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity entered into solemn conclave and effected the three divine decrees. These were the divine decrees of Creation, Redemption, and Predestination.

Proof.

1. Eph. 1, 4: κενός ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς . . . πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου

"Even as He has chosen us before the foundation of the world."

In these words the Apostle makes the clear and emphatic assertion that the divine Decree of Predestination, the ἐκλογή of God, was an act which took place before the beginning of time, before the world. The expression πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου or its synonym ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου we find also on the lips of our Lord, as when He says: "Father, I will that they also, whom



thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." 1) Or, "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation." 2) Or again, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." 3) The noun καταβολή is from the verb καταβάλλω, which again is compounded from the two words κατά and βάλλω, "to throw or cast down." Then it also means "to put in a lower place," and occurs commonly in the phrase θεμέλιον καταβάλλομαι, "to lay (down) a foundation." Thus, then, the noun καταβολή is commonly used to mean "a founding (laying down a foundation)." The reference is therefore clearly to the creation, when God, in human language, laid the foundations of the earth. The word κόσμος is here used in its wider signification of "universe." And now the statement is that before God began to lay the foundations of the universe, before there was, outside of God, life or matter, God formulated the divine Decree of Predestination. Even then God thought of us graciously, had us in His mind, and in His counsel and purpose took us out of the lost and condemned world of men for Himself, and decreed that we should be and remain His own, and be with Him forever in heaven. S.D.F. Salmond, in the Expositor's Greek Testament, says of the phrase πρὸ καταβολῆς τοῦ κόσμου: "It expresses most definitely the fact

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- 1) John 17, 24
  - 2) Luke 11, 50
  - 3) Matt. 25, 34

that the election in question is not the setting apart of certain persons at a definite period, as act in time, a historical selection, as some ( e.g., Boys.) strive to prove, but an eternal choice, a determination of the Divine Mind before all time." 1)

2. Eph. 1, 5: προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν

"In that He foreordained us unto adoption of sons."

In characteristic fashion, St. Paul brings in a dependent clause. The main verb on which it is dependent is the foregoing ἡμετέρας. The aorist participle here used, προορίσας, indicates coincidence, as in many other places, such as Acts 1, 24; Rom. 4, 20; 2 Pet. 2, 5; Col. 2, 13; Phil. 2, 7. Now this might have been said by ὀρίσας, as in Acts 10, 42: "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained (ὀρισμένος) of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." But προορίσας makes it more emphatic. The word προορίζειν goes back to ῥος, "terminus," and the verb ὀρίζειν means "to determine." Προορίζειν, then, means "to predetermine," "to predestinate." In this case there are two reasons for referring this to God's eternal election. In the first place, this is the general usage of προορίζειν in the New Testament. It is always used of God as determining from eternity, sometimes with the further definition πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained (προώρισεν) before the world πρὸ

1) Expositor's Greek Testament, vol. III, p. 249

τῶν αἰώνων) unto our glory;" 1) And in the second place, this is according to the present context, pointing to πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. In this way the Apostle again brings out that the choosing of God, the ordaining of us to Himself, was done "before," that is, before anything existed, in eternity.

3. Eph. 1, 11: ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκλογίσθημεν προορισθέντες

"In Whom we were chosen being foreordained"

In his commentary on Ephesians, Stoeckhardt has a complete discussion of the term κλήρω. Most of the older and more recent commentators derive κληροῦν here from κλήρις in the sense of possession, inheritance, κληρονομία, corresponding to the Hebrew נַחֲלָה and translate either: "in whom," or "through whom we have become the heritage of God," which, however, is rather foreign, or, more usually: "in whom," or "through whom we have been provided with the inheritance," that is, "have received the inheritance." However, if we take it to mean, "in whom we received the inheritance," then, as Stoeckhardt points out, it is made to refer to the future possession, while Paul is here describing present blessings. And if we take the translation to mean "in whom we received the right of heirs," we do not have a third blessing, as the exponents of this view urge, namely, the right of heirs in addition to the forgiveness of sins (first blessing), and sonship and wisdom (second blessing), because in that case the third blessing would be identical with the first. Secular Greek usage shows that the

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1) 1 Cor. 2,7

term κληροῦν undergoes a generalization, in which the root idea, the means of choosing, that is, the κλήρω (lot) recedes into the background, and the effect, gained through the means, is emphasized, namely, the choosing itself. Hence, the verb κληροῦν comes to mean "choose." A similar generalization takes place in the verb χειροτονέω, which means to choose or to vote even though this is done without raising the hand. Dr. Stoeckhardt says on this point:

"Ehe man fuer ἐκκληρώσθην eine neue Bedeutung erfindet, sollte man doch zusehen, ob man mit der in der griechischen Sprache gaeng und gaeben Bedeutung des Worts nicht auch an unserm Ort auskommen kann. In allen den verschiedenen Wendungen und Verbindungen, in denen κλήρω bei den griechischen Profanskribenten sich findet, liegt demselben das Substantiv κλήρω in seiner naechstliegenden, urspruenglichen Bedeutung 'Los' zugrunde. Κληρώω heisst 'das Los werfen' und dann 'durch das Los bestimmen, erwahlen,' und ist bei den attischen Schriftstellern die gewoehnliche Bezeichnung fuer die Wahl der Magistrate. Und da diese Wahl in Athen oben meist durch das Los geschah, so trat dann hin und wieder in der Vorstellung das Mittel der Wahl in den Hintergrund und der durch das Loswerfen erzielte Effekt, die Erwahlung, in den Vordergrund." 1)

Furthermore, this is the Scriptural usage of the term. In 1 Sam. 14,41.42 it is said of Jonathan and Saul: καὶ κληροῦται

Ἰωάναν καὶ Σαούλ, that is, the lot fell upon Jonathan. The

Septuagint makes the following addition here: καὶ εἶπε Σαούλ:

βάλλειτ ἑνὰ μίσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ἑνὰ μίσον Ἰωάναν τοῦ υἱοῦ μου.

"Ὁ ἔτι κατακληρώσεται κύριος ἀποθανέτω. "And Saul said: Cast

the lot between me and my son Jonathan; he whom the Lord shall designate by lot, shall die." The other passage reads: καὶ

είναι ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπισηθῆσαν καὶ προσεκκληρώσθην τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ

Σίλῳ. 2) Προσεκληρώω really means "to distribute by lot,"

1) G. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 70f.  
2) Acts 17,4

and then in general, as the means of the action is disregarded and only the purpose retained, "to distribute." The meaning is that those who came to faith were thereby given by God to Paul and Silas as disciples.

Dr. Stoeckhardt ends his discussion: "Es entspricht demnach dem profanen und biblischen Sprachgebrauch, wenn wir ἐν ἐκλογῇ an unserm Ort mit Chrysostomus, Vulgate, Ambrose, Estius, de Wette, Blank, Hofmann, Cremer, Klostermann, Wohlenberg und andern uebersetzen: 'in quo electi sumus,' 'in welchem' oder 'durch welchen wir auch erloest,' das heisst, 'erkoren worden sind.' Da hier nicht vom Loswerden die Rede ist, sondern von dem, was Gott an den Personen, die jetzt Christen sind, getan hat, so kommt das ἐκλογῇ selbstverstaendlich hier nur nach seinem Zweck und Effekt in Betracht, als Besonderung, Erwaehlung. Wir sind von Gott aus dem menschlichen Geschlecht ausgesondert, erkoren, dass wir ihm zugehoeren sollten.....Es ist also, ἐκλογῇ parallel dem ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς V. 4, und wie dort ἐξελέξατο durch προορισμῶς, so ist an unserm Ort ἐκλογῇ durch προορισθέντες naeher bestimmt, indem hier wie dort der erste Ausdruck die Beziehung auf Gott, der zweite die Beziehung auf das Ziel in sich schliesst." 1)

Here again, therefore, St. Paul wishes to make it very clear that we were chosen in eternity. He says not merely that we were chosen, for that could refer to an event in time, a choosing conditioned on something in us. But he qualifies the term "chosen," with another which leaves the meaning indisputable, namely, "being predestinated." That is the choosing of which we were the objects. It was an eternal election.

That this teaching of the Apostle in Ephesians 1 is in perfect accord with other Scriptural expressions on the same subject may be seen from a brief consideration of a few of these.

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1) G. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 72f

4. Eph. 3, 11:

"According to the purpose of the ages which He made."

This passage, in the light of the context, is an especially clear reference to the eternity of God's election. In the third chapter of his Letter to the Ephesians St. Paul speaks of the "mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," 1) and says that this mystery consisted in this, "that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." 2) Hence, the mystery of God destined to be revealed through Paul's ministry is that salvation is for all mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles. And now in the verse before us he says that whenever this takes place, whenever either Jew or Gentile is brought to the knowledge of salvation, it is "according to the eternal purpose" of God, or, as was literally translated above, "the purpose of the ages." The expression ἔνι αἰώνων is the common one in Scripture for "eternity." That this is the meaning here is further evident from what St. Paul says of this divine purpose in other places, as chapter 1, verse 3: "before the foundation of the world," and 2 Tim. 1, 9: "before the world began." Therefore the Authorized Version has translated with substantial accuracy, "eternal." The purpose of eternity to which Paul here refers is the same which he presented in the first section of the Epistle, the counsel and purpose of Election, according to which God, through Christ, before the foundation of the world, chose for Himself an eternal Church, a

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1) Eph. 3, 5  
2) Eph. 3, 6

vast multitude of children.

5. 2 Thess. 2, 13:

"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has taken you from the beginning to salvation."

This passage is significant, first of all, because of the very forceful term by which it expresses the idea of election. The word is ἀλάρο, the aorist middle of ἀλάω, which means "to take," "to grasp," "to seize." The force of the middle voice may render it thus: "God has taken you unto Himself." The nature of the election is in this way beautifully indicated. And the second significant feature of the verse is the term by which eternity is expressed: "from the beginning." The beginning of what? Scriptural usage of the phrase will allow but one meaning. It is the same as that in the very first verse of the Pentateuch, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." 1) It is the same which is found in the opening of the Gospel according to St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." 2) Time is spoken of here, the time before there was time as we know it now. It is the time before there was anything, the time when only God existed. The expression is therefore tantamount to "eternity." The writer adds a very fine touch in the word "from" instead of "in." "From the beginning" enhances the idea of the timeless, the eternal. "From eternity," the Apostle means to say "God has taken you to Himself," has chosen you for

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1) Gen. 1,1

2) John 1,1

Himself in His eternal Decree of Predestination.

6. 2 Tim. 1, 9:

"[God] who has saved us and called (us) with a holy call, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before times of aeons."

This is one of the truly great utterances of St. Paul.

God has saved us, that is, God does everything that pertains to our soul's salvation: He calls us from darkness unto light, enlightens us by His Holy Spirit, He sanctifies us and keeps us with Jesus Christ in the one true faith, and He finally will glorify us. The aorist tense is used because this entire process of salvation is viewed as certain as though it had already been completed. The case is parallel to that other great and similar expression of the Apostle, in Romans 8, 30: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." And now the point in that this entire process of salvation, of God saving us in time, was "according to His own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus "before the world began." Again the Authorized Version has given the correct meaning of the Greek πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων, which literally might be rendered: "before the times of world-periods." The meaning is unmistakable: this phrase expresses that which is anterior to the most remote period in the past conceivable by the imagination of man, in other words, to eternity. Then it was that God made His divine Decree of Predestination.



"ELECTION"

Definition

The term ἐκλέγεσθαι can mean nothing else than to "pick out," "to choose from," "to take out of many" or "a multitude of similar things or persons."

The middle voice adds the force of "sibi" to this concept. ἑκλέγεσθαι means "to choose for oneself," so that the chosen object now belongs to the choosing subject, stands in a relation to him, or somehow serves his interest.

And yet, it is not quite exact to say that ἐκλέγεσθαι means to choose one out of many or before others. The expression as such does not affect the others who are not chosen, that is, who are not, in a similar way, as the chosen ones, separated from the mass. Rather, the exact correlary of ἐκλέγειν, to which the ἐκ points, is the mass, the whole, from which, through the choice, separate parts are selected. The chosen objects belonged originally to the same mass from which they have been taken, and now, since and by virtue of the ἐκλογή, are in contrast, not to the other non-chosen things or individuals, but rather to the genus, from which they have been chosen. Whenever the contrast is between the chosen and the non-chosen, the context must always indicate this; and this it does, as when it is said of David that the Lord chose him to be king, and then expressly says of his brothers, that the Lord

did not choose them.

Thus, the eternal election consisted in this, that God determined to choose unto Himself a certain number of certain persons, and to procure, work, and promote what would pertain to their final salvation. The election takes in the whole number of those who are finally saved.

Dr. A.L. Graebner, writing in the "Theological Quarterly," has this to say on election:

"The verb, ἐκλέγομαι, occurs twenty times, the adjective, ἐκλεκτός, twenty-three times, and the noun, ἐκλογή, seven times, in the New Testament. The medial form of the verb indicates a personal interest of the subject in the act or the object upon which it is directed, and which, in the absence of an equivalent form of the verb we may express by 'unto himself.' This personal interest appears also where the subject is a human person, as in Luke 10, 42: Μαρία ἐγὼ ἐξαθῆν μερίδα ἐξελέξατο, and Luke 14, 7: ταῖς πρῶτο κλισίας ἐξελέξαντο. Mary chose that good part for herself, to be her part, and the guests of the Pharisee chose the chief seats for themselves, not for others. And those whom God elected were by such election singled out to be God's own, ἀλλετροὶ υἱοῦ, Matt. 24, 31; Luke 18, 7; ἐκλεκτοὶ θεοῦ, Rom. 8, 33; Col. 3, 12; Tit. 1, 1. In the same sense ἀρρέσθαι is used, when Paul says, 2 Thess. 2, 12: ἵλατο ἡμᾶς εἰς θεός, 'God has taken you unto himself.' - Again, the composition of λίχασθαι with the preposition, ἐκ, clearly indicates a separation or segregation of the objects chosen from among or out of a mass or number. A choice of all, a universal election of all mankind, is thus incompatible with the term, ἐξελέξατο. 'Many be called, but few chosen.' Matt. 20, 16; 22, 14." 1)

It was stated above that "the election takes in the whole number of those who are finally saved." This is a statement of the Scriptural, and therefore Lutheran, conception of the EXTENT OF ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION. A discussion of this

1) A. L. Graebner, "The Doctrine of Predestination As Taught In Ephesians 1, 3-6." Theological Quarterly, Vol. 5, p. 30

subject naturally finds a place in the definition of "Election." The term "election," obviously, may be employed in a two-fold sense, meaning only what the term itself implies, namely, a choosing out of many, or referring to the theological doctrine of that name, and then including all that God does for the salvation of those who finally enter heaven, comprising "a series of blessings extending from eternity before all time to eternity beyond the end of time." 1) The discussion of the term in the latter sense constitutes the present thesis. A complete discussion of the former, however, seems logically to cover also the question of the extent of election and Predestination. This can best be made clear by contrasting the Lutheran and Calvinistic views on this point.

Briefly, Calvin teaches that the predestination of God extends also over the angels, both good and evil, while the Lutheran view is that the predestination of God extends only over those who are saved, and not over those who are lost.

Calvin defines the extent of predestination thus:

"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which He has determined in Himself what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated either to life or to death." 2)

These are plain words which most decidedly say that predestination extends over all men, fixing each individual person's

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1) A.L. Graebner, loc. cit., p. 30  
2) Calvin, Inst., Vol. II, p. 145

eternal destiny, be it salvation or damnation. Concerning the creation of individual persons Calvin says: "All things being at God's disposal, and the decision of salvation or death belonging to Him, He orders that some men are born devoted from the womb to certain death, that His name may be glorified in their destruction." 1) That is plainly saying, whom God predestinated unto death, He also creates unto death. Calvin was very consistent, and therefore also taught that God wanted Adam to fall. Arguing against his opponents Calvin writes:

"I inquire again how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God.. Their tongues, so loquacious on every other point, must here be struck dumb. It is an awful decree, I confess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before He created him, and that He did foreknow it because it was appointed by His own decree." 2)

Incidentally, the assumption that God foreknew the fall of Adam, because He had decreed it, is fallacious. It was one thing to foreknow the fall of Adam, and another thing to decree it. God certainly foreknew the fall, but He did not decree it. In regard to the angels Calvin writes: "The angels who stood in their integrity Paul calls 'elect;' if their constancy rested on the Divine pleasure, the defection of the others argues their being forsaken -a fact for which no other cause can be assigned than the reprobation hidden in the secret counsel of God." 3) Thus, what Calvin really teaches is not an election and predestination, but a division and predestination, a division of the whole human family into two parties and a predestination of

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1) Calvin, op. cit., p. 169  
2) Calvin, op. cit., p. 170  
3) Calvin, op. cit., vol. II, p. 167

each to its eternal end.]

On the other hand, what is the Lutheran teaching on the extent of election and predestination? The Formula of Concord has this to say:

"First, the distinction between the eternal foreknowledge of God and the eternal election of His children to eternal salvation, is carefully to be observed. For 'praescientia vel praevisio' (foreknowledge or prevision), that is, that God sees and knows everything before it happens, which is called God's foreknowledge, extends over all creatures, good and bad; namely, that He foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be, that is occurring or will occur, whether it be good or bad, since before God all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and present. Thus it is written, Matt. 10, 29: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.' And Ps. 139, 16: 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them.' Also Is. 37, 28: 'I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against Me.'

"The eternal election of God, however, 'vel praedestinatio' (or predestination), that is, God's ordination to salvation, does not extend at once over the godly and the wicked, but only over the children of God, who were elected and ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says, Eph. 1, 4.5: 'He hath chosen us in Him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.' 1)

The difference of Calvinism and Lutheranism on the extent of election and predestination may be summarized in the following sentences:

"1. Calvin teaches, that God predestinated and created Lucifer and his angels unto apostasy and eternal torment. We Lutherans teach, that God did not predestinate the now evil

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1) Form. Conc., Sol. Decl., Art. XI, p. 4 (Trigl., p. 1063f.)

angels unto destruction, but created them that they should remain in 'their own habitation,' Jude 6.

"2. Calvin teaches, that God does not will the salvation of all men. -We teach, that God does will the salvation of all men.

"3. Calvin teaches, that the predestination of God extends over all men, both good and bad. -We teach, that the predestination of God does not extend over all men, but only over the elect children of God.

"4. Calvin teaches, that God divided the whole human family into two parts, and predestinated both parts, the one to life, the other to death. -We teach, that God elected His children from the world, and these He predestinated, and no others.

"5. Calvin teaches, that God passes by and doomed to death the greater part of mankind. -We teach, that God passed no one by and doomed no one to death.

"6. Calvin teaches, it was the will of God that the first man, Adam, should fall. -We teach, it was the will of God that the first man, Adam, should not fall.

"7. Calvin teaches, that God created some men to eternal death. -We teach, that God creates all men to eternal life.

"8. Calvin pronounces it 'puerile and absurd' to teach an election unto life, but no predestination unto death. -We glory in that which is foolishness to men." 1)

### Proof

The proof which we bring at this time is of a two-fold nature, in conformity with the two-fold presentation above under "Definition." Therefore, we shall show from Scripture, first, that we have correctly defined "Election" in its narrower sense, i.e., that we have defined it in harmony with Scriptural usage, and second, that the Lutheran view of the extent of election is the Scriptural one.

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1) F. Kuegele, "What Is Lutheran And What Calvinistic Doctrine In The Article of Election and Predestination?" Theological Quarterly, vol. IX, p. 8 f.

1. Luke 14, 7:

"And he put forth a parable unto those which were bidden, when He marked, how they chose out the chief rooms (πρωτοκλισίας ἐξελέγοντες)."

Here the usage of ἐκλέγεσθαι is very apparent. These vain-glorious guests "picked out" for themselves the most prominent places. In this example, the choice for the subject is particularly emphasized.

2. Luke 10, 41.42:

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, (Μαρία τῆς ἀγαθῆς μερίδος ἐξελέξατο)."

Here again the choosing for oneself is emphasized. Mary chose the good part for herself, to be her part.

3. Luke 6, 13:

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve (ἐξελέξαμενος ἀπὸ αὐτῶν δωδέκας), whom he also named apostles."

This passage is a good illustration of the fact that ἐκλέγεσθαι means the taking of one or more out of many.

4. Acts 6, 2.5:

"Then the twelve called the multitude unto them.... And they chose Stephen (καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στεφάνον)."

Here again, the separation of one person from a mass of others is brought out. That is the very essence of "election."

5. John 15, 16.19:

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you....I have chosen you out of the world (ἐξ ἡ ἐξελεξαμην ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου)." —

Once more, the separation of certain individuals from the "massa redempta" is clearly evident in the technical, Scriptural use of ἐκλέξασθαι.

Of the many passages which might be adduced to prove the Scripturalness of the Lutheran teaching on the universalis gratia it seems necessary to bring forward only those which clearly teach the several points denied by Calvinism.

6. Is. 45, 22:

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

7. 1 Tim. 2, 4:

"(God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." —

These passages teach, as clearly as that is possible, that God wills the salvation of all men.

8. Ezek. 33, 11:

"As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." —

It could not be stated more plainly that God does not desire the damnation of any one.



9. Rom. 11, 5:

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

That there is an election of grace is proved by the fact that that is the very name which Scripture ascribes to this act of God.

Hence, there is no election of wrath. Calvin brings many passages, it is true, but in each case he is forced to teach what according to his reason follows from the text. The Scriptural evidence against any decree or reprobation will be further advanced in the subsequent sections. F. Kuegele put the matter well when he wrote: "There is no election of wrath. Neither is it at all necessary that men should be destined to death by a divine decree; for of themselves men rush on to destruction. But the election of grace is indeed necessary; for if God did not preserve a remnant unto Himself all the world would be as Sodom and like as Gemorrah; but the election of grace assures us that the Church is preserved alway and shall not perish." 1)

Thus, Calvinism recognizes a conflict between our conception of "gratia universalis" and "Election of Grace." All attempts to remove this logical conflict have resulted either in the doctrine of the absolute, double predestination of mankind (Calvinism), or in an election "intuitu fidei" (synergism).

However, on the relation between the "gratia universalis"

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1) F. Kuegele, loc. cit., p. 13

and the "Election of Grace" we follow strictly the pronouncements of the Word of God. First, what does Scripture say of the "gratia universalis"? "Wir folgen hier der von Pieper gegebenen Gruppierung der Beweisstellen. Zur ersten Gruppe gehoeren alle die Stellen, die als Objekt der Gnade und Liebe Gottes die ganze Welt, alle Menschen, nennen: Joh. 3, 16 (die Welt); 1 Tim. 2, 4 (alle Menschen); Tit. 2, 11 (alle Menschen); Rom. 11, 32 (alle); 1 Joh. 2, 2 (die ganze Welt); Rom. 3, 28 (der Mensch - jeder Mensch). -Die zweite Gruppe von Beweisstellen nennt ausdruuecklich enizelne Individuen als Objekte der goettlichen Liebe und des goettlichen Erbarmens: 2 Petr. 3, 9 (irgendwelche); Hesek. 33, 11 (der Gottlose). -Die dritte Gruppe von Stellen enthaelt all diejenigen Sprueche, die ausdruuecklich besagen, dass sich die Gnade Gottes auch auf diejenigen erstreckt, die schliesslich verlorengehen: 2 Pet. 2, 1 (falscher Lehrer - "verleugnen den Herrn, der sie erkauf hat"). Vgl. Matth. 23, 37. Mit Recht schreibt darum Gerhard, dass die Schrift mit Worten, Christus mit Traenen, Gott selbst mit einem Eide die allgemeine Gnade bezeugt." 1)

What, on the other hand, is the Biblical view of the "Election of Grace"?

"Wie die Schrift aber einerseits die 'universalis gratia' lehrt, so auch andererseits und mit derselben Klarheit eine Gnadenwahl. Die Hauptbeweisstellen sind ja bekannt: Eph. 1, 4 ('wie er uns denn ausgewaehlt in Christo'); Matth. 22, 14 ('wenige sind auserwaehlet'); Matth. 24, 24 ('wo es moeglich waere, auch die Auserwaehnten'); Apost. 13, 48 ('wieviel ihrer zum ewigen Leben verordnet waren'); 1 Petr. 1, 1.2 ('den erwaelhten Fremdlingen'); 2 Thess. 2, 13 ('dass euch Gott erwach-

let hat', εἶλατο ἡμᾶς )." 1)

There are distinct similarities or points of agreement between the "universalis gratia" and the "Election of Grace." Both take place from eternity (2 Tim. 1, 9; Eph. 1, 4); both, according to the same passages, take place in Christ; in the case of both the inner motive is the love and mercy of God (John 3, 16; Eph. 1, 5); both are meant seriously (Ezek. 18, 23, 32; Luke 13, 7, 8); in the case of both the goal is life everlasting (John 3, 16; Rom. 8, 30); and in both this salvation is mediated through the means of grace (1 Tim. 2, 4; Eph. 1, 9) and faith (John 3, 16; Acts 13, 48). This agreement is reasonable when we think that we are dealing, in both cases, with the one evidence of the grace of God.

On the other hand, there are distinct differences between the two. The first extends over all mankind without exception, as was seen above (John 3, 16; Rom. 11, 32), while the latter concerns only a certain few (Matt. 22, 14; Eph. 1, 4). Furthermore, the "gratia universalis," although meant seriously in every case, does not always and absolutely bring about the salvation of those for whom it is meant, for many are lost (Matt. 18, 6; 24, 10; 23, 37), either because they persistently resist the gracious will of God (Acts 7, 51), or because they belong to the temporary believers, who especially in time of temptation fall from grace (Luke 8, 13). But from the Election of Grace

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1) P. E. Kretzmann, loc. cit., p. 680

there follows with certainty the salvation of those who are chosen; because there is here no permanent falling away of those who do ~~not~~ reach salvation (Matt. 24, 24; John 10, 28.29; Rom. 8, 30). ┌

This is the Scriptural relation between the "gratia universalis" and the Election of Grace, the former at the same time definitely ruling out an election of reprobation.

"O F G R A C E"

Definition

Grace is God's kindly disposition or benevolent inclination or unmerited favor and boundless love over against the sinner who is in revolt against Him. Obviously, then, there could have been nothing in such a creature to move God to pick him out for eternal salvation. The only motive that impelled God to do this wonderful thing was His unfathomable grace (love, mercy, kindness). This is what we mean when we speak of an "Election of Grace." Grace was the "causa impulsiva" of Election.

The discussion of the false views regarding the causes of election will be reserved until the end of Part One, when the section "In Christ Jesus" will also have been discussed. There will, however, be scattered references to the false views in the discussions of the following proof passages whenever that seems particularly appropriate.

Proof

1. Eph. 1, 4: ἵνα λάβωμεν ἡμῶν . . . . πρὶ καταβολῆς κόσμου,

"He chose us . . . . before the foundation of the world."

This passage, teaching a divine choosing in eternity, has been discussed above. However, the eternity of the choice also has a bearing on its impelling motive of grace. If God chose us

already before the dawn of creation, before we had come into being, before we had done anything, either good or evil, then the motive of that choice must be sought outside of us. And if we reflect that when we did appear upon the human stage, we came already laden with sin, and began immediately to transgress actually, positively, against God, then we must admit that not only is there no cause in us for divine favor, but that there is every cause for divine wrath and displeasure. But now, behold, God has treated us just oppositely from what we have deserved. That must be the work of grace, because grace means the bestowal of good things contrary to deserts. Election is of grace.

It may be objected that although we had done nothing, either good or bad, at the time of God's election, yet God foresaw that we would embrace His Word by faith, and therefore elected us. This is the old "intuitu fidei" argument of human reason. This will be refuted later by express words of Scripture. Here we wish to reject it only in so far as it is involved in this proof of grace. It is historically untrue that God foresaw that we would believe and therefore elected us. Rather, in eternity God foresaw that we would resist His gracious operation in our hearts until the very moment when He Himself would change our stubborn hearts and make them willing. Hence, if God would have had respect only to our natural reaction and response to His advances of grace, He would never have chosen us. Again, it could happen alone by grace.

2. Eph. 1, 5: προορίσας ἡμᾶς ... κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ.

"Having predestinated us...according to the good pleasure of His will."

Again the Apostle is stressing the motive of God's foreordination to sonship, or election to salvation. This election he declares to have taken place in accordance with the εὐδοκία of God's θέλημα. The noun εὐδοκία is derived from the verb εὐδοκίω (fr. εὖ, "well," and δοκέω, "think"), which is most frequently used in the impersonal sense of "it seems good to one," and means that a person does something of his own free will, simply because he wants to do it. Hence, εὐδοκία is the good pleasure, the free decision, of God; German: "das Fuer-guthalten, Belieben, der Entschluss des Willens Gottes." Even though the characteristic of "kind intent" is involved in the term, since it is always employed only "bono sensu," yet the essential meaning is here "the free self-determination of God." The same meaning is often found in the Latin "beneplacitum," as the German "Wohlgefallen." The free determination of God's will is meant by the expression εὐδοκία τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ. The whole phrase is intended to show that this act of God, our election, was based solely on God, and not on anything outside of God. "Noch ausdruecklicher wird die Tatsache, dass Gottes Ratschluss ausschliesslich in seinem eigenen Willen begruendet ist, nicht durch irgendetwas ausser ihm veranlasst wurde, durch die Schlussworte κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ hervor-gehoben," Haupt. 1) "Es soll betont werden, dass diese vor-

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1) Quoted in Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrieŕ, p. 50

zeitliche Liebestat Gottes ihren Grund lediglich in ihm selber hatte, ohne dass etwas ausser ihm seinem Willen diese Richtung gab," Hofmann. 1) Thus, in His election and predestination God had respect unto nothing outside of Himself, unto nothing in man, in no way unto man's disposition, as the "fides praevisa," or "the cessation of obstinate resistance" (Phillipists). Because He wanted it so, and because it was in accordance with the free "Belieben" and resolution of His will, did God, before the foundation of the world, choose for Himself and ordain to sonship, certain individuals, namely, those, who are Christians to their blessed end. Again, if man's merit, in any form, even that of faith, is excluded from Election, then we are of necessity thrown on God's grace alone as its impelling motive.

3. Eph. 1, 6: eis ἕνεκεν τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ,  
"Unto praise of glory of His grace."

In the Apostle's progression of thought this is the last objective of the eternal act of God's will, namely, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." God's final purpose in our election, and the supreme end of His predestination, are the manifestation and adoring recognition of His grace in all its glory. To praise forever the grace of God in its overwhelming glory - that is the eternal occupation of the redeemed, the very object of the Predestination. The concept "grace," in itself, implies a motivation by nothing outside of itself, but that it is "causa sui," that God owes it to no one. But here Paul

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1) Quoted in Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief, p. 50



reinforces this idea and makes it very emphatic by the two qualifying terms ἴπαινον δόξης. If there were any merit in man for his election, why lavish eternal praise on God's grace? And if "grace" leaves any room for human merit, why speak of its "glory"? That would be poor glory indeed. Thus we see that Paul again is most insistent that we regard our election purely as the product of God's grace, and that we understand "grace" not only as unmerited favor, but favor which is actually contrary to deserts.

4. Eph. 1, 6: ἡς ἰχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς.

"Which He freely bestowed on us."

In this relative clause St. Paul most forcefully enforces the idea of the Election of Grace. The verb which he here uses, χαριτώω, means "to bestow grace on one," so that we have here the idiom χαίρει χαριτοῦν, parallel to the idiom ἀγαπᾷν ἀγαπᾶν, for the ἡς is the attracted form, standing for the accusative ἡν. But such expressions as χαίρει χαριτοῦν and ἀγαπᾷν ἀγαπᾶν emphasize most strongly, by repetition, the basic thoughts of the phrases, in these cases "grace" and "love." The Apostle could not more forcibly express the thought that our election is the product of God's grace, for, says he, it is due solely to the grace wherewith He "graced" us. All the rich meaning of χάρις lies in the verb χαριτώω.

5. Eph. 1, 7: κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ.

"According to the riches of His grace."

The sequence of thought is this: God's election had as its final purpose the praise of His grace; that election had as its objective basis, as is expressed in the sentence immediately preceding the clause under consideration, the work of Christ, and both of these, the election and the work of Christ were "according to the riches of His grace." To say that the Election was "according to the riches of His grace" is merely presenting the "causa impulsiva" of God's eternal election under another figure. The motive itself is once more stated to be grace, but here it is characterized as consisting of riches, God's own riches. Reflecting on the figure, we soon feel its effectiveness and striking character; we see that it is calculated to exalt the concept of grace as being undeserved love and favor. That is precisely why our election is according to the riches of God's grace, namely, because it is contrary to all that we deserve, indicating total absence of worthiness on our part. If there were any merit to be claimed by us, that would seriously detract from the "riches" of God's grace; that grace would not be so rich and generous after all, because, by our merit, we would have a rightful claim upon it. Considering, however, what miserable sinners we really are, we are forced to the admission that God's grace had to be rich indeed, yea, inexhaustible, to bring us to salvation. Our election had to be by grace.

6. Eph. 1, 9: γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,

"In that He made known to us the mystery of His will."

The Apostle has just stated the particular forms in which God made His grace to abound towards us, namely, by giving us insight and practical intelligence with regard to His saving counsel. Now he becomes yet more explicit and says that God did this by giving us to know a certain secret of His will. This secret -the New Testament use of μυστήριον signifies something once hidden but now revealed, a secret now open -includes all that has gone before, beginning with the ἰκλογία. Our election, therefore, is the μυστήριον of God's θέλημα, and this thought is in striking parallelism to the one discussed above, namely, that our election is according to the εὐδοκία of God's θέλημα. Hence, here the Apostle is stressing the unmerited quality of our election from this side that it is due solely to God's will, and not to anything of moral worth in us. Election is once more declared to be of grace.

7. Eph. 1, 9: κατὰ εὐδοκίαν σου.

"According to His good pleasure."

So solicitous is St. Paul that his readers understand the true motive of their election that he heaps one qualifying and explanatory phrase upon another, repeating and reinforcing his thought again and again, so that there will be no possibility of misunderstanding this wonderful and vital matter. Again, therefore, he lays it down as an eternal truth that our election is the result of "the free self-determination of God" and of nothing else; it is "of grace."

8. Eph. 1, 9: ἣν προέθετο,

"Which He purposed beforehand."

The relative ἣν in this clause refers to the foregoing εὐδοκία. The εὐδοκία of God, His free self-determination to choose to Himself, was determined on "before," was purposed in eternity, before any moral quality attached to us, for we were not yet existent. Grace alone, therefore, can explain to us why God chose us.

9. Eph. 1, 11: προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,

"Having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His will."

Again all human worth and merit are necessarily excluded from the Predestination, for that, as we are told in these words, was performed κατὰ πρόθεσιν θεοῦ, "according to the purpose of God." Election was His idea, it originated entirely with Him; man knew nothing about the whole matter until God Himself revealed what He had already done. This election, again, was κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, "according to the deliberate counsel of His will." The sovereign will of God alone proposed our election; we did not come into consideration at all, except, as was shown above, that we were the ones to praise God for His undeserved mercy. But we were not regarded in the least as moving God to choose us. Only His grace was responsible for that. Man is excluded by the θελημα. "But that the divine foreordination is neither a thing of necessity on the one hand

nor of caprice on the other, but a thing of freedom and of thought; and further that the reasons for that foreordination do not lie in the objects themselves, but are intrinsic to the Divine Mind and the free determination of the Divine Will," 1) that is brought out by the insertion of κατὰ βουλήν. Again, if merit on the part of man and necessity on the part of God both are excluded, then grace alone remains as the "causa impulsiva" of the Predestination.

10. Eph. 1, 12: εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ.

"To the end that we should be to the praise of His glory."

Again the great purpose of the eternal Election is stated. We should be to the praise of God's glory. This is the second statement of the final purpose of our election. It was first stated in verse 6, where χάρις was inserted, in the phrase, εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ. Essentially the same thought is expressed in both statements: namely, this, that we must say of our salvation, and specifically of our election, "Soli Deo Gloria." But this is just another way of saying that our election is of grace, for if God is to receive all glory for it, then no credit can accrue to us.

11. Eph. 1, 14: εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

"To the praise of His glory."

For the third time in this brief section St. Paul states

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1) Expos. Gr. Test., vol. III, p. 264

as the final purpose of election the glory of God. He has done all the choosing; He is to get all the glory. The difference between this statement and the one just considered is that in the former Paul was speaking of Jewish believers, whereas here he is referring to Gentile Christians. In the case of both the Election is identical, it is solely for the praise of God's glory, it is of grace alone.

As in the first section of Part One, so here also we shall show from other Scripture passages that Holy Writ is unanimous in its expressions on the question of Election by grace.

12. 2 Tim. 1, 9:

"God has saved us and called us with a holy call, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before world-periods of aeons."

These words are among the grandest in all Scripture. The relative "who" refers to the word "God" in the preceding verse. In this quotation we wish to emphasize the words, "God hath... called us...not according to works, but according to His own purpose and grace." These words are great and mighty, and they shatter absolutely all theory of an "intuitu fidei" in just so many words. If faith were in any measure or degree responsible for our election, and be it ever so slight, then faith would be a work in the Biblical sense of the term. But that, or any other "work" imaginable, is here ruled out so plainly and definitely and emphatically that a child can understand it, "God called us, not according to works." And then, to exclude the

remotest possibility of misunderstanding or error, the Apostle states the other side, the true state of affairs, the real cause of our election, "but according to His own purpose and grace." Words so simple and plain require no exegesis; they need only to be quoted; they clinch the matter - predestination is "of grace."

13. Rom. 9, 11:

"In order that the purpose of God according to election might remain, not of works but of Him who calls."

This passage, and the incident to which it refers, places the doctrine of Election, from the angle under consideration, in such a clear light that it would seem incapable of misunderstanding. The Apostle Paul here adduces a concrete example showing that Election must be "of grace." The reference is to Rebecca and her two sons, Esau and Jacob. God had told the mother, "the elder shall serve the younger," 1) and also "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." 2) All this, says the Apostle, took place "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil." 3) When, as yet, both were unborn, and so morally neutral, God determined their courses. And why did God do it at that time? The answer is contained in the words quoted above: "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." So here we have the amazing revelation that God did this in order to vindicate the Election of Grace, to prevent

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1) Rom. 9, 12  
2) Rom. 9, 13  
3) Rom. 9, 11

any one from thinking the choice was prompted by merit, by works. Again, all human merit, even the subtle forms as "faith" and "non-resistence," are "expressis verbis" ruled out. Election is "not of works," but "of Him that calleth," and from the above passages we know that this is only another way of saying that it is "of grace."

14. Jer. 31, 3:

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

The passage before us is another one of the sublimest in Scripture. Jehovah, through His prophet, speaks to His people, "the Remnant." That they were His people was due entirely to God; for with lovingkindness had He drawn them to Him, to be His people. That had taken place in time, and was only the result of something which had taken place in eternity - the boundless love of God. God had loved them with an everlasting love and therefore had He drawn them. Their present affectionate relation to God was the result, was caused by, the eternal love of God. That is presenting the doctrine of Predestination in Old Testament language. God has drawn us, has made us believers and heirs of salvation in time, because in eternity He loved us, or chose us. But this was an "everlasting love," God loved and chose us before we could have done anything good, yea, in spite of the fact that He foresaw that we would do only evil. Such election is plainly of grace, even as "love" and "grace" are synonyms in Holy Scripture.



15. Eph. 2, 5:

"By grace are ye saved."

Scripture pictures our salvation as a process, beginning in eternity. But this salvation, from first to last, from predestination to final preservation, is "of grace."

16. Rom. 11, 5:

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Paul is arguing for the existence of a "remnant," of the Jews even in his day, when they all seemed to be hardened against the Gospel of Christ. But just so, says he, it appeared to Elijah in his day. He complained that he alone had remained faithful to the Lord, but God informed him there were 7000 others who had refused to bow the knee to Baal. And just so, argues Paul, it is at the present time. The Jewish nation may appear to have rejected their Messiah in their entirety. But that cannot be, because what, then, could become of the Election of God? Yes, there is a remnant, "according to the election of grace." That Election which salvaged even some of the Jews for the Kingdom of God, had to be "of grace." And so it is with us. Paul uses the phrase "Election of Grace" as a technical term, and we, in stating our doctrine, have merely taken over his language and incorporated it in our definition. Hence our definition of Election, in this particular, not only agrees with Scripture, but is expressed in the very language of Scripture. It must, therefore be correct. It must be an "Election of Grace."

"I N C H R I S T J E S U S"

Definition

It has been stated that grace was the "causa impulsiva" of the eternal Election. We come not to the "causa meritoria" of that divine decree. God, who foresaw the fall of man into sin, was nevertheless just in choosing some to eternal life, and not damning them forever, as He had threatened, because this choosing was done on the basis of the merits of Jesus Christ. He bore the eternal punishment of sin in man's stead, so that God, in pardoning sin, and, first of all, in predestinating man to salvation, is still just. His threat was carried out, to the letter; man's debt was paid, to the last farthing; sin was punished eternally - in Christ.

Hence, we cannot think of our election in any other way than in Christ, never outside of Christ. If we leave Christ out of consideration, then one of two things must follow: either God's grace falls, for if God did not choose us "per Christum," i.e., "propter Christum," then He must have chosen us because of something good in us; or God's justice falls, because if He chose us by grace, i.e., in spite of our sins, and still not in Christ, then He ceases to be just. Therefore, Christ must be the element in which we live, for outside of Him we must perish.

The requirement, "In Christ Jesus," has another important implication for the doctrine of Predestination. "Christ" means

"Anointed," "Messiah," the One promised to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. This Messiah was promised for the whole world. Hence, there can be no decree of damnation. "Jesus" means "Savior," the Savior of the whole world. Again there could be no decree of reprobation.

Proof

1. Eph. 1, 3: ὁ ἐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει ἐλόγια πνευματικῆ  
ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ

"Who has blessed us with every kind of spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ."

Paul here praises God because He has blessed us so wonderfully, namely, with every kind of spiritual blessing. In the succeeding verses he mentions these various blessings, beginning with our election. That, of course, is the beginning of all the others. To this agrees very well the ἐν οὐρανοῖς, which names the place where these wondrous blessings originated, namely, heaven, the dwelling place of God. Especially the Election was made in heaven, by God Himself, before the world began. But now of all these spiritual blessings, and so in particular of election, St. Paul specifically says that they came about ἐν Χριστῷ. This phrase, as also ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν ᾧ, is found in this letter, as in all of Paul's epistles, in very different connections. Wherever ~~is~~ in the context that is spoken of which God has done, or still does, for us, or has given or still gives to us, this phrase indicates that all of God's doing, benevolence, and gifts are mediated through Christ.

In this case the "per Christum" merges into the "Propter Christum." For these spiritual gifts and blessings are mediated to us through Christ, in so far as Christ has won and merited them. This in may also be regarded as causal and be rendered "in," as giving the element, in which being found, we receive these things. Meyer has paraphrased it thus: "In Christo war jenes an uns vollzogene εὐλογεῖν begründet; nicht ausser Christo, sondern in ihm hat es ursächlich beruht, dass uns Gott mit jedem geistlichen Segen segnete, da seine Erloesungstat die 'causa meritoria' dieser goettlichen Segensspendung ist."

1) Thus, at the very outset Paul very emphatically states the "causa meritoria" of our election as being "in Christ."

2. Eph. 1, 4: καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ.

"Even as he has chosen us in him."

Again St. Paul states this phase of the doctrine of election in language so clear and unmistakable that we could do no better than incorporate his very words into our definition. Here is stated in just so many words that we are elect in Christ, His work being the "causa meritoria," of the divine act, as mentioned above.

3. Eph. 1, 5: προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

"Having foreordained us unto adoption of sons through Jesus Christ."

From these words we learn that the Decree of Election of <sup>7</sup>

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1) Quoted in Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief, p. 36

God involves the foreordination of sonship. God has chosen us for Himself, has selected us to be His own, and this relation to God is here more closely defined as sonship. This choosing to sonship is nothing else than the Election; ἡ ἐκλογή is employed by Paul as a synonym of ἡ κληΐω. And once more he stresses the fact that this foreordination to divine sonship took place διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "through Christ Jesus." This is the familiar "per Christum," which in more concrete terms means "propter Christum." And this in turn is but a restatement of the "causa meritoria."

4. Eph. 1, 6: ἡ ἡμεῖς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ  
"Which He bestowed upon us freely in the Beloved."

As regards the Election, the sequence of thought in this passage is as follows. God foreordained us to sonship, for the purpose of extolling His grace. Hence, the basis of our election is God's grace, the "causa impulsiva." But this grace again could not do violence to God's justice, and so it required a justifying basis before it could be given expression. This is the "causa meritoria," the work of Christ. It is here drawn into the matter of election in this way that the grace which moved God to choose us is said to rest "in" or "upon" "the Beloved," the Christ. Or we may connect the ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ immediately with the ἡμεῖς, and say that we are "graced" or elected "in the Beloved". This would again be stating the element of our spiritual life, namely, Christ and His merits. Outside of that element we could exist spiritually as little

as a fish could live out of water. Thus we find that the expression ἐν Χριστῷ or ἐν ἀντῷ, ἐν ᾧ really combines two thoughts, namely, the thought that here we have the solution of the preservation of God's justice in Election, and that we are elected always as being found in Christ, our proper element. The title "the Beloved" is filled with comfort for us. Christ, the eternal Son of God, is by essence God's Beloved. But if we are found in Him, then we too, by virtue of that fact, are beloved of God. Only "in the Beloved" are we chosen to salvation; there is no other "causa meritoria."

5. Eph. 1, 7: ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος  
αὐτοῦ,

"In whom we have the redemption through His blood."

This clause follows immediately upon the foregoing one and gives in the plainest possible terms the explanation of the foregoing expression ἐν ᾧ ἡγαπημένοι. We are elected in Christ; and now Paul says that that means, or rather, is true, because "we have redemption through His blood." The "causa meritoria" could not be stated more concretely. Here the very essence of that merit, its very history, is stated. It consists in this, that Jesus Christ shed His blood for us on Calvary. That is the merit of eternal value upon the basis of which God, perfectly just with regard to sin, could choose sinful man to eternal salvation. That blood redeems, buys us free from the guilt, power, dominion, and eternal punishment of sin.

6. Eph. 1, 10: ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκλεγρώθημεν προορισθέντες.

"In Him, in whom also we were chosen in that we were foreordained."

7. Eph. 1, 13: ἐν ᾧ (Χριστῷ) καὶ ὑμεῖς .... ἐσφραγίσθητε ὑπὸ πνεύματι,

"In Whom also you...were sealed by the Spirit."

The former of these two statements speaks of the Jewish Christians, the latter of the Gentile Christians. And in both cases the Election is said to be ἐν αὐτῷ, i.e., "in Christ." In the first it is plainly said that "we were chosen in Him." What this must mean we have shown above in several passages, namely, that God's justice could remain inviolate only if He chose sinners in Christ, and, on the other side, sinners can be chosen by God and by Him regarded as saints only in Christ, their spiritual life, never outside of Him. In the case of the Gentile Christians Paul states, not the fact of their predestination, but a result of it, namely, their being sealed unto salvation by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit could not assure them of their salvation if they had not first been elected to salvation. But this sealing, as necessarily its precedent basis, election, is said to be ἐν ᾧ, i.e. ἐν Χριστῷ. So by taking the two above statements together we can formulate a universal truth, including both Jew and Gentile, and admitting of no exception, namely, that election can take place only "in Christ," on the basis of His merits. This and this alone, is the "causa meritoria" of the eternal Election.

8. 2 Tim. 1, 9:

"(God) has saved us and called us with a holy call, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before world-periods of aeons."

Again we are invited to contemplate this grand passage of St. Paul's to Timothy. God called us to salvation; this calling took place before the world began, and hence is equivalent to predestination. But note the clear and emphatic position of "in Christ Jesus." The words follow immediately upon "us." This great and undeserved gift, election to salvation, was given us before the world began, but only in so far as, and because, we were thought of "in Christ Jesus." His work, the vicarious atonement, must ever remain the one and only "causa meritoria" of eternal election. The apostle states this truth so clearly here that misunderstanding would appear to be excluded.

9. Eph. 3, 11:

"According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As was pointed out above, Paul, in this passage, is speaking of the "mystery" which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," which "mystery" he explains thus: "that the gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." But the execution in time of this mystery, or, we may say, the conversion of both Jew and Gentile in any age of the world's history, is now said to take place "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." In other



words, the sequence, in inverted order, is this: conversion<sup>7</sup> rests on eternal election, but eternal election, in turn, rests on "Christ Jesus, our Lord"; His work of fulfilling the Law, suffering and dying, is once more clearly and emphatically stated to be the objective basis and ground of Predestination. ]

10. Rom. 5, 10:

"When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

This passage from the great Epistle to the Romans sheds a new and brilliant light on the point under consideration. Once more the objective basis of Election is stated in terms as concrete as human language and thought can make them. Man became God's enemy by his rebellion. And yet, notwithstanding their hostile disposition over against Him, God loved the guilty rebels and proposed their salvation, salvation for all. Yea, He went further and explicitly chose certain ones to salvation, in spite of the fact that they were His enemies. But how, then, was God's justice and holiness to remain inviolate? How was God to be reconciled to man? The answer lies in the words, "by the death of His Son." That was the basis of all reconciliation, and, long before its actual accomplishment, predestination.

11. 2 Cor. 5, 18, 19:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

These wonderful words state the method of the reconciliation between God and man. Everything that was contributed toward that reconciliation came from the side of God. Man did nothing; God did everything. But note the precise method adopted by God: He reconciled the world to Himself "by Jesus Christ," and when the actual reconciling was taking place, God was "in Christ." All this points to a very definite event in history; it points to the vicarious death of Jesus Christ on Mt. Calvary. There, and in that manner, the actual reconciliation was accomplished. But that reconciliation had to exist between God and man before God could think of actually choosing and predestinating certain sinful beings to heaven. And we find that it did exist in the eternal Decree of redemption, which with God was as valid as the accomplished historical fact, for with God there is no time. But the point is that there could be no predestination without reconciliation, and that the method of reconciliation, as here unmistakably set down, was the vicarious death of Christ. Hence, the "satisfactio vicaria" is the basis of election, God's eternal election of grace was "in Christ Jesus."

Before concluding Part One, it may be advisable to sum up, first of all, what the passages considered above teach regarding any possible other cause of eternal election beside the two mentioned, namely, the "causa impulsiva" (the grace of God), and the "causa meritoria" (the suffering and death of Christ). The passages, especially under the section last considered,

"In Christ Jesus" state the matter so as to deal a single, final, crushing blow to the "Intuitu Fidei" doctrine. This is done positively in all those places where it is said that our election took place in Christ, on the basis of His mediatorial work. Nothing is said of man's cooperation or influence in the matter. Whenever any cause is mentioned as furnishing the basis for our election, it is always Christ, and Christ alone. But lest some one should attack this as an argument from silence, and therefore still insist that man plays a part in his election, be it ever so minor, as for instance non-resistance and its consequent favorable disposition leading to faith, the Apostle states also the negative side, which leaves no possible room for argument. This is done in all those places where the writer, not implicitly, but definitely and explicitly, excludes man and all his "favorable" qualifications from the matter of Election. Thus, we are elected, according to St. Paul, "not according to our works" but according to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. St. Paul teaches that we were chosen "when we were enemies." Expressions such as these settle the matter. God did not elect us because He foresaw that we would believe. We know this because Scripture points us, not to any "intuitu fidei," but to the merits of Christ our Savior. On the other hand, God did foresee something in us, that is, on our part. But that was not faith, but active, persistent resistance to the very moment when, through His Spirit, He made of our unwilling and obstinate hearts willing and obedient ones. And finally, any credit on man's part detracts from the glory of

Christ's merit, and this, with one voice, the Holy Scriptures will not tolerate.

In order to bring this Scriptural, and therefore Lutheran, teaching into sharper relief, it may be well, in the second place, to contrast it with the teachings of Calvinism. What are the Calvinistic and Lutheran views on the CAUSES OF ELECTION?

Regarding election an act of the absolute will of God in His independent sovereignty, Calvin, in fact, allows no cause of election whatever, unless the absolute will of God be called a cause. According to Calvin's doctrine, God ordained men unto salvation simply and only because He wanted it so, moved there-to by nothing, in consideration of nothing, but exclusively regarding His own will. Grace as an impelling motive, or Christ and His merits as the meritorious cause, are to Calvin not causes of election, but by a decree of His absolute will God set apart some men for salvation, and their redemption through Christ is only a consequence of that decree. Calvin's doctrine is thus based on absolutism pure and simple, predestination for no cause or reason whatever, save only the absolute will of sovereignty. His words on this matter leave no room for doubt. He says: "When God is said to harden or show mercy to whom He pleases, men are taught by this declaration to seek no cause beside His will." 1)

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1) Calvin, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 163

The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, teaches that there are two causes of Election: the grace of God and the merits of Christ. She confesses, furthermore, that these are the only two causes of Election. In Article XI. of the Epitome, Negative 4, the Lutheran Church condemns the view "that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us there is a cause of God's election, on account of which God has elected us to everlasting life." 1) This too she classifies among the "blasphemous and dreadful erroneous doctrine, whereby all comfort which they have in the Holy Gospel and the use of the Holy Sacraments is taken from Christians, and therefore should not be tolerated in the Church of God." 2) The difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism on this point may be summed up thus:

"1. Calvin teaches that there is no cause of election save alone the absolute will of God. -We Lutherans teach that there are two causes of election: the grace of God and the merits of Christ.

"2. Calvin teaches that Christ and His merits are not a cause of election, but only a means to carry out the absolute decree of God. -We teach that Christ and His merits are the ground, foundation, and cause of election.

"3. Calvin teaches that there is no cause of election in man, because God exclusively regarded His own absolute will. -We teach that there is no cause of election in man, because man is altogether corrupt." 3)

What are the Calvinistic and Lutheran views on the BASIS OF ELECTION? According to our doctrine, election rests on the redemption in Christ Jesus; according to Calvin's doctrine,

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1) Con. Trigl., p. 837

2) Ibid., p. 837

3) F. Kuegele, loc. cit., p. 86 f

election rests on the essential attributes of God independent of Christ. We teach an election of grace, Calvin teaches an election of sovereignty. J

That this is Calvin's doctrine is plain from his own statements. He says: "God's sovereign election of some and preterition of others, they" (Calvin's opponents) "make the subject of formal accusation against Him." 1) What Calvin means by a 'sovereign election' he himself explains in these words: "The conclusion is, that God creates whom He chooses to be His children by gratuitous adoption; that the cause of this is wholly in Himself; because He exclusively regards His own secret determination." 2) By "sovereign election" Calvin, therefore, means that God had regard neither of sin, nor of Christ, nor of redemption, but "exclusively" of "His own secret determination," i.e., His absolute will. That Calvin taught that the salvation of the elect was decided upon before, and independently of, redemption, is plain from his treatise on Christ as our Mediator. There he says: J

"It was of great importance to our interests that He, who was to be our Mediator, should be both true God and true man. If an inquiry be made concerning the necessity of this, it was not, indeed, a simple, or, as we commonly say, an absolute necessity, but such as arose from the heavenly decree, on which the salvation of men depended. But our most merciful Father has appointed that which was best for us." 3)

Only because the Father thought it best was Christ, as Calvin says, "destined by the eternal decree of God to purify the pollution of men; because the effusion of blood is an emblem of expiation." 4)

1) Calvin, Inst., vol. II, p. 150

2) Ibid., vol. II, p. 158

3) Ibid., vol. I, p. 419

4) Ibid., vol. I, p. 422

The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, teaches that on the basis of the atonement in Christ; God, without a violation of justice, can and does elect sinners unto salvation. In the Eleventh Article of the Formula of Concord we confess: "Accordingly, this eternal election of God is to be considered in Christ, and not outside of or without Christ. For 'in Christ,' the Apostle Paul testifies, Eph. 1, 4 f., 'He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, as it is written: He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' This election, however, is revealed from heaven through the preaching of His Word, when the Father says, Matt. 17, 5; 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.' And Christ says, Matt. 11, 28: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' And concerning the Holy Ghost Christ says, John 16, 14: 'He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' Thus the entire Holy Trinity, God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, directs all men to Christ, as to the Book of Life, in whom they should seek the eternal election of the Father. For this has been decided by the Father from eternity, that whom He would save He would save through Christ, as He Himself says, John 14, 6: 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' And again, John 10, 9: 'I am the Door; by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.'" 1)

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1) Op. cit., p. 1084 f

The points of difference regarding the basis of Election may be summarized thus: 7

"1. Calvin teaches that the mere absolute will of God, independently of Christ, is the foundation of election. -We teach that the grace of God as merited by Jesus Christ is the foundation of election.

"2. Calvin separates mercy and justice, and teaches that God resolved to glorify each separately. -We teach that God harmonized and glorified both His mercy and His justice in the sending of His Son.

"3. Calvin teaches that God elected unredeemed sinners to salvation. -We teach that God elected from the human race as redeemed in Christ.

"4. Calvin teaches that the elect could and would have been saved without the incarnation, suffering, and death of Christ. -We teach that without the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ no man could have been elected and saved.

"5. Calvin teaches that the secret absolute decree of God is the foundation of the plan of salvation. -We teach that Christ is the foundation of the whole plan of salvation." 1) 7

The expressions from Ephesians 1, 3-14 and from other portions of Scripture which we have so far discussed present the Scriptural concept of Election in Eternity, or the divine Decree of Election. It is eternal, taking place before the foundation of the world; it is an actual choosing of certain persons from the "massa redempta"; it is an election of grace, God's kind and affectionate disposition toward a rebellious world being its only "causa impulsiva"; it is an election "in Christ Jesus," the vicarious satisfaction of the Savior of the world being the only "causa meritoria." 7

We turn our attention now to the Scriptural concept of Election in Time, or the Execution of the Eternal Decree of Predestination. We shall follow the same mode of procedure as

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1) F. Kuegele, loc. cit., p. 18 f



in Part One, treating each phase of the Execution under "Definition" and "Proof."

(Theology is the)

JUSTIFICATION

Definition

The term "justification" is used in a wider and in a narrower sense, and is accordingly classified as "objective" or "subjective."

Objective or general justification is the imputation, by God, to all mankind, of the merits, the perfect righteousness, of Christ. Christ has placed his blood for the sins of all men, and God therefore has imputed the merits of Christ to all men who believe in himself, not imputing their transgressions unto them, but has imputed to them a righteousness for their sake. By objective justification he declares the sins of all men forgiven, and that they are accounted as if they had never sinned. The redemption of the whole world is an accomplished fact.

Subjective, or individual, justification is the application by God to the individual of the righteousness of Christ. It is the imputation of his righteousness to the individual who believes in Christ, and by faith he receives the benefits of the general or objective justification. It is the personal application by God of the general or objective justification to the believer by faith. Thus an individual is justified by faith in the objective justification, the

PART TWO

THE EXECUTION OF THE DIVINE DECREE OF PREDESTINATION

(Election in Time)

J U S T I F I C A T I O N

Definition

The term "justification" is used in a wider and in a narrower sense, and is accordingly classified as "objective" or "subjective."

Objective or general justification is the imputation, by God, to all mankind, of the merit, the perfected righteousness, of Christ. Christ has atoned for the sins of all men, and God therefore has in the death of Christ reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, but has instead declared them just for Christ's sake. By objective justification God declares the sins of all men forgiven, paid for by the suffering and death of the Redeemer. The redemption of the whole world is an accomplished fact.

Subjective, or individual, justification is the application by God to the individual of the righteousness of Christ the moment that individual comes to faith, and by faith accepts the general or objective justification offered in the Gospel. It is the personal application by God of the general or objective Justification to the believer by faith. When an individual by faith takes as his own the objective justification, the

perfect righteousness, prepared and completed by Christ for the whole world, God declares him personally and individually justified. It will be seen that subjective justification is synchronous with conversion or regeneration.

Now when we speak of justification as the first step in the execution of the divine Decree of Predestination, we mean subjective justification. Whenever God in conversion declares the sinner justified who appropriates by faith the merits of the Redeemer, He is carrying out His own eternal Election of Grace. In this way subjective justification is based on objective justification. Before proceeding with that point, however, it may be well to investigate the nature and extent of objective justification. The following paragraphs bring this out.

"The sinner must know that God had him personally in mind on Easter Day and all along when Christ lived and suffered and died for the world. 'Personally' -that word belongs here. Unless that word (or a similar one) is used in presenting the doctrine of the objective justification, the comfort of justification by faith cannot be brought home to the individual. We have no objection to Dr. Lenski's proposal to characterize the subjective justification as personal justification. We know what he means. But we do not accept that proposal in the sense that the objective justification is not of a personal nature. Indeed it is. J. Schaller puts it in this emphatic way: 'The universality of salvation must not be thought of or preached in such a manner as to deny or cloud its individual application. Christ did not die for the world, or mankind, in the abstract, but He lived, suffered, and died for each one of those individuals whom we comprehend under the abstract concepts of the world, or mankind. His work is the salvation of the world because in Him every human being fulfilled the Law and died for his guilt. The sinner does not make a general salvation applicable to himself by faith; if that were true, salvation would not be complete before man performs the act of faith. On the contrary, by faith the individual accepts the salvation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption procured for him personally by Christ. Hence this salvation is just as perfect and complete for those who are finally lost. This is the only reason, but a sufficient one, why he that believeth not shall be damned. Unbelief is the rejection of life and salvation achieved and personally intended for every

unbeliever.' (Biblical Christology, p. 135) And you know what we mean by personal in this connection.

"One other point needs to be brought out. Are we ready to say that the sins of all men, the sins also of the unbelievers, are forgiven them? That is exactly what objective, universal, justification means. And one who refuses to take the objective justification to mean exactly that, cannot, if he knows the meaning of the terms, teach a justification by faith. Here there are but two alternatives. The first is: Man is justified by faith, by accepting the pardon issued to all in the Gospel, by relying on the objective justification, the forgiveness of sins obtained for him before he believed. The second is: There is no objective justification; the only justification there is takes place when a sinner believes; on account of, or on the condition, of this his faith God forgives him his sins. What does justification 'by faith' mean in this second alternative? What does the sinner believe? This, that God has already forgiven him his sins for Christ's sake? No, for there is no objective justification. What, then, is the function of faith? It cannot be the apprehending medium, for there is nothing offered, Christ has not gained the forgiveness that might be offered. So it is 'faith' that effects the change in God's heart; God forgives sin because of faith as a human achievement or the fulfilment of a condition imposed by God. Thus justification by 'faith' is no longer a justification by faith, a justification as a free gift, but a justification by works, in consequence of man's right conduct. Justification by 'faith' has become a Pelagianistic, synergistic affair." 1)

### Proof

1. Eph. 1, 4: ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αἰτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."

Before the foundation of the world in the eternal council of His grace, God determined our salvation, decided to save us, predestinated us. This was the Election of Grace, which, however, could not do violence to God's justice. God foresaw, but did not decree, man's fall into sin, and His justice demanded punishment of sin. Therefore, together with the eternal Decree

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1) Th. Engelder, C. T. M., Vol. IV, p. 674 f

of Election there was another eternal decree, that of Redemp-  
 tion. By it God purposed to prepare a way of salvation for a  
 lost and fallen world through the vicarious atonement of His  
 Son, Jesus Christ. By that atonement God's justice was satis-  
 fied, sin was not overlooked but was punished, and all men were  
 justified. Objective justification is thus the basis of sub-  
 jective justification, which, in turn, is part of the execution  
 of the divine Decree of Election. This truth St. Paul teaches  
 in the above quotation when he says that God chose us "in Him,"  
 that is, in Christ. God, to remain just, could choose us only  
 because of the satisfaction Christ rendered for our sins; and,  
 conversely, because God did choose us sinful creatures unto  
 life eternal, there had to be also an atonement for sin. This  
 God provided by sending His only-begotten Son into the world,  
 to be the Redeemer of mankind.

2. Eph. 1, 5: προορίσας ἡμᾶς ... διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

"Having foreordained us through Christ Jesus."

The term προορίσας, as we have seen above, refers to the  
 divine act of Predestination before the foundation of the world.  
 But this was not an absolute predestination. God did not simply  
 choose us for heaven without any regard to the great question  
 of sin. Therefore God predestinated us "through Christ Jesus,"  
 for He it was who, "by the determinate counsel and fore-  
 knowledge of God," was to bear all sins in His own body on  
 the tree. This is the force of the "through Christ Jesus."  
 It gives the basis for Election, is, in fact, inseparable  
 from the Election itself, and is usually mentioned together  
 with the divine decree.

3. Eph. 1, 6: ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, "In the Beloved."

Again the manner in which God's eternal Election of Grace began to find fulfilment is plainly stated. The Predestination took place "in the Beloved," that is, in the Beloved of God, Jesus Christ, His only Son, whom the Father Himself called "my beloved Son." 1) To say that the Election took place "in the Beloved" means that it was based on the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. This is stated by the Evangelist St. John thus: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," 2) this is the basis for subjective justification, the first stage of Election in Time. Before God could bring us to faith, forgive our sins individually, and bring us to final salvation, there had to be an object and a basis for it all. And such we have in the merits of Christ. This is what St. Paul expresses when he says that our election was "in the Beloved."

4. Eph. 1, 7: διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ,

"Through His blood."

The relative αὐτοῦ refers to the preceding ἡγαπημένῳ, that is, to Christ, the beloved Son of God. The great thought of the paragraph is, of course, the eternal ἱκλόγη of God. The subordinate clauses throughout the section

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1) Matt. 3, 17

2) John 3, 16

always modify this thought. Here, then, we find the basis of our election stated very concretely. In this phrase we have an actual historical reference to the completion of the basis for the first phase of election in time. "The blood of Christ" takes us to Calvary and to the crucifixion of the Son of God, by which He secured perfect righteousness for the whole world. This we call objective justification. Only on the basis of this objective justification, appropriated by faith, could God justify subjectively and so begin the execution of the divine Decree of Election.

5. Eph. 1, 10: ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἠκλυσάμεν προορισθῆντας,

"In Him, In Whom we were also chosen, in that we were predestinated."

In this verse St. Paul makes a double reference to the objective basis of the divine Election. Both the personal and the relative pronouns refer to Christ. Twice it is stated that our election took place in Him. That is a reference, as has been said, to a definite historical occurrence, namely, to the vicarious atonement accomplished on the cross. That was not only the basis of election, but, being its basis, it became also the basis for subjective justification, which is the first step in its temporal execution, the first link in that marvelous chain by which God takes His chosen ones, dead in trespasses and sins, and makes them heirs of salvation.

Passages from other portions of Holy Scripture sub-

stantiating this very important truth of Ephesians 1, that the objective basis of our election is Christ and His merit, are so numerous that only the most salient ones can be mentioned.

6. Eph. 3. 11:

"According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This passage was quoted above to show that the objective basis or ground of justification was the vicarious atonement of Christ. Considered as a historical fact, this atonement becomes the basis for the first phase of Election in Time, namely, for the subjective justification of the sinner. Before the conversion of a single sinner could take place, there had to be a Savior to whom the sinner could turn. In the Old Testament He was the Savior of promise, and in the New Testament He is the Savior of fulfilment. In both cases an actual, historical redemption lies at the bottom of conversion.

7. 2 Tim. 1. 9:

"Who (God) hath saved us ... according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

In this passage St. Paul says that the grace of God was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. In eternity God was gracious to us and therefore elected us to eternal salvation. But He did this "in Christ Jesus." The merits of the God-appointed Redeemer, His suffering and death, are made the



objective basis on which the Decree of Predestination was made. But if this was the basis of God's eternal Election of Grace, then it had to be also the basis for subjective justification, which begins its temporal execution.

8. 1 Pet. 1, 20:

"Who (Christ) verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." 7

This passage contains the account of the second divine decree, the Decree of Redemption. This decree, of necessity, goes hand in hand with the divine Decree of Election. Both were made in eternity. Since once was made in eternity, the other had to be made then also. God chose us in eternity, but that election had to have a basis which would satisfy the justice of God. That basis was the vicarious death of Christ. And therefore also that death had to be decreed from eternity, simultaneously with the Decree of Election. And so it was, as we learn from this passage. The particular reconciliation of the world to God through the blood of His own Son was decreed "before the foundation of the world." This being the fore-ordained basis of election, it follows that it was the basis also of subjective justification, the first step in the practical execution of that eternal decree. J

9. Acts 2, 23:

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." J

The Apostle St. Peter, in his great sermon on Pentecost Day, convicts the Jews of the murder of the Son of God. This he does in order to bring them to a consciousness of their sins, that he might then direct them to the only forgiveness of sins. But in this passage we see that although the Jews were guilty of murder in the death of Christ, yet all took place in accordance with a divine, eternal decree, an overruling Providence. Christ, though slain by the Jews, was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." This, being the eternal basis for Election became the basis also of its execution in time. This step we call subjective justification. By His death on the cross Christ made it possible. And since all sins are forgiven in consequence of the death of Christ, and through that death are all atoned for, objective justification becomes the basis for subjective justification, which begins the execution, in time, of the eternal Decree of Predestination.

10. Acts 4, 28:

"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

These words are taken from the hymn of praise and prayer which the first Christian congregation at Jerusalem raised to the Lord upon the release of St. Peter and St. John from prison. In their prayer they acknowledge to God that although Herod and Pilate and the Gentiles had gathered against Jesus, still whatever they had done was only what God had "determined before to be done." Herein is another reference to the eternal Decree of Redemption, executed in the death of Christ on Calvary.

That death was the basis of election, procured justification for the whole world and so became basic for subjective justification.

11. Luke 2, 30 - 32:

"For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

Simeon in the temple sings his immortal "Nunc Dimittis." He is now content to die, for God had fulfilled His promise that Simeon should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ, and even now he is holding the Infant Jesus in his arms. That is the Salvation which his eyes have seen, a Salvation prepared by God before the foundation of the world for all nations, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel. The salvation which the Christ-Child came to bring was actually accomplished in His death on the cross. But this, in turn, was determined upon in the eternal counsels of God, together with the specific Decree of Predestination. Redemption through the blood of Jesus would never have been decreed, had not God also determined to save certain persons. Hence, the Redemption or objective justification is the basis for subjective justification, which, again, is a phase of the execution, in time, of the eternal Decree of Election.

12. Gal. 4, 4,5:

"But when the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

This is one of the clearest statements we have of the objective justification. The Son of God was made under the Law, i.e., both fulfilled its requirements and suffered the punishment for its fracture, in order to redeem "them that were under the law, that is, all men. Because of this universal justification, God can justify individually. But this subjective justification, in turn, could not take place, had not God, long before, from eternity, predestinated a certain number of certain persons to salvation on the basis of the objective justification. In this way subjective justification is a result of Election, and one of the steps in leading the elect to final salvation. ]

In order the better to appreciate the Lutheran and Biblical view of universal or objective justification, let us look, for a moment, at the Calvinistic conception of this doctrine. Because Calvin makes his doctrine of an absolute predestination<sup>9</sup> the starting point of his whole system of theology, he vitiates all the chief articles of the Christian faith. And the first article which Calvin's doctrine of predestination affects is redemption, or objective justification. Because Calvin teaches an absolute predestination and places it before redemption, he, as a natural consequence of that doctrine, restricts redemption to the elect only. Because God, according ] to Calvin's doctrine, had predestinated and created only a comparatively small number of men unto life and the multitude unto eternal misery, therefore Calvin draws the inference that God could not have sent His Son to redeem the reprobate; for this would not have been consistent. The sending of

Christ, in Calvin's system, was only a means to carry out the Decree of Election unto life. Therefore the "Presbyterian Confession" says: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." 1) And the "Larger Catechism" says: "who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?" Answer: "Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it." 2) That is plainly denying universal redemption, and saying that the blood of Jesus Christ was not shed for all men, but for the elect only. ]

The passages discussed above plainly show our Lutheran view of universal redemption to be the Biblical one.

The points of divergence, then, between Lutheranism and Calvinism, are these:

1. Calvin teaches that Christ died for the elect only. -We teach that Christ died for the elect, but not for the elect only.
2. Calvin teaches that Christ did not purchase salvation for those who will be lost. -We teach that Christ did purchase salvation for those who will be lost.
3. In Calvin's doctrine no one can know "a priori" whether he is redeemed, but each one is taught to draw a conclusion from his effectual calling to his redemption. -Our doctrine assures every one that he is redeemed, that salvation is prepared for him. ]

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1) Ch. 3, art. 6  
2) Qu. 59

## "C O N V E R S I O N"

### Definition

In the strict sense of the term, conversion is the creation of faith in a man's heart through the means of grace (the Gospel) in which the Holy Spirit is active. It is the turning of obstinate man from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. In the Gospel message God calls us, and by His Holy Spirit He kindles faith in our hearts. This is the essence of conversion. And we owe it again to God's eternal election of grace; it becomes the second step in the execution, in time, of that divine decree. ✓

As to the question whether conversion is a process, requiring a longer or shorter period of time for its completion, or whether it is a crisis, taking place instantaneously, we shall, before answering, have to distinguish carefully in the use of terms. Whenever Scripture speaks of conversion as a process, then the term is used in a wider sense, including both contrition and the coming to faith. And whenever "momentary" conversion is described, then the term is used in its narrower meaning, as defined above, namely, the implantation of faith in the heart. But even in the latter case, a certain "process" must precede, namely, the sorrow for sin, or contrition. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, writing in the Concordia Theological Monthly, has the following to say regarding these two points.

"In welchem Sinne hat man denn von Vorstufen der Bekehrung und von einem Prozess der Bekehrung geredet? In welcher Auffassung allein koennen 'actus praeparatorii' nach der Schrift recht dargelegt werden? Antwort: Wenn man etwa mit D. Walther (Referat des Noerdlichen Distrikts, Milwaukee, 1873) sagt: 'Ordentlicherweise erfolgt die Bekehrung erst nach verschiedenen dieselben vorbereitenden Vorgaengen im Menschen.' Wir koennen die Antwort auch so formulieren: insofern Gott nach seiner gnaedigen Vorsehung besondere Umstaende, Gelegenheiten, Lebenslagen schafft, durch die Gott vorbereitend an den Menschen herantritt....."

"Wenn wir nun alles, was bisher kurz dargestellt worden ist, zusammenfassen und das Fazit ziehen, so muessen wir sagen, dass schon auf Grund der Identifizierung der Busse mit der Bekehrung im weiteren Sinne letztere im engeren Sinne als Krisis bezeichnet werden muss, denn darauf zielt der ganze Vorgang doch ab. Ohne die Erfassung der Vergebung der Suenden, die auf die Reue folgt, haette die Reue an sich weder Wert noch Zweck. Dies wird aber noch deutlicher zum Ausdruck gebracht in den verschiedenen 'termini,' die die Schrift selbst von der Wiedergeburt und der Bekehrung gebraucht." 1)

The following expressions used by Scripture are then listed: "Umkehren," "Weg- (von der Suende) und Zu- (Gott) wenden," "Auf tun der Augen," "Die Gabe des Glaubens," "Das Ziehen Gottes," "Lebendigwerden," "Das Schaffen des Lichtes im Herzen," "Gezuegt und Geborenwerden," "Vom Tode Auferwecktwerden und Aufstehen."

The further question of whether in conversion man is able to contribute anything, even the least, i.e., whether he is capable of any "modus agendi" in the matter of his conversion, while it will be treated in the following section under "Proof," may, for the sake of completeness, be somewhat briefly discussed under the present "Definition." The basic principle to be kept in mind has been stated thus: "Nach Schrift und Bekenntnis gibt es daher nur 'zwei wirkliche (bewirkende,

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1) P. E. Kretzmann, C.T.M., Vol. I, pp. 820 f., 825 ff.

"efficientes") Ursachen' der Bekehrung, naemlich den Heiligen Geist und das Wort Gottes als das Instrument des Heiligen Geistes, dadurch er die Bekehrung wirkt....."

"Allerdings, unser Bekenntnis lehrt auch, dass der zu bekehrende Mensch das Gesetz auf sich einwirken lassen muss. Er muss 'durch die Predigt des Gesetzes seine Suende und Gottes Zorn erkennen und wahrhaftiges Schrecken, Reue und Leid im Herzen empfinden.' Aber wenn der Mensch solches Schrecken, Reue und Leid im Herzen empfindet, dann ist er nicht etwa schon halb bekehrt oder in ein Stadium eingetreten, wo er sich nach der Gnade sehnt oder ein 'Verantwortungsgefuehl fuer die Gnade' in sich entwickelt oder er sich zur Gnade schickt; nein, dann ist er - solange der Heilige Geist durch das Evangelium nicht den Glauben in ihm anzuendet - in einem ganz unseligen Zustand der Verzweiflung, in dem er zur Hoelle fahren muesste, wuerde ihn der Tod in diesem Zustand ereilen oder wuerde er wie Judas in diesem Zustand selbst den Tod suchen. So wirkt auch das Gesetz keinen 'modus agendi' im Menschen."

Unser Bekenntnis lehrt ausdruuecklich: 'Zur rechten, heilsamen Busse, ist nicht genug allein das Gesetz zu predigen, sondern "es muss dazu auch kommen das Evangelium".' (De Lege et Evangelio, Sol. Decl., P. 15) Das ist deshalb noetig, weil die Menschen, 'solange sie die blosse Predigt des Gesetzes und nichts von Christo hoeren und also ihre Suende aus dem Gesetz nicht recht lernen erkennen, entweder vermessene Heuchler werden wie die Pharisaeer oder verzweifeln wie Judas.' (De Lege et Evangelio, Epitome, P. 8) Das Gesetz wirkt daher im Menschen keinen 'Zug nach oben;' kein Streben nach Versoehnung, sondern nur entweder verdammliche Selbstgerechtigkeit oder verdammliche Verzweiflung, also keinen 'modum agendi'." 1)

### Proof

1. Eph. 1, 5: *recepimus* *gratiam* *ad* *adoptionem*

"Having predestinated us unto adoption of sons."

In these words the Apostle plainly states that God pre-determined us to be His adopted children. That pre-determination was made in eternity and hence is nothing else than the

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1) J. T. Mueller, C.T.M., Vol. IV, p. 519 f



Election of Grace. But the manner in which God, in time, made us His adopted children was by conversion, the creation of faith in our hearts. In that moment we became God's children "by faith in Christ Jesus." 1) And as this was determined upon in eternity, it is evident that we owe our conversion to God's Election of Grace, that it is morely part of the execution of His divine Decree of Election.

2. Eph. 1, 9: γνωρίσω ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματός αὐτοῦ.

"Having made known to us the mystery of His will."

The mystery of God's will regarding us was our eternal salvation. This was God's will before the foundation of the world and was expressed in His eternal Decree of Salvation. Now St. Paul says that this good and gracious will God has made known to us. Plainly, he is speaking of something that takes place in time. God makes known to us His will whenever we hear the preaching of His Word. And God makes known to us His will of predestination, i.e., that we are His elect children, when He brings us to faith. This is what takes place in conversion, which is again plainly the result of God's eternal choosing, or we may say, the second step in the execution, in time, of God's eternal Decree of Predestination.

3. Eph. 1, 10: εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἵνα κεφαλαιώσῃται ἐν πάντι ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.

"Unto the dispensation of the completion of the world-periods, to bring into one (under one head) all things in Christ."

1) Gal. 3, 26

This clause also modifies the great thought running through the entire paragraph (Eph. 1, 3-14), namely, the eternal election of God. Our election was "unto" (εἰς) this, had this purpose, that God should so manage the various periods of the world as to bring about what He had planned in eternity, namely, the creation of one great family of God in Christ Jesus. But admission into that family is always by faith, and faith is given us in conversion. Hence, conversion is a very vital link in the carrying out of God's eternal Decree of Election. It is, in fact, the first step which concerns each man personally.

4. Eph. 1, 11: ἐν ᾧ ἐκλεγόμεθα προορισθέντες.

"In Whom we were chosen in that we were foreordained."

The relative clause in this passage, ἐν ᾧ, refers to Christ. In Him, i.e., as found in Him by faith, we were predestinated to salvation. But such a predestination, of necessity, involves that in the course of time we, who were in eternity chosen in Christ, should be brought to faith in Christ. This of course, occurs in conversion, which is thus an indispensable step in the execution, in time, of God's eternal Decree of Election.

5. Eph. 1, 13: ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς εὐαγγελίας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν, ἐν ᾧ πιστεύσαντες ἰσχυρισθῆτε τῷ πνεύματι ... τῷ ἁγίῳ.

"Having heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, in Him (Christ) having come to faith, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit."

The sequence of thought from the eleventh verse forward is necessary to appreciate the force of this passage. Above, the Apostle had said that the Jewish Christians were predestinated in Christ; in this passage he addresses the Gentile Christians and prefaces his remarks with the words ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς, "in whom also you." So also the Gentile Christians had been chosen in Christ. And in the words under consideration St. Paul gives us the precise order of events by which that eternal decree went into effect, in time. First they heard the word of truth, the good news of their soul's salvation, of their objective justification. And as they heard the Word, the Holy Spirit worked faith in their hearts, and at the same time gave them the assurance of their salvation, or "sealed" them. Thus, conversion stands in a very vital relation to election; it is the first personal step in the execution of the Decree of Predestination.

6. Rom. 9, 11:

"That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth."

This passage was discussed above. God accepted Jacob and rejected Esau, not because He saw that one would believe while the other would not, but simply in accordance with His election. What interests us in this connection is the very intimate relation which St. Paul posits between election and conversion. The same God who has elected us has also called us, that is, called us to faith in His Son through the Gospel. Conversion,

therefore, is the working out, in time, of God's eternal Decree of Election.

7. 2 Tim. 1, 9:

"Who (God) hath called us....according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Once more this great passage to Timothy sheds marvelous light on the point under discussion. God's "purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" is nothing more or less than His eternal election of us to salvation. And now let us note the close connection between this and conversion. St. Paul says that God "called us," created faith in our hearts, converted us, "according" to this eternal Decree of Predestination. Conversion is therefore plainly a step in the execution, in time, of that eternal decree. It is the first thing that God must do for us personally before He can finally take us to Himself in heaven, as He has determined before the world began.

8. Acts 13, 48:

"And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," literally, "came to faith."

Paul had just delivered a powerful sermon in Antioch of Pisidia. Many of the Gentiles came to faith, were converted by the Holy Spirit through the word of Paul. But of every single one who came to faith the text says that he was ordained to eternal life, was predestinated thereto. Thus, this becomes a very striking proof for the fact that we owe our conversion to

God's eternal election, that it is only the carrying out, in time of His eternal decree. ✓

9. Rom. 8, 30:

"Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified." ✓

It would be impossible to find a clearer passage on the subject than the one before us. It is so emphatic and plain that it requires hardly any comment. Every one whom God predestinated He brought within the sound of His Gospel message (called) and every predestinated child, so called, God also converted, bestowed faith in his heart (justified; subjective justification). Thus, conversion is clearly a product of predestination. ✓

10. 2 Thess. 2, 13, 14:

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto He called you by our Gospel." ✓

This is another passage which is simply amazing in its clarity and pointedness. From the beginning God chose us to salvation. This is the eternal Decree of Election. And now He brings us to that salvation through definite means, namely, "through sanctification of the Spirit (the entire process of separating us from the world and making us children of God) and belief of the truth (faith in the Gospel promises of God)." This is conversion. This is the means by which God brings us to that foreordained salvation, or, we may say, by which God executes or carries out that eternal decree. ✓

As in the case of Redemption, so also God's gracious calling has been greatly perverted. Calvin, who teaches an absolute predestination of some to life, some to death, and a redemption of the elect only, must, in order to be consistent, also teach that not all men are called alike. He says:

"There are two kinds of calling. For there is a universal call, by which God, in the external preaching of the Word, invites all, indiscriminately, to come to Him, even those to whom He intends it as a savor of death, and an occasion of heavier condemnation. There is also a special call, with which He, for the most part, favors only believers, when, by the inward illumination of His Spirit, He causes the Word preached to sink into their hearts. Yet sometimes He also communicates it to those whom He only enlightens for a season, and afterwards forsakes on account of their ingratitude, and strikes with greater blindness." 1)

On the assertion that God does not intend to call the non-elect unto Himself, but that it is His determinate decree that they shall not believe, Calvin expresses himself thus:

"Those, therefore, whom He has created to a life of shame and a death of destruction, that they might be instruments of His wrath, and examples of His severity, He causes to reach their appointed end, sometimes depriving them of the opportunity of hearing the Word, sometimes, by the preaching of it, increasing their blindness and stupidity." 2)

Again he says:

"That the reprobate obey not the Word of God when made known to them, is justly imputed to the wickedness and depravity of their hearts, provided it be at the same time stated that they are abandoned to this depravity, because they have been raised up by a just but inscrutable judgment of God, to display His glory in their condemnation." 3)

In sharp contrast, the Lutheran Church teaches that God has not two different calls, but as He has created all men unto eternal life and has redeemed all in Christ, so He also seriously, earnestly, and effectually through the Word of the Gospel

1) Calvin, op. cit., vol. II, p. 187  
2) Ibid., p. 191  
3) Ibid., p. 193

calls all men unto Christ. Our Church confesses:

"And this call of God, which is made through the preaching of the Word, we should not regard as jugglery, but know that thereby God reveals His will, that in those whom He thus calls He will work through the Word, that they may be enlightened, converted, and saved. For the word, whereby we are called, is a ministration of the Spirit, that gives the Spirit, or whereby the Spirit is given, 2 Cor. 3, 8, and a power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1, 16. And since the Holy Ghost wished to be efficacious through the Word, and to strengthen and give power and ability, it is God's will that we should receive the Word, believe and obey it." 1)

card 3-9-10

And Again:

"However, that many are called and few chosen is not owing to the fact that the call of God, which is made through the Word, had the meaning as though God said: Outwardly, through the Word, I indeed call to My kingdom all of you to whom I give My Word; however, in My heart, I do not mean this with respect to all, but only with respect to a few; for it is My will that the greatest part of those whom I call through the Word shall not be enlightened nor converted, but be and remain damned, although through the Word, in the call, I declare Myself to them otherwise. 'Hoc enim esset Deo contradictorias voluntates affingere,' that is; For this would be to assign contradictory wills to God. That is, in this way it would be taught that God, who surely is Eternal Truth, would be contrary to Himself, while, on the contrary, God punishes also in men this wickedness when a person declares himself to one purpose, and thinks and means another in the heart, Ps. 5, 9; 12, 2 f. Thereby also the necessary consolatory foundation is rendered altogether uncertain and void, as we are daily reminded and admonished that only from God's Word, through which He treats with us and calls us, we are to learn and conclude what His will towards us is, and that we should believe and not doubt what it affirms to us and promises." 2)

card 3-13

Summing up the differences, then, we have these considerations:

"1. Calvin teaches that God has two calls. -We teach: As God is one His calling is one.

"2. Calvin teaches that God does not earnestly and effectually call those who will be lost. -We teach that God does earnestly and effectually call those who will be lost.

1) Art. XI, Form. Concord, (Con. Trigl., p. 1073)  
2) Ibid., p. 1075

"3. Calvin teaches that God deprives some men of His Word, because He does not want them saved. -We teach that God deprives men of his Word only and alone because of their wickedness and ingratitude.

"4. Calvin teaches that to some men God sends His Word to obdurate and harden them. -We teach that God sends His Word to enlighten and save all.

"5. Calvin teaches that the non-conversion of men is owing to the decree of God denying them the grace of conversion. -We teach that God denies no man the grace of conversion, but the non-conversion of men is owing only and alone to their own wickedness.

"6. Calvin separates the effectual calling of the Spirit from the calling through the Word, and teaches an absolute or immediate calling of the elect. -We teach that God calls men only through His Word.

"7. Calvin teaches an irresistible calling of the elect. -We teach that the calling of God is not irresistible.

"8. Calvin's doctrine leaves man in doubt, whether the Gospel is intended for him. -Our doctrine assures everyone that he is called unto Christ." 1)

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1) F. Kuegele, loc. cit., p. 95



"S A N C T I F I C A T I O N"

Definition

Sanctification is here used in its narrower sense of Holy life, i.e., a life set apart and dedicated to God. It is the inward spiritual transformation of the believer which follows upon, and is inseparably connected with, justification. It is the renewal and restitution of the divine image in the regenerate by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

It is one of the things which characterize the Christian and distinguish him from the world. The basic direction of the mind and will, the motives of the Christian's acts and strivings are meant, and not an absolute sinlessness, a perfect sanctification in this life. God has chosen us before the foundation of the world, and therefore there is to be a sharp contrast between us and the children of the world, and this contrast is to be evidenced just in our manner of life, a life which should prove that we are a holy, godly people, a people who, though in the world, are not of the world.

But this sanctification is the third step in the execution, in time, of the eternal Decree of Election. God willed it, it was one purpose of His eternal choice, to see and to have a holy seed upon earth. He wanted to have a people who in this untoward generation shine as lights and show forth godly

virtues and the praises of God.

Proof

1. Eph. 1, 3: εὐλογίας ἡμῶν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἐν λόγῳ πνευματικῇ...  
καθὼς ἐλελεξάτο ἡμῶν,

"Who has blessed us with every kind of spiritual blessing even as He has chosen us."

All the spiritual blessings that come to us from our heavenly Father in time are here traced back to His eternal election. One great spiritual blessing is sanctification, a clean heart. This is therefore included when it is said that all blessings of a spiritual nature are the product of our election. It is at the same time also another step in the execution of God's eternal Decree of Predestination.

2. Eph. 1, 4: εἶναι ἡμῶν ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον  
αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ,

"That we should be holy and blameless before Him in love."

The infinitive in this passage, εἶναι, is dependent on the preceding ἐλελεξάτο and expresses purpose. One of the very purposes of our election, therefore, is that we should be holy and blameless before God in love, that we should lead a life of sanctification. Thus, our peculiarly Christian, unworldly manner of life is stated to be a product and purpose already in view in our Predestination. It is another step in bringing us to the final goal of heaven. First God brings us to faith, then He works in our lives the necessary fruits of

faith, a godly life. And whenever God does this He is only carrying out, in time, an eternal decree to save us.

3. Eph. 1, 5: προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἱοθεσίαν,

"Having predestinated us to the adoption of sons." ]

The passage before us is a dependent clause, parallel to the foregoing one, and like it also dependent on the main verb ἔξελεξάμετο. It therefore expresses a further purpose of the Election. The Apostle might have used another infinitive construction here, but the participial phrase, taking up again the ἔξελεξάμετο in the synonym προορίσας, makes for smoother reading. Note how clearly it is stated that we are chosen "unto sonship"; that is a purpose of our election. That we now stand in the relation of children to God, children by adoption, we must attribute to our eternal election. But this relationship of children involves this also, that in us there be found something of the manner and mind of our heavenly Father, that God's holiness and God's love be reflected in our life and conversation. In this way sanctification is made directly dependent on election. In producing a sanctified heart and life in us God is carrying out, in time, the eternal Decree of Election to salvation. ]

4. Eph. 1, 6: εἰς ἰκάνειν δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ,

"Unto the praise of the glory of His grace." ]

This passage states formally the "finis ultimus" of our election, namely, the glory of God, the praise of His grace.

This must imply sanctification. For one, predestinated of God, to lead an ungodly life would not be to God's glory; only the godly, sanctified life can redound to the glory of God. Thus, again sanctification and predestination are bound together; one flows from the other. This it must do, for in sanctification God is merely carrying out in our lives the purposes of the Predestination.

5. Eph. 1, 8: ἐν πάντῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει.

"In all wisdom and understanding."

The thought connection with the theme of the paragraph, predestination, is this: Paul has just said that our election is due to God's boundless grace, the same grace which offers us the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus, the same grace which has given us the great spiritual gifts of "all wisdom and understanding." In other words, these last mentioned gifts also flow from our election. Φρόνησις is practical wisdom, discretion, insight. Now these gifts are absolutely indispensable to a life of sanctification or holiness. In this way again sanctification is made a fruit of eternal election, or, we may say, the working out in time, of the eternal Decree of Election.

6. Eph. 1, 12: εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἕκαστον δόξης αὐτοῦ.

"That we should be to the praise of His glory."

This statement is almost the same as that in verse 6, only it is more forceful for the purpose in view. Above it was

stated that election had as one of its purposes "the praise of the glory of His grace," and here the thought of grace is not stated but the simple purpose, "to the praise of His glory." We are to glorify God in our lives; that is why we have been elected to salvation. Sanctification could not more forcefully be represented as a fruit of predestination. Or, looking at God's eternal plan, we might say that because He has chosen us He now also leads us into a life of sanctification. That is His way of carrying out the eternal decree.

In conformity with this teaching of Ephesians 1, we quote only two of the most striking passages from other portions of Scripture.

7. 1 Pet. 1, 2:

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit."

This passage tells us one phase of the execution of God's eternal Decree of Election. It was "through sanctification of the Spirit." God carries out His plan or resolution in this way that the Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, consecrated to God. This work, in the majority of cases, was begun in Holy Baptism, but is carried forward throughout the believer's life, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, who lives in all Christians through faith, and creates in them a clean heart.

8. 1 Pet. 2, 9:

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"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

This beautiful passage states sanctification, holiness of life, as the purpose of our election. If this was God's purpose in electing us, then it follows that by working sanctification in us through the Spirit He is carrying out that purpose, He is executing, in time, a decree concerning us which He made in eternity.

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"P R E S E R V A T I O N"

Definition

When we speak of preservation we mean the preservation of a Christian in his saving faith unto the end of his life. Such preservation requires the assistance of divine grace, yea, of the omnipotent grace of God, we might say. This preservation in our saving faith until our death is the final step, on the part of God, in the execution of the divine Decree of Election. That we are preserved in faith is again due to our election in eternity. God is now forced, so to say, forced by His own promise, to keep us in the faith, because He has elected us, and His choice is absolutely sure and irrevocable, more unalterable than the laws of the Medes and the Persians. In this sense our preservation is due to eternal election. We may also say that our preservation in faith to final salvation is the last purpose of God's eternal election.

Proof

1. Eph. 1, 5: *recipimus quos in uisideriam.*

"Having predestinated us to adoption of sons."

One of the purposes of God's election was to make us His children by adoption. We might call this the "finis intermedius" of election, as it refers to our station and calling here on earth and not to our final glorification in heaven. Christ

as μὲν υἱοῦ is the Son of God, partaking of the same essence and nature with the Father. We Christians are God's children, not according to nature and essence, but according to effect, by adoption. We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3, 26. But this relationship to God of children implies that we have the inheritance coming to children of God, namely, final salvation. "And if children, then heirs." 1) Although as yet we do not experience the full enjoyment of our heavenly home, still we are, even now, in actual possession of the inheritance, we are the rightful heirs. But in order that we might some day enjoy fulness of joy God must preserve us in the saving faith unto the end. Thus, election, which is responsible for our sonship, is also responsible for our preservation. God works out His Decree of Election in time not only by bringing us to faith and sanctification, but also, and necessarily so, by keeping us in faith to the end.

2. Eph. 1, 6: εἰς ἰδοὺ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ,

"To the praise of the glory of His grace."

This passage was discussed above as indicating one of the purposes of God's election. From it the deduction was made that therefore the elect child of God was bound to lead a godly life. Here we make the further deduction that if we are elected unto the praise of the glory of God's grace, then we must also be kept by God in faith unto the end, for if we, the elect, were finally not saved, it would not be to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Thus, preservation, as much as the fore-

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1) Rom. 8, 17



going conversion and sanctification, is a vital, necessary step in the execution, in time, of God's eternal Decree of Election.

3. Eph. 1, 7: ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτωσην διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ  
"We have the redemption through His blood."

The thought connection of this passage is this: in the same Christ in whom we have been elected we now possess the redemption through His blood. The tense of the verb is present, denoting present possession. The essence of the redemption, as St. Paul states in the next phrase, is the forgiveness of sins, and this we possess now. This is in consequence of our eternal election, and marks the beginning of our eternal reward. Though we possess eternal salvation only in part, we nevertheless possess it actually, and now. The whole connection shows that this is again the result of our eternal election, or the working out, in time, of the Decree of Election in eternity.

4. Eph. 1, 11: ἐκλεγόμενοι προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τοῦ πάντων ἐνεργούντος,

"We were chosen, having been predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things."

This is a characteristic of God, that He is ὁ τὸ πάντα ἐνεργῶν. Man sets out to do many things, but does not accomplish all that he undertakes. But what God has set out to do, that He accomplishes in its entirety, that He carries through in spite of all obstacles. The purpose of God cannot fail or be overthrown. What God has determined upon and what

He wished to have occur, that must finally reach its purpose and goal. And this applies specifically to the purpose of our election and foreordination. Those whom God has elected and foreordained will certainly, without fail, reach the goal of their election. For the God who chose them to eternal salvation is the God who works all things, who is almighty, and who therefore is altogether able to bring them to their destined goal. This means that God must preserve them in their saving faith unto the end, and this He will not fail to do. Preservation must follow upon election; it is the final step in the execution, in time, of the eternal decree of God.

5. Eph. 1, 12: εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμῶν εἰς ἑπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ.

"That we should be to the praise of His glory."

This is the purpose of our election, this is the end it has in view, namely, the exaltation of the glory of God. From this purpose, however, our preservation must follow, for God's glory is at stake. He cannot allow that glory to be dimmed; He will therefore keep in the faith those whom He has chosen for His glory. In this way He will carry out the decree made in eternity.

6. Eph. 1, 13, 14: σφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι . . . τὸ ἅγιον, ὅς ἴσται κληρονομία ἡμῶν εἰς ἀπολύτωσην ἐφ' ἡμετέρας.

"You were sealed by the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of His own possession."

This passage constitutes the "locus classicus" of this

section of the Letter on preservation as related to predestination. We shall consider first the words, "You were sealed by the Holy Spirit." After the Holy Ghost has worked faith in the heart through the Word of truth He makes His abode in the believer's heart. Through the preaching of faith we have received the Holy Ghost as our own. And of this Holy Spirit, who now dwells in us, it is said that we are sealed by Him. He Himself is a Seal which God has impressed upon us.

"Man drueckt dem sein Siegel auf, was man fuer sein erklaeren will im Gegensatz zu fremden Ansprache, oder was man vor fremden Haenden sicherstellen und unverletzt wissen will, oder endlich wozu man sich bekennen will, um es fuer fremde Augen zu beglaubigen. Hier faellt dies alles in eins zusammen. Aber da die Besiegelung ein innerlicher Vorgang ist, so ist es zunachst der Empfaenger des Geistes selbst, welcher durch dessen Mitteilung vergewissert wird, dass er Gotte angehoere und nicht dem Fuersten dieser Welt, und dass er Gottes eigen bleiben, nicht dem Verderben dieser Welt, anheimfallen soll." Hofmann. 1)

Yes, the Spirit of God, which is in us, gives us the assurance, and that is divine certainty, that we belong to God, already from eternity, and that we remain God's own, since God certainly will not leave His possession, or surrender it to another. And while the Spirit assures us of this, He at the same time sees to it, that we do remain God's own, in that He guards us from evil, from the world and its princes, and keeps us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. "Der Geist ist also nicht nur als Kennzeichen des Christen, sondern als die ihn bis zu Ende bewahrende Macht gedacht." Haupt. 2)

The Holy Ghost preserves us to the salvation which has been promised us in the Gospel by Christ, to which we were chosen

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1) Quoted in Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief, p. 78 f

2) Quoted in Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief, p. 79

already from the beginning. In this way God executes in time the Decree of Predestination, formed in eternity.

This thought is reinforced by the words, "Who is the earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance, to the redemption of His own possession." Here again the notion of childhood is uppermost. Children are also heirs. From eternity God has ordained us to be children, Christ by His bloody merit has won the right of childhood for us, and through faith we have entered upon the position of children. And now what we still wait and hope for is the inheritance, the heavenly inheritance, the heavenly glory. But the Apostle does not express himself in this way, that we shall at some future time receive our inheritance, some far distant time come into possession of it, but, because in the whole section he is speaking about our present Christianity, and is describing its present blessing, he stresses that in and with the Holy Ghost, which we have already received, we have, as it were, the earnest or pledge money, the guarantee, of the future inheritance. Thus, the Holy Ghost not only preserves us for the eternal inheritance, but in and with the Holy Ghost who is from the other world, we already possess the earnest money of the future world. Therefore, the full consummation, the full harvest, will certainly not be wanting. We are God's own possession, and at the last day this possession shall be redeemed, released from all the cares and sorrows of this present time. Then we shall take full possession of our completed and perfect salvation. This is the great goal toward which the Holy Spirit is leading

us, and for which He is preserving us. That was the great purpose of God's eternal election, and therefore in His preservation of us in the faith He is even now carrying out that eternal decree.

7. Rom. 8, 30:

"Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

In this passage we have a remarkable presentation, step by step, of the way in which God carries out His eternal Decree of Election. First He formed the Decree of Predestination. This took place in eternity, and consisted in the choosing of a certain number of certain persons for eternal salvation. Then God turned to the execution, in time, of this eternal decree. According to our passage, He called those whom He had predestinated, that is, He brought them to faith in Christ as their Savior, and as soon as they appropriated Christ and His merits by faith, God justified them, that is, declared them just in His sight. And now St. Paul says of the persons so predestinated and justified, that God also glorified them, that is, bestowed on them the full glory and joy of heaven. This last act, of course, still lies in the future, but so sure and certain is it that St. Paul speaks of it as already accomplished. He uses the perfect tense. It is as though he were arguing: "Just as surely as the first steps in the execution of God's eternal Decree of Election have been accomplished, so surely shall also the final act be accomplished." Our preservation to

salvation, in consequence of our election, could not be stated more emphatically.

8. Mark 13, 20, 22:

"And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the elects' sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days. For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."

In His eschatological discourse, our Lord is picturing the last times in the history of the world. Those days shall be perilous, filled with wickedness, so much so that God Himself, out of loving regard to those whom he has chosen, shall shorten them. One especially serious threat to the salvation of the elect shall be the false Christs who shall perform signs and wonders in their efforts to seduce the elect. But this is impossible; they cannot succeed in this. And why not? Because God Himself will keep and uphold them in the faith. God has predestinated them to eternal salvation, and He will also preserve them to salvation, and so carry out the decree which He made in eternity.

9. Rom. 8, 28:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

This passage is taken from St. Paul's matchless eighth chapter to the Romans. All things, he says, and that is inclusive of everything that happens in a Christian's life, work

together for good to them that love God, and these are more closely defined as they who are the called according to God's purpose. In other words, in the case of the elect, all things work together for good. Now the greatest good that can possibly come to the elect is the realization of the goal of their election, or the fulfilment of their election. This is definitely promised to the elect in this passage. It is God who promises this to them, for God it is who will preserve them in saving faith unto the end, and so actually carry to its final conclusion in their lives His eternal Decree of Election.

10. Luke 18, 7. 8:

"And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily."

This passage is taken from the Lord's parable of the Unjust Judge, who finally granted the poor widow's request because of her importunity. The point is that if this unjust judge, to get rid of this importunate widow, granted her request and came to her aid, how much more shall God come to the aid of His own elect, God, who loves them, yea, who loved them in eternity and chose them for salvation. God will hear their cry and will help them in all time of need, especially in their spiritual needs, for He has chosen them from eternity and will not fail to execute, in time, that eternal decree.

11. 1 Thess. 5, 24:

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it."

This short passage is very striking. Here our preservation in faith is made a matter of God's faithfulness. God it was who called us, who brought us to faith, and now for God not to keep us in the faith, and so accomplish the purpose of His call, would be a breach of faithfulness, unthinkable in the case of God. He must, for His very faithfulness' sake, accomplish that for which He called us, namely, our eternal salvation. This means that He will preserve us in the faith unto the end.

12. Matt. 24, 31:

"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Our Lord, in these words, gives us a glimpse into the grand scene on the Day of Resurrection. Christ, the returning Judge, shall send His angels to gather together the elect. Those who have already fallen asleep shall first be raised; and those who are still alive at His coming shall be assembled with them. All shall be brought to the feet of Christ, to enter with Him into the eternal mansions. It is distinctly stated that these are the elect, those whom God has chosen from eternity. The scene described takes place on the Last Day. In other words, on that day it will be evident that God has perfectly carried out and executed His eternal Decree of Election; those whom He chose before the foundation of the world He will have called, justified, and kept in the faith either until their death or until His own glorious return to earth.



13. Matt. 25, 34:

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, ]  
Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom  
prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

These are the words which the Judge, Jesus Christ, shall speak to those on His right, those who are to share His eternal glory. He tells them to come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. It was prepared precisely for them, because from eternity they were the ones whom He had chosen for such heavenly bliss. Here, then, we see God's Decree of Election, fully executed. He has not only predestinated them to salvation, but in time He has created faith in their hearts and has kept them in this faith unto the end. Hence, at His return He can welcome them into the realms of glory, His eternal purpose accomplished. ]

14. Ps. 33, 11:

"The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." ]

What God has determined upon must stand; it must come to pass, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. So also with His eternal Decree of Election; it must come to pass, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. This means that those who have been chosen and brought to faith will most assuredly be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1) ]

The truth and beauty of the Lutheran doctrine will become apparent when it is contrasted with the false views held by that

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1) 1 Pet. 1, 5

vast body of Reformed Churches which follow the lead of Calvin, also on the matter of perseverance and certainty of election. Of the elect Calvin teaches that once they have been converted they can never fall from grace. His maxim is: "Once in grace, always in grace." He says: "We deny, however, they (the elect) may be afflicted, that they ever fall and depart from that certain confidence which they had conceived in divine mercy." 1)

Again:

"Nor is it to be doubted, that when Christ intercedes for all the elect, He prays for them the same as for Peter, that their faith may never fail. Hence we conclude that they are beyond all danger of falling away, because the intercessions of the Son of God for their perseverance in piety have not been rejected. What did Christ intend we should learn from this but confidence in our perpetual security, since we have once been introduced into the number of His people?" 2)

The Lutheran Church indeed teaches that of the elect none can finally be lost, for God's purpose "cannot fail or be overthrown." If elect persons do fall away, they turn to repentance again, like David and Peter. But we do not teach that elect persons, when once converted, can no longer fall, but we hold that elect persons may, and often do, temporarily fall from grace. "Here are condemned such as teach, that those who have once been justified, cannot fall again." 3)

The Lutheran Church, however, abhors the doctrine that such persons could be God's beloved children and still despise the means of grace and live in sins.

"Many receive the Word with joy, but afterwards fall away"

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- 1) Calvin, op. cit. vol. I, p. 507
  - 2) Calvin, op. cit. vol. II, p. 186
  - 3) Augsburg Conf., Art. XII

again,' Luke 8, 13. But the cause is not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom 'He has begun the good work,' for that is contrary to St. Paul, Phil. 1, 6; but the cause is that they wilfully turn away again from the holy commandment, grieve and embitter the Holy Ghost, implicate themselves again in the filth of the world, and garnish again the habitation of the heart for the devil. With them the last state is worse than the first." 1) ✓

Hence the difference in doctrine is this: ✓

"1. Calvin teaches that in conversion the elect are brought into a condition which excludes the possibility of falling in this life.

"We teach that not in, but only after this life the elect are in a condition which excludes the possibility of falling.

"2. Calvin teaches that the elect always remain children of grace, even though after conversion they despise the Word of God and walk in the service of sin.

"We teach that all who despise God's Word and walk in sin, hence also the elect, when and so long as they do this, are children of wrath.

"3. According to Calvin's doctrine the righteous who turns from his righteousness shall not die.

"According to our doctrine the righteous who turns from his righteousness shall die." 2) ✓

Regarding the certainty of election, Calvinism teaches an absolute certainty, and yet a certainty of sensible experience, while Lutheranism teaches a certainty of faith. While the Calvinist bases his certainty on his heart's experience, the Lutheran bases his certainty on the Word of God. ✓

Thus Calvin, deriving his doctrine of an absolute certainty (i.e., a certainty which is independent of the means of grace) of election from the doctrine of an effectual calling

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1) Art. XI, Form. Con. (Con. Trigl., p. 1077)

2) F. Kuegele, loc. cit., p. 137

and an inadmissible grace, says: "Few, therefore, are chosen out of a multitude that are called, but not with that calling by which we say believers ought to judge of their election." 1)

Thus, he says believers ought to judge of their election by their effectual calling. But how, according to Calvin, does this "effectual calling" distinguish itself from the calling through the Word which is common to all? This is how he distinguishes between common faith and full assurance faith:

"But very different is the meaning of 'full assurance' ( ), which is always attributed to faith in the Scriptures, and which places the goodness of God that is clearly revealed to us beyond all doubt. But this cannot take place, unless we have a real sense and experience of its sweetness in ourselves." 2)

So, then, the final mark is, a man is to judge of his election by "a real sense and experience of the sweetness of God's goodness." Calvin bases the certainty of election on the experiences of man's heart. But what stability can the feelings and sensations of the heart afford? The Scriptures say; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." 3)

The Lutheran Church does not base the certainty of election on such an uncertain foundation. It teaches that the Christian derives his certainty of election and salvation from the Word of God. We hold with the Apostle:

"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy." 4)

1) Calvin, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 187

2) Calvin, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 505

3) Jer. 17, 9

4) 2 Pet. 1, 16.18.19

Our Church confesses:

"In reference to this point we should not judge according to our reason, or to the Law, or to any external appearance; nor should we attempt to scrutinize the concealed, the hidden depths of divine predestination, but we should attend to the revealed will of God. For He has made known unto us the mystery of His will, and brought it to light through Christ that it might be preached." 1) This is the type of certainty which we teach:

"In order that the hearts of persons may entertain a consolation and a hope, which are real and infallible, we refer them, as Paul does, to the divine promises of grace in Christ, and teach them that they must believe that God grants them eternal life, not on account of their work, or the fulfillment of the Law, but for the sake of Christ." 2)

Hence the difference of doctrine may be summarized thus:

"1. Calvin teaches an absolute certainty of election; we teach a certainty of faith.

"2. Calvin bases the certainty of salvation of the experience of the Christian; we base the certainty of salvation on the divine Word of promise.

"3. Calvin's doctrine is certainly productive of fanaticism; our doctrine confines men in the limits of the written Word of God." 3)

In closing this section on predestination, we might point out that as in the eternal Decree of Election all thoughts of "intuitu fidei" must be excluded, so in the execution, in time, of that eternal decree, all human merit and cooperation must be ruled out. In each step, in justification, in conversion, in sanctification, and in preservation, it is God, and God alone, who is responsible for the successful completion of the purposes of predestination.

In concluding this treatise on Predestination, we shall

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1) N.M., 2d ed., p. 714  
2) Ibid., p. 184  
3) F. Kuegele, loc. cit., p. 144

discuss the incorrect and the correct uses of this doctrine.

The doctrine of Predestination is not put to its rightful and intended use when it is made the source of curious and doubting questions. We shall consider three of these.

1. How can I be certain that I am included among the elect? Very often a Christian, when he is especially conscious of his sins and shortcomings, will feel that he, after all, could not possibly be included among God's elect. That even Christians at times should become doubtful of their election need not surprise us, for, as Luther says, they have Satan about them constantly, who with his lying and murdering, will let them have no peace within or without. But such Christians are not making the proper use of the doctrine of Election. Rather, they are abusing it. They will have to be shown its proper use. While this will be taken up under the proper use of the doctrine of Election, we might at this point quote the Formula of Concord on the question under consideration. Article XI presents the false reasoning on this point in the following terms:

"If, however, I am not foreknown, it helps me nothing anyway, even though I would occupy myself with the Word, repent, believe, etc.; for I cannot hinder or change God's foreknowledge." 1)

"To this false delusion and thought we should oppose the following clear argument, which is sure and cannot fail, namely: Since all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is to serve, not for security and impenitence, but for 'reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,' 2 Tim. 3, 16; also, since everything in God's Word has been prescribed

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1) Op. cit., p. 1067

to us, not that we should thereby be driven to despair, but 'that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope,' Rom. 15, 4, therefore it is without any doubt in no way the sound sense or right use of the doctrine concerning the eternal foreknowledge of God that either impenitence or despair should be occasioned or strengthened thereby. Accordingly, the Scriptures teach this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the Word, Eph. 1, 13; 1 Cor. 1, 7; exhort to repentance, 2 Tim. 3, 16; urge to godliness, Eph. 1, 14; John 15, 3; strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation, Eph. 1, 13; John 10, 27 f.; 2 Thess. 2, 13 f." 1)

2. What about the others? We are no better than others; the others are no worse than we. Why, then, has God, who wants all men to be saved, chosen us before others? This is the old rationalistic question: "Cur allii, allii non?" "Cur nos prae alliis?" "Cur non omnes?"

Now this question arises, not out of concern for the soul's salvation, but from curiosity. It is an impertinent question. And to such inquisitive, impertinent questions Scripture, which reveals to us only what is necessary for us, only what will promote our salvation, gives no answer. The apostolic instruction, Eph. 1, 3-14, is directed to Christians, treats only of the elect and the salvation of the elect, and says not one word about the others and the fate of the others. And in another place, Rom. 9-11, the Apostle Paul expressly forbids the Christians to inquire into the "causa discriminis" and the "discretio personarum," including them among the things which God has purposely hidden from us. And humble Christians will at once let themselves be guided and

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1) Concl. Trigl., p. 1067

will suppress all inquisitive questions, as soon as they arise in their hearts.

The question, "Cur nos prae aliis" gives rise to all sorts of reflections and deductions. Those who give their thoughts free rein here reason about as follows: That we Christians believe the Gospel, that we have been made children of God through faith and were then sealed with the Holy Ghost who also preserves us from falling away, that, we are told, is the result and product of eternal election. From this there follows: if others do not believe the Gospel or fall away again and are finally lost, the reason must be sought in this, that here the eternal background is lacking, that God passed them by in His choosing. For had God chosen them, they also would have come to faith and been saved. It is pure, carnal reason which makes such deductions and conclusions, reason that with unwashed hands handles and maltreats the mysteries of God.

The passages of Scripture which treat of election, as Eph. 1, do not supply the faintest justification for such reflections, but speak only of the election of grace, of the eternal divine decree, which had as its object the chosen children of God. They do not even remotely imply any kind of divine decree or any purposeful neglect on God's part as the "causa adequata" of the unbelief and damnation of the many who are lost. And in other places the Scripture teaches expressly



that unbelief, defection, and damnation have their causes in man himself, are the fault of man himself, and that God has neglected nothing, and has left nothing undone, to save also those who will not let themselves be saved.

That, nevertheless, there is still a gap for our reason, we will not deny. The real mystery in the doctrine of election exists because Holy Scripture does not explain why "some are struck by the Law and others are not struck, so that the former receive the proffered grace and the latter reject it." 1) This mystery the true Christian believer does not try to solve since it belongs to God's unsearchable judgments and His ways which are past finding out, Rom. 11, 33-36. The solution of synergism (denial of "sola gratia") and of Calvinism (denial of "universalis gratia") are both directly opposed to Scripture. Therefore the Christian keeps all his thoughts on the doctrines of eternal election, conversion, and salvation within the revealed teaching of Scripture: He who is saved is saved alone by grace; he who is lost perishes through his own unbelief, Hos. 13, 9.

3. What about the temporary believers, those who believe for a time and then fall away and are finally lost? While they believe, are they elect? If so, how could they possibly fall away? And if we say that not all believers are elect, then how can we ever be sure who is and who is not elect?

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1) Luther, St. L., XVIII, 1794 ff. 1965 f

This is again a question of carnal curiosity, an inquisitive question. Those who worry about such matters are again abusing the doctrine of predestination, and are missing altogether its intended and salutary purpose.

In the Apostolic letters the expressions "elect," "saints," "beloved," "chosen ones" are used promiscuously. And in our Lutheran Confessions the titles "elect" and "Christians," "Children of God" are freely interchanged. This is identifying the Christians with the elect. Whenever Scripture speaks of the elect, those whom God beforehand has predestined and determined, we are always to think of the believing Christians and to include ourselves in the number of the chosen. And whenever Scripture speaks of the Christians, the believing children of God, we are to identify these with the elect. Of course, only those are the predestinated ones who abide in faith unto the end and who are finally glorified. But Scripture regards and describes the believers throughout as persons whose permanent characteristic is faith and who also attain to the goal of faith, the soul's salvation. And so Luther, in the explanation of the third article, defines the Christian Church or the Communion of saints or believers as "the whole Christian Church" which the Holy Ghost "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies, and keeps with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." To be sure, experience teaches that many who have come to faith, sooner or later again fall away. And Scripture warns earnestly against defection and speaks also of temporary

believers. But, as Dr. Stoeckhardt has said,

"Was von den Zeitgläubigen zu halten ist, das steht auf einem andern Blatt der Bibel geschrieben, das ist eine Wahrheit fuer sich, das sollen wir nicht in die Schriftaussagen von der Wahl der Kinder Gottes zum ewigen Leben einmengen, die eben nur von den Personen handeln, die da glauben und selig werden."  
1)

Thus, by "believers" Scripture means the "finaliter credentes." No special stress is laid upon those who for a time fall away, but then come to faith again. These too, of course, when their whole life from the moment of conversion to the hour of death is taken into consideration, must be termed "believers." For when they turn again to God, their former falling and turning aside is no longer remembered. When Scripture says, "Whosoever believeth, ὁς ἐπίστεύσῃ, shall be saved," then evidently with the ὁς ἐπίστεύσῃ is meant the permanent relation to Christ, in which the man is found just at that time when the last sentence is pronounced, when salvation or damnation is determined upon. When we confess, that God will upon the last day raise up me and all the dead and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life, we think of all those who lived in faith and who also died in faith. Thus, whenever Scripture describes the believers, it characterizes them as such who live and die in faith.

True, Scripture speaks also of temporary believers, of those who believe for a time and then fall away, fall away "finaliter," and are lost. The temporary believers really believe, have inner communion with the Lord, as long as they believe. There actually are people who have tasted the good word

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1) Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief, p. 85

of the Lord, and the power of the world to come and who still fall away. Heb. 6, 5. 6. This is fact, according to Scripture. But it is contrary to Scripture to divide "the believers" into two classes, such as believe to the end and are saved, and such as believe only for a time and then fall away and are finally damned. It is wrong to reason thus: "1. The 'finaliter credentes,' 2. The temporary believers. Sum total: all believers." It is wrong to put the believing children of God and the temporary believers in one class, to construe the notion of faith from the temporary believers, and "a priori" to inject into it the possibility of defection. Of course, every Christian still has the flesh with him and must therefore always be on his guard, that he does not yield to the flesh and lose the Spirit. But the believer as believer knows of no apostacy. A faith is unthinkable which could ever and completely, for ever, cease. True faith is certainty, certainty of present and future salvation, a certainty which never deceives. We value the Scriptural statements regarding the temporary believers. They serve as examples of warning to us. But never will we let the temporary believers instruct us on the nature of faith, or how we should believe. Temporary believers are not included in the term "all believers," and therefore temporary believers do not belong to the elect.

On these last two questions, our position is stated in the Eleventh Article of the Formula of Concord. While it recognizes the logical chasm, it does not try to bridge it.

Instead, it goes only as far as Scripture goes, and lays down two fundamental principles.

First, God wishes all men to be saved (*gratia universalis*).

"For all preparation for condemnation is by the devil and man, through sin, and in no respect by god, who does not wish that any man be damned; how, then, should He Himself prepare any man for condemnation?....And as God does not will sin, and has no pleasure in sin, so He does not wish the death of the sinner either,' Ezek. 33, 11, nor has He pleasure in his condemnation. For He is not willing 'that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,' 2 Pet. 3, 9." 1)

Second, man perishes through his own wickedness. "But the reason why not all who hear it believe, and some are therefore condemned the more deeply is not because God has begrudged them their salvation; but it is their own fault." 2)

The logical hiatus which still exists our Confessions make no effort to bridge because Scripture itself is silent on the matter.

But let us turn, finally, to the correct and intended use that Christians should make of the doctrine of Election. The great and wonderful purpose for which God has revealed this doctrine to us is for the comfort contained therein, and it is only when the Christian recognizes this and derives from this teaching the consolation it has to offer that he is making proper use of it. The doctrine of Predestination is meant for Christians and is calculated to encourage and streng-

1) Con. Trigl., p. 1089  
2) Op. cit., p. 1089

then Christians in their faith. It is really a highly comforting truth. The whole section, Eph. 1, 3-14, is a doxology, praising the wonderful grace and mercy and blessings of God. Everything that we read here is sweet Gospel. Elsewhere, as in Rom. 8, 2 Thess. 2, 1 Pet. 1, the doctrine of predestination is applied as comfort in cross, suffering, and persecution. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the sufferings of the Christians is not the point of view. At all times, in good as well as in evil days, Christians need the comfort and the strengthening which this teaching affords them.

The secret of the comforting power of the doctrine of Election lies in this that the Christian can and should be absolutely sure of his own election to salvation. Thus in Eph. 1, the Apostle does not speak in general of the elect, whom God has chosen, but speaks of "we," "us," "you," and in these terms describes and regards the Christians as the elect. If one can say to himself: I am a Christian, then he should also know and believe, that he is a chosen one. But in Eph. 1 Paul determines more closely, wherein Christianity consists, and what we as Christians are and have. And these distinguishing marks of Christianity are consequently also the marks and proofs of predestination. The eleventh article of the Formula of Concord, in a lengthy treatise, treats the question of how the individuals can recognize and be certain that they belong to the number of the elect, and refers there also to Eph. 1, since here it is shown that God leads His elect on the way to

salvation and had determined to lead them in no other way other than the well known way to salvation. To those whom God has chosen for Himself from eternity He allows the Word to be preached in time, namely, the Gospel, then He brings to faith, then He gives grace and justifies through Christ, then He sanctifies through faith, and makes wise for all good, then He preserves in faith. In consequence of this each Christian should speak and conclude as follows: True, I am a poor sinner, worthy of no grace, but I believe on Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me with His blood, in whom I have grace and forgiveness of sins; through Christ I am a child of God, and now I pursue, even though in great weakness, sanctification; it is my true endeavor, to walk in a manner pleasing to God my heavenly Father. Therefore I belong to the elect, for just these are the distinguishing marks of the elect. Our whole present status as Christians is in accord with the execution of God's eternal Decree of Election. This thought runs through the whole section, Eph. 1, 3-14. Hence, I can rightly reason from the effect back to the cause. To be sure, the marks of Christianity just mentioned, repentance, faith, sanctification, like in the subjective field. And now in hours of severe affliction the whole inner life of faith is shaken. And then often the inner marks of election are not recognizable. Spiritual affliction consists in just this, that earnest Christians seem to become mistaken about their faith, they begin to doubt whether their faith is really genuine. The consciousness of

their childhood becomes darkened, they fear that their obedience, their piety is mere sham and deceit. But at such times, when the "nota internae electionis" no longer seem to be valid, the apostle points in Eph. 1 to the "nota externa," to the Word of truth, to the Gospel of our salvation, that is high above all subjective experiences, all quakings and sentiments of the human heart, all feelings and emotions of the Christian. Those whom God has chosen for Himself from eternity, they, in consequence of that choice, are granted to hear the Gospel. The ἐκούσαντες τὸν λόγον in Eph. 1, 13 is mentioned beside and before the πιστεύσαντες as a special favor of God, flowing from eternal foreordination. I can and should, therefore, according to the Apostle's intimation, conclude as follows: Here is the Gospel of Christ with its precious promises, the universal promises of grace, that apply in the case of all, to whom they belong, and hence to me also. That is also the Gospel of my salvation, that assures me, that I shall be saved. And what it promises is most certainly true. The Gospel is the Word of truth. The Gospel, the Word of truth, I hear with my ears. Here I hear, and can read it with my eyes, that God wants me to be saved. And so there can be no doubt about it-- I am one of the elect.

Well may we conclude with the words of the Formula of Concord on the salutary use of the doctrine of Election.

"Moreover, this doctrine gives no one a cause either for despondency or for a shameless, dissolute life, namely, when men are taught that they must seek eternal election in Christ and His Holy Gospel, as in the Book of Life, which excludes no penitent sinner, but beckons and calls all the poor, heavy-laden, and troubled sinners to repentance and the knowledge



of their sins and to faith in Christ, and promises the Holy Ghost for purification and renewal, and thus gives the most enduring consolation to all troubled, afflicted men, that they know that their salvation is not placed in their own hands, - for otherwise they would lose it much more easily than was the case with Adam and Eve in paradise, yea, every hour and moment, --but in the gracious election of God, which He has revealed to us in Christ, out of whose hand no man shall pluck us, John 10, 28; 2 Tim. 2, 19." \*)

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\*) Con. Trig., p. 1093

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