

The other is that of Pastor Fischer and some of his fellow ministers, Utika and Minneapolis in Minnesota. The results were not the same everywhere, some were pleasant, others saddening. May the merciful Lord continue to grant mercy, and where radical improvement remains to be desired, also this, for the sake of the holy merit of His only begotten Son. For the sake of the holy merit of His only begotten Son, amen.

As the main subject of the negotiations, the Synod had before it a paper by Past. J. A. Hügli was presented:

24 theses on the doctrine of good works based on the doctrine of free will, election by grace, and justification.

However, only the first five could be discussed; these five are therefore only included in the version in which they were finally adopted by the Synod.

First thesis.

"Man, after the Fall, is by nature so corrupted by sin that he cannot do a truly good work by his own strength."

Proof: "The Holy Scripture testifies 1) that man has lost the image of God after which he was created. Scripture testifies 1) that man has lost the image of God after which he was created, Gen. 2, 17. Compare with Eph. 4, 24. Col. 3, 10. Gen. 5, 1. 3.; - 2) that he is spiritually dead, Col. 2, 13. Eph. 2, 1. 5.3) that procreation by natural birth, as well as the whole nature of man, is sinful and corrupt, Joh. 3, 6. cf. Luther's answer to Erasmus that free will is nothing, Walch XVIII, 2372, § 514-523 - "Wohlan so habe duin ihnen ist." (Milwaukie ed. p. 217-221); further: Ps. 51, 7. Eph. 2, 3. - 4) that all man's doing is only evil, Gen. 6, 5., 8, 21. cf. Luther at the cited place W. XVIII, 2353, § 487-498. "Further comes the Diatribewider den freien Willen." (Milw. Ausg. p. 204-209); - 5) that the natural man does nothing good, Tit. 1, 16. - 6) this also teaches experience. Cf. Concordia Book, N. Y. ed. p. 532: that he is powerful and active. To the objection that God has given commandments to men, therefore they must also be able to do something, Luther answers l. c. W. XVIII, 2212, § 270-279: "The other saying is far from your discretion. (Milw. Ausg. pp. 113-117); further, ibid. W. p. 2225, § 289-292: "Now see the sayings .what we shall do." - (Milw. Ausg. p. 121. 122)." *)

In this regard it was noted:

From these six proofs it follows irrefutably that the natural man

*) Note. The passages cited should be looked up and read.

cannot do a truly good work. Good works cannot be demanded of people who have not been born again; those who demand them do nothing but want to pick grapes from thorns and figs from thistles.

It has been pointed out that Luther, in one of the passages read, also proves the greatness of human ruin from the fact that all those who persistently and always reject the gospel only become angrier when they hear this gospel, which is after all the power of God for salvation. Such do not want to take away their idol, but the gospel pushes it off the throne; therefore they hate the same. Great is the enmity of the natural man against the law of God, but still greater is the enmity against the gospel in those who are perishing, to whom it is a stench of death unto death. Otherwise a man is moved when love is shown to him, but they are filled with hatred and enmity when God, the highest good, proclaims to them the vain goodness and grace of the gospel.

Luther wants to prove in the quoted passage that man has no free will, that he cannot meet God, that he cannot accept grace, but is completely passive in conversion; that if man does something, he can only resist, has only a servile will, that free will is nothing, nothing but a title without dignity. On the part of man there is nothing but satanic enmity. Even the weakest "yes" that man speaks is a work of the Holy Spirit. Spirit.

This doctrine is denied by most of the theologians of the new age, although not always in a crude way; they consider it to be an outworn point of view. They say that man cannot make himself blessed, but at the same time they maintain that if man becomes blessed, it is because he has decided for it; the final decision comes from man. Just as man decided against God at the Fall, so he must now decide for God again if this is to be balanced; this decision of man *fei* faith. If some become blessed, others not, one cannot explain this differently, than by the fact that evenly those decided for it, these against it. Therefore, the choice of grace is also based on this decision of man. God had foreseen who would decide for him and who would decide against him, and had chosen those and rejected those.

Through this atrocious teaching, all honor is taken away from the Lord Christ, as the one who only helps, while man has to make the actual decision.

Do not say that this is only a doctrine for the theologians and not for the people, who would abuse it if they heard that man can do nothing for salvation. The true children of God do not abuse it and accept it with joy. This teaching must be diligently practiced. No one can become a Christian if he does not realize that he is a poor sinner and can do nothing for his salvation, that everything about him is cursed that the Holy Spirit has not worked in him. The Holy Spirit has worked in him.

Although the various Protestant communities confess the doctrine of original sin in thesi and say that man is spiritually dead and must be born again, none of them teaches it correctly and in their practice they deny what they confess in thesi. They only talk about the fact that man can also do something, chasing people into their own work. It is true that they also remember the Lord Christ with their mouths, but at the same time they deny him by saying that man can also do something. In this way they make the Lord Christ only an emergency helper, who must help out where man is lacking. If man did not belong skin and hair in the hellish abyss, if he could help himself out of ruin, what would God have sent his Son for?

In the doctrine of conversion there is no difference between Methodists and Papists. The Methodists do not say to the frightened sinner: it is written, only believe! - but rather they say: you must not believe until it is so and so with you. If this were true, then we would acquire blessedness ourselves.

Regarding the different effects of the law and gospel, it was noted: As long as the law works, sin becomes greater, enmity against God more bitter. The gospel takes away hatred and enmity. The repentance that the law works only becomes a repentance to blessedness when the faith of the gospel is added; otherwise it is a damned repentance. The law causes wrath, i.e., it causes man to become more and more hostile to God and to realize that he is now all the more under God's wrath and curse.

No man can give repentance to himself; it is a shameful expression of Romans: "work repentance. - God's Spirit works repentance through the law; but if repentance is to be repentance unto salvation, the effects of the law must be joined with the effects of the gospel. The effects of the law by themselves lead to death. Repentance without faith is damnable, like that of Cain and Judas. The law works repentance, not the gospel. But although the gospel does not work repentance, it makes salutary the repentance that the law works. No one can sincerely hate sin unless he believes. It is foolish not to want to tell one the gospel until he confesses that he repents of his sin. It is therefore terrible to preach only law in a sermon without letting the gospel follow.

To repent is nothing else than to wish that something would be different, that something would not have happened. When it is said of God in Scripture: "He repented," this is not attributing to Him a movement of the mind, but only saying that He wants to change something; in man, repentance is not without a movement of the mind. If the impenitent, who have the sadness of the world, repent of something, they have a different reason for such repentance than those who have the divine sadness. The difference of repentance in both is not in the essence, but in the cause; the penitent has repentance, the impenitent may also have it, and perhaps even more; but in both

the reason is different. The impenitent fears temporal shame and hell; the penitent is offended and pained that he has offended God, his benefactor, for so many years.

A natural man has no desire for the grace of Christ. He may wish that God would not punish him, but not that God would be merciful to him; he may not want to go to hell, but he does not want to go to heaven either, as the word of God promises to the elect.

A natural man cannot recognize his sinfulness, not without the preaching of the law, and not even through it alone. For this does not yet mean to have recognized sin correctly, if one says that he is a sinner, but at the same time also claims to still have his "good side". The Pharisees knew the law and yet they remained without a true knowledge of their sins, they became more and more blind. Such people harden their hearts against the voice of the law; to the natural powerlessness comes nefarious reluctance.

With worldly repentance there is still love for sin, which is due to the fact that man has different urges that oppose each other. Thus, a person may well wish that what follows sin should not be, but at the same time have the urge to sin and the desire for it

The repentance of the natural man comes from his own love: he wants to see the punishment averted; the repentance for beatitude arises from the love of God. To him who has repentance only through the law, it is all the same whether God is merciful to him or not, if he only goes to the heaven he imagines; he does not realize that the grace of God is heaven. But with truly penitent people it is different, they only ask for God's mercy, if they would also have to be with God in hell, and say with Assaph: "If I have only You, I ask nothing of heaven and earth," Ps. 73, 25. Cf. the song: "Treasure above all treasures."

Even if in books of pagan writers there are strange statements, from which one can see that they felt to some extent that it was not right with man, they still had by no means a right knowledge of the human ruin. A person who has not been enlightened by the Holy Spirit cannot even know about human corruption. A person who is not enlightened by the Holy Spirit cannot even recognize his original sin from the Bible. Only when man is born again, he recognizes that there is nothing good about him. Even the holiest will confess without hypocrisy that they are the greatest sinners. A believing Christian alone knows that everything he does is worthy of hell, that everything that is good about him is God's work.

The last two passages from Luther's writing "that free will is nothing" were described as especially important against the Methodists, who cite this as the main proof for their doctrine of the perfection of Christians, that God demands perfection from man, that therefore man can also prove this perfection, since God does not demand it in vain.

Second thesis.

"According to this, the doctrine that man still has free will in spiritual matters after the Fall is false, whether this doctrine occurs either

1) in Pelagianism; this is the false opinion that the Fall of the first human beings harmed only themselves, but not also their descendants, and that thereby human nature remained uncorrupted; or

2) Semi-Pelagianism, which is the false doctrine that man can make the beginning of conversion, but cannot lead it out without God's help; or

3) in synergism; that is, the false opinion that, while the grace which precedes begins in the man to be converted, his own will can join it."

Ad. 1. Pelagius *) writes: "malum nobiscum non oritur, sed agitur a nobis." "Evil does not originate with us, but is committed by us." (1. de lib. arb.) Against this cf. Rom. 5, 12.

Ad. 2. Cassianus †) writes: "It is not to be doubted that in the soul of every seed of virtue is implanted by nature through the goodness of the Creator, but if it is not awakened by the help of God, it cannot grow up to perfection". (Coll. 13, 12.) In contrast, compare the passages on thesis 1 that deal with spiritual death.

Ad. 6 3. Melanchthon ‡) writes: "These causes work together in conversion: the Word of God, the Holy Spirit whom the Father and the Son send to inflame our hearts, and our will, which agrees and does not resist the Word of God". (Exam. Ord.). Cf. on the other hand the passages on thesis 1.

Spiritual things are those which are not subject to the senses and reason and which lie hidden in God, who is a spirit, although they may also be presented by him through revelation; or those which are to a certain extent subject to the senses and reason, but which must be treated in a spiritual way. (Baier Comp. II, 2. § 13). As far as the doctrine of free will is concerned, according to Chemnitz (*Loc. th.* 1, 2. p. 284) this concept includes two things: 1) the intellect and 2) the will of man. That the mind is naturally blind in spiritual matters is taught in the following passages: 1 Cor. 2:14, Eph. 5:8; but that the will is also perverted by nature is taught in Rom. 8:7.

*Note. Pelagius was a British monk and began to spread his heresies about the year 410, when he came to Rome. His followers are called Pelagians.

†) Remark. Cassianus, who was at the head of the Semipelagians, i.e., the half-Pelagians, was abbot of Massilia and died in 432.

‡) Note. In later years, Melanchthon deviated from the pure doctrine of free will, which he himself had professed in the Augsburg Confession. Those who held with him in this are called synergists, because they ascribed to the natural forces of free will in the work of conversion a cooperation (*synergeia*.) with the holy spirit. Spirit".

Cf. Concordienbuch p. 548. "Darnachherkam." Luther at the place cited W. XVIII. P. 2409, § 565-582. "For since Paul in the deepest depths of the heart." (Milw. ed. pp. 240-248.)

Comments:

This second thesis, while already inherent in the first, is emphasized here because of the importance of the doctrine that man has no free will in spiritual matters.

In the quoted saying Eph. 5, 8. it was pointed out that the apostle expresses a high degree of corruption of the human mind by not saying: "you would have been dark", but: "you would have been darkness".

In external, worldly things, man still has free will to some extent, but not in spiritual things.

An unconverted person may well go to church by virtue of his free will, hear the sermon or not, but he will not go to church to have his soul edified there, he will not read God's word to recognize Christ, to find grace. The outward going to church is to some extent under his control. As a result of such actions, which he does out of his natural powers, he may well come to God's grace, but this is not his, but God's work. God precedes man with his grace. It is not man who seeks God, but God who seeks man. But the preceding grace is an outward, not an inward one. It is a dangerous false doctrine of the new believers that they call all those awakened and under the preceding grace who have not yet attained a certain degree of contrition or confidence; whereas every willing is God's work of grace. He who has the first spark in his heart has all grace. Such a one is already a perfect child of God. It is terrible to say to such a one, You are awakened, but not converted; alive, but not yet a child of God; you are a workmanship of God, but you do not yet have grace; grace has only begun with you, but you do not yet have it. Many have already been driven into despair or back into the arms of the world by such teaching. Equally reprehensible is the classification of the spiritual states of the soul. According to God's Word, there are only two classes of people: Converted and unconverted, pardoned and rejected.

When Luther speaks of the best power of free will, he means that even those are blind and God's enemies who have spent their whole lives and made an effort to learn what is truth and right, such as the old pagan philosophers. This teaching is now despised in our time. One has ceased to place Christianity in opposition to what the whole world considers truth and right; one connects Christianity and the world; Christianity recognizes the world so that it may be recognized by it again. Where the church does not take Bible teaching seriously, it will soon be swallowed up by the darkness of the last days.

One does not like to speak of those pagans Socrates, Plato and others, who tried so hard to find truth, as being among the lost; because if one praised them, one would slap the gospel too much in the face. Therefore the doctrine of Hades was invented, in which such should still be converted. Those who do not believe in the election of grace cannot believe that those who do not believe are damned, that salvation is a work of God's free grace and mercy; they must be angry that such people should go to hell.

Concerning synergism, it was noted that many who want to be Lutherans are in the same without knowing and wanting it, by attributing in sermons and otherwise to man a self-decision of the will and saying that man, when grace comes to him and touches him powerfully, must and can decide. Admittedly, people are urged: Repent! But this does not mean that they can do so. This was made clear by the word of Christ spoken at the tomb of Lazari: "Lazare, come out!" Lazarus had no strength to get up, although Christ said to him, "get up!" But at the same moment that Christ spoke these words to him, and through these words he received this power; what is true of these words of Christ is now true of every other word of the Lord that the preachers proclaim. Through this word comes power and life and increases, if the man does not resist wilfully. But a man wilfully resists when he consciously does not want to follow the power that wants to make him free. "To him that hath shall be given, that he may have abundance; but from him that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath," Matth. 13:12.

Third thesis.

"The so-called good works of the unregenerate can only be called good in the sense that they outwardly agree to some extent with the law of God, and in this respect God also rewards them out of great kindness with temporal goods. But they are not truly good works; because 1) God's word expressly testifies to this, Rom. 14, 23. Matth. 12, 33. 2) The person who does these works has not yet been reconciled with God and is therefore still under God's wrath, Joh. 3, 36. 3) They come from an unclean heart, Tit. 1, 15. 4) The purpose they have is a false one".

That the unregenerate can outwardly do good works to some extent is taught by 1) God's Word, Rom. 2:14, 2) experience.

Cf. Concordienbuch, p. 30, p. 566. Luther on Gal. 2:16: "Now come great"; Luther's Interpretation of the 101st Psalm, Erl. Ausg. 39, 330-334, "Zwar gethan habe".

Luther in Walch XVIII, 2374, §517-523. "Should that be to you." (Milw. ed. p. 218.)

Augustine: "The Romans, according to the zeal of their discipline, have received in reward a flourishing empire over the whole earth, happy successes, etc. ".

Quenstedt: "Although, therefore, some actions of the unregenerate are not in themselves and according to the substance of the act erroneous (*vitiosi*), they nevertheless happen to be erroneous, namely, because they lack the requirements of good works before God; therefore, those actions of the unregenerate are called sin not with respect to the substance of the act itself, which seems to correspond to the law of God, but with respect to the effecting cause, the essence and the purpose. When, therefore, it is said by Augustine, Luther, and others that even the virtuous acts of the unregenerate are sin, it is not with respect to matter, or with respect to their substance, even in so far as they are done and are done according to the knowledge of good and evil that is left in this life (for we admit that they are good in this way), but with respect to the effecting cause, essence, and purpose." (Theol. IV, s. 2, Q. 1. p. 312.)

Synod comments:

Works of the unregenerate are called good, considered as mere actions without looking at their reason, intention, etc.; they are civilly good, not spiritually good; they may be called good in human judgment but are not good before God, they are not morally good.

Regarding the reward of these works, it was said that it cannot be denied. God does not allow anything to be done in vain. But the word reward must not be taken in the strict sense, as if they deserve this reward; they obtain it out of goodness. God owes no one anything; he has not bound himself to do so; but he does so at times. God would like to have all men blessed, he is love; the unregenerate do not want his love, do not want eternal life, yet he often gives them temporal goods. He also does it for the sake of the preservation of the world, so that outward discipline remains in it; to induce them to do so, he gives them temporal blessings; they do not want the spiritual and eternal. The saying Rom. 4, 4 ("But to him that worketh, the reward is not by grace, but by duty") is to be understood according to the attitude of the works-righteous; they ascribe their works to God; God will deal with them accordingly, he will pay them; but they do not receive eternal life.

Fourth thesis.

"If man is to be able to do truly good works pleasing to God, he must first and foremost be inspired by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. If man is to be able to do truly good works pleasing to God, he must first of all be born again by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the Holy Sacraments. Sacraments.

1) Since it has been shown in the previous theses that man cannot do a truly good work by his own strength, it follows that if he is to be able to do it, a change must take place in him, and this will be no other than the one described in Joh. 3, 5. 2) This is also taught in the Scriptures in all the passages where it speaks of a spiritual resurrection, Eph. 5, 14, 25, Luc. 15, 32. Scripture also teaches this in all the passages where it speaks of a spiritual resurrection, Eph. 5, 14. Joh. 5, 25. Luc. 15, 32. of a resurrection, Eph. 2, 5. 6.

Creation, 2 Cor. 5, 17. Gal. 6, 15. Eph. 2, 10. (Balduin says to Gal. 6, 15. that the apostle needs the word "create" to indicate the principle of our rebirth, that this is not the powers of our nature but God alone, because creating is a work that belongs to God alone). Furthermore, Scripture speaks of this in all the passages where it speaks of putting on the new man, Eph. 4, 24, of conversion, of repentance, Apost. 12, 18. etc.

Luther's interpretation of the Gospel of John (C. 3, 3.). Erl. Ausg. 46. pp. 257-264. sermon in the church postilion on the Gospel on 1 Adv. Erl. A. 10, 36-39. "Diesglauben an Christo."

In this regard it was noted:

It is a great error to think that the doctrine of the necessity of rebirth belongs only to the enthusiasts and not to the Lutheran Church; furthermore, to think that baptism is rebirth, that all baptized persons are born again, have the power to do good works, and have free will. This error is especially prevalent in Germany. Rebirth is presented as nothing more than a new relationship of the baptized to God brought about by baptism, as an inexplicable something that is worked in the soul by baptism, which does not change even if the person falls into mortal sins. It is claimed that the one who is born again through baptism always remains such. But according to the Scriptures we must believe that in But according to the Holy Scriptures we must believe that in the rebirth not only the relationship of man to God, but his heart, mind, courage and all powers are changed, that the rebirth is not only something moral, but something physical in the theological sense. This creation of God is a sum of new spiritual, heavenly powers, which are called "spirit" in the Scriptures, because they are worked by the Holy Spirit. Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit". Joh. 3, 6. "And your spirit whole, together with soul and body, etc." 1 Thess. 5, 23.

We must hold on to the teaching that not all baptized will be born again; after all, there are many who resist the Holy Spirit. There are many who resist the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the bath and means of rebirth. But those who wilfully resist are guilty that this means cannot achieve its purpose. A Jew who remains in his unbelief and is baptized only for the sake of the patronage money will certainly not be born again, although baptism remains the bath of rebirth; just as little is he converted who hears the converting word of God but does not accept it. And just as we must say that not all who are baptized are born again, so we must also say that one can be born again who has not been baptized; for the word of the gospel also has regenerating power.

The sacraments must not be ascribed a magical power, an effect without faith, *ex opere operato*.

The doctrine that in unbelievers who have been baptized something is worked through baptism that remains with them forever, that is, that such a one must still be regarded as a member of the body of Christ, - is not

different from the papists' doctrine of the indelible sign, which, according to them, is expressed through baptism, through their confirmation and ordination to the priesthood, and remains visible even in hell.

Just as we have to hold fast to the belief that baptism is the bath and means of rebirth, so we must also beware of expressions such as: baptism is rebirth, so as not to give them cause to blaspheme our doctrine; although such expressions can be well interpreted, it can also be implied that whoever is baptized, he may live as he pleases, is born again. We believe that all children are born again, they do not resist the Holy Spirit. They do not wilfully resist the Holy Spirit. Those who have fallen from their baptismal grace must be born again. The apostle says of the apostate Galatians: "whom I bring forth again with fears", Gal. 4, 19. According to this, the teaching is wrong that the rebirth can only happen once in baptism and cannot be repeated.

A question concerning the blessedness of the children of the Gentiles and unbelievers was answered thus: Of the children of the Gentiles we have no promise, we leave them to the mercy of God, we do not condemn them, but we do not call them blessed either. The children born within Christendom, even those born of unbelieving parents, are to be regarded as given to the Church by God; hence the promise concerns them also. - "What business have I of those outside, that I should judge them". 1 Cor. 5:12 We have no right to decide what God can do according to His free grace.

To the passage 1 Thess. 5, 23: "and your spirit whole with soul and body etc." was answered: man does not consist of three parts: Spirit, soul and body. The word "spirit" when used by believers, as in this saying, denotes that which was born and created in man by the Holy Spirit. When the word "spirit" is used by a natural man, it is synonymous with "soul." Jude, in his epistle, calls the unbelievers "carnal, having no spirit." V. 19. If the word "spirit" is used to describe that which was created by the Holy Spirit in man, then it is the same as "soul". If the word "spirit" refers to that which was created in man by the Holy Spirit, then it is distinguished from the word "soul". Since also the hell. Since the holy gospel was also given and created by the holy spirit, it is distinguished from the word "soul". Since the holy gospel was also given and created by the holy spirit, it is also called "spirit".

To the question of how faith, regeneration and justification relate to each other, the answer was given: these three coincide in time and can only be separated conceptually. Man must first receive the power to believe; this happens through regeneration; when he has received faith, he puts his trust in the Lord Christ; the consequence is that he is justified by such faith. The concept of regeneration and faith precedes justification. A dead man cannot believe. But at the moment of rebirth he believes; for in rebirth faith is given. At the same moment, God pronounces him righteous and blessed.

Fifth thesis.

"The election of grace relates to this change of man in such a way that God, by virtue of his eternal election, also works and creates powerfully in time out of pure grace for Christ's sake, so that his elect - that is, all those whom he has predestined to eternal life - also come to the means of grace and are converted."

See Lehre und Wehre II, 315, flg.

Proof. 1) That God is the main cause of election is taught in Eph. 1, 3. 4;

2) That the inner driving cause is God's grace is taught in Rom. 9:15;

3) That the external or meritorious is nothing in us is evident from 2 Tim. 1, 9. but that it is united and solely Christ's merit is taught in Eph. 1, 4. 5. 6;

4) That the calling and sanctification of the elect is a fruit and consequence of election follows a) from the fact that Scripture testifies that everything that God does in time for the sanctification of His elect is only a consequence of His eternal election, Eph. 1, 4. 13, 48.; b) This also follows from the term election itself, as this word is used in this doctrine. It includes 1) God's love for the elect for eternity, Deut. 7, 6-8; 2) the separation of the elect from other people, Deut. 7, 6. 3 Deut. 20, 24. 1 Kings 8, 53. Joh. 15, 19; c) it is also said of the elect that all things must serve them for the best. Rom. 8, 28.

Cf. Concordienbuch p. 635: "Die ewige Wahlwaren .". P. 638: "And hatSeligkeit .".

Luther, Walch XVIII, 2474, § 654-662: "I wanted miracles done." (Milw. ed. pp. 283-287.)

Gerhard: "By no merits of men, by no worthiness of the human race, nor by the foreknowledge of good works or **faith, was** God moved to choose some to eternal life, but this is entirely due to His unmerited and immeasurable grace. Eph. 1, 6: "He has chosen us to the praise of His glorious grace." Rom. 11, 6.: "But if it is by grace, it is not by merit of works; otherwise grace would not be grace." 2 Tim. 1, 9.: "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ JEsu before the times of the world." (*Loc. de elect. & repr.* § 52.)

The same: "We confess with a loud voice that we believe that God has found nothing good in the man to be chosen to eternal life, and that he has not seen it that way, neither in good works nor in the use of free will, nor even in faith itself,

We say that Christ's merit alone is the one whose worthiness God has considered, and that it was by grace alone that he made the choice. (L. c. § 161.)

Quenstedt: "God has not chosen us according to our works, but by pure grace. Also faith itself does not belong here, if it is regarded as a condition, more or less worthy, whether in and of itself or added to faith by virtue of a valuation by the will of God. None of this had any influence on God's choice (*circulum electionis ingreditur*), either as a moving or as a driving cause, that he took such a decision, but it is solely due to his grace, as the blessed Hülsemann teaches" (I. c. P. III., o. 2. §. 1., p. 17.). See Doctrine and Weir IX, 297-300.

Synod comments.

The difference between the Calvinist and Lutheran doctrine of the election of grace is this: The Lutherans do not want to explain how it comes about that, since it is all up to God's mercy, reluctance and death are taken away in some, while others are lost. They reject this question. The Calvinists, however, answer it in such a way that they say that God does not want to save those who perish, that he has made an unconditional decision from eternity to create some people as objects of his wrath and others as objects of his grace. This is a blasphemous doctrine. As resolutely as Luther asserts election as a choice of free grace, so resolutely does he teach that God wants all to be saved, that Christ died for all, that the call is earnestly meant. God does not let us see into his wonderful counsel; he has directed us to his will revealed in the Word. But we must not believe that this revealed will is contrary to the secret will.

Concerning Luther's statement in his preface to the Epistle to the Romans that it originally flowed from God's eternal providence who should believe or not believe, it was remarked that if it flowed from providence who should believe, it would certainly also flow from it who should not believe; but that this did not mean that God did not want to save such people.

The difference between Calvinist and Lutheran doctrine is clearly shown in the Formula of Concord. - If, according to the testimony of the Formula of Concord, eternal election by grace is the cause that creates, works, helps and promotes the salvation of the elect and all that belongs to it, it does not follow that the cause that creates the condemnation of the rejected is the eternal election of God; that is Calvinist teaching. The cause is rather the wrong will of the wicked. S. Augsb. Conf. XIX.

What the Concordia formula teaches, namely that there is no predestination to damnation but only to blessedness, can be clearly proven from the words of the basic text of Rom. 9, 22. 23. Of "the vessels of mercy" it says: "Which he hath before prepared or ordained unto glory (*α προη-οίμασεν εις xxxxx*), but of the "vessels of wrath"

only: "those who are prepared for destruction" (χατηρισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν). From the vessels of wrath are not said to have been prepared by God, nor are they said to have been prepared beforehand, but only to have been prepared for destruction.

From the way someone presents the doctrine of the election of grace, one can see whether he has Pelagian ideas or not. (See Doctrine and Weirs l. c.) - It is well to note that the Concordia formula calls the doctrine according to which one ascribes the least to man a blasphemous one. Now the doctrine according to which one puts everything in God's mercy is considered an unreasonable one.

Faith is not the cause of our blessedness, nor is election, but Christ alone. Election is the cause that brings about our salvation and all that belongs to it. Faith is the means of salvation. A beggar does not have something because he grasps it, but because it is given to him. The giver does not give to him because he, the beggar, grasps, but he grasps because he is given. So it is also with us who are beggars before God. God does not give us because we take hold, but we take hold because he gives us.

It was objected that Eph. 1 says that we are chosen through Christ, and that this includes faith, since Christ is grasped through faith, and that this also justifies the expression of the later theologians, "intuitu fidei, in view of faith, God has chosen". To this was replied: In God there are no conditions; but one puts such conditions in God when one says that he has chosen in view of faith. The choice is therefore not an absolute one. God has chosen us in Christ, i.e. for Christ's sake. Faith cannot be the cause. How can it be a cause that God has done something to us, is doing something to us? Does one love a beggar because one has given him a gift? How can God want to make us blessed because he has given us faith? Nowhere in Scripture do we find that God foreknew anything about man for the sake of which he would make him blessed. Rom. 8, 28. 29.

It is a gross misunderstanding of the moderns who accuse Luthern, Heshus, Flac- cius, Wigand and other faithful disciples of Luther of Calvinism. They themselves, these moderns, mostly pay homage to Pelagianism and Semipelagianism. They ascribe free will to men when they teach that God chose them because they will believe. God saw men, one and another, sunk low. What is the cause that these believe, those do not believe? If it is not solely God's free mercy that they believe, then they must have had a free will to believe.

It is not wonderful that people are condemned, because they all deserve damnation, but it is admirable that while some are saved, others are condemned, that in some people reluctance and death are taken away, in others they are not. We cannot understand this. We have only to admire it. We must not want to make the secret, hidden will of God a revealed one with the Calvinists.

On the question of how far it is Pelagianism if faith is regarded as a middle link, so that the moving thing in election is not faith.

The answer was that it was not God per se, but Christ taken by faith and his merit: Surely by this one sets a condition in God. Faith is indeed a middle element; but if one says that God has chosen in view of faith, then faith is not a middle element, but a condition. No matter how subtle the distinction, a certain causality is attributed to faith. But nowhere in Scripture do we find it said that we are saved for the sake of faith. Faith is the means, not the cause. Christ is the cause of salvation, even if he is not grasped in faith.

The election of grace is only comforting when no cause is set in man. The devil would overcome all believers if there were no election of grace. But now we are preserved by God's power through faith to salvation, in that he gives, strengthens and sustains faith. For the comfort of those who are in doubt as to whether they have been chosen, and who think that they belong to those who believe only for a time, the pure doctrine of the election of grace is to be explained to them. Their salvation is certain; it is not in them, it is God who sustains them. To them the comforting words should be said: "To you who are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation" (1 Pet 1:5). "But we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are appointed according to the purpose. For whom he hath before ordained, them hath he also ordained," etc., Rom. 8, 28. ff. "And am of the same in good confidence that," etc., Phil. 1, 6.

The teaching must begin with the doctrine of the law and not with the doctrine of the election of grace. The doctrine of the election of grace is the doctrine of the way in which God wants to lead a number of people to eternal life. In order for them to come to this path, they must first be made poor sinners through the teaching of the law. The election of grace therefore requires that the beginning be made with the law. It is wrong that the Calvinists begin with the election of grace in the Heidelberg Catechism.

Attention has been drawn here to the misuse of the doctrine of election by grace, especially in Wisconsin: together with the Calvinists, they want to reveal the hidden will of God; in doing so, they refer to Luther, who, however, did the opposite, warned against investigating the secret will of God with all seriousness, and declared that a deeper examination of the relationship between the faithful and the ungodly in the election of God is strong wine, which is dangerous to the inexperienced; the election is presented - contrary to the Concordia formula (R. p. 706, 9.); this doctrine, which God has given for the consolation of his faithful, is used to murder souls; there is a certain lust to introduce poor souls into the greatest, terrible mysteries of the divine majesty.

On the other hand, the one who wants to present the election of grace plausibly, so that it is considered easy and simple, is not Lutheran either. The pure doctrine of the election of grace is such that reason is terrified of it and

The people do not judge otherwise than that God is a terrible tyrant. Faith speaks differently; it bows before the majesty of God, considers it (the election) as the greatest secret of the divine will and waits for its disclosure in eternal life.

It was asked whether Christ, in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, did not address us to reason with the words: "I do you no wrong; are you not one with me for a penny?"

Have I not power?" etc., Matth. 20, 13. f., and answered: The words are not about the election of grace; they are directed against those who believe that they can earn something and deserve more than others, since they had become one with the father of the house for a penny; since this was against reason, the father of the house could justly appeal to reason.

Regarding Quenstedt's testimony, it was noted that he stated that Hülsemann had also taught in this way, and that this passage, together with the quotations from Gerhard, was therefore a powerful testimony, even to the later theologians, to the truth that God, in His election, had not considered anything in man, but had chosen solely out of grace and mercy, even though, for the sake of the Calvinists, it made use of the unfortunate terminology that God had chosen *intuitu fidei*, in view of faith.

The pure doctrine of the election of grace enables preachers and hearers to see whether someone teaches rightly about justification. He who does not teach rightly about free will does not teach rightly about justification.

We cannot thank God enough for the glorious testimony of the Concordia formula and of Luther, especially in his book *de servo arbitrio*, "that free will is nothing".

Woe to him who takes from the Lord Christ and gives to man. There is nothing more blasphemous and frightening than this error. We make ourselves God with it.

Here the negotiations on the theses had to be broken off.

Luther's book *de servo arbitrio*, "that free will is nothing". [Roy Suelflow referenced this in his thesis [here](#)]

The committee, to which the minutes of the previous year's Michigan Pastoral Conference had been submitted for review, called attention to the conference's verdict on the above book by Luther. The synod agreed with it and decided to include it in the synodal report. It says in the minutes: "The question whether Luther later taught the doctrine of free will differently than in earlier years, was emphatically denied and noted that it seems so, especially if one compares his book against Erasmus with his interpretation of Genesis. But it only seems that way. Especially in his "*de servo arbitrio*" (that free will is nothing) Luther speaks with the utmost caution; everything in it is well considered; he himself calls it his best writing. The difference that makes it appear as if Luther later taught differently is that Luther speaks dialectically in the first writing,

in such a way and with such words, as it should have been done precisely towards this opponent. Luther, like Augustine, learned best from St. Paul how to make the sharpest distinctions in this teaching, as Paul treats it in Romans 9. Christ himself speaks similarly when he says: "This do, and thou shalt live!" [Luke 10:28] "Take that thine is, and go thy way" [Matt. 20:14]; "Have I not power to do what I will with what is mine?" [Matt. 20:15] There are opponents to whom one cannot give any other answer and must speak just like that. While Luther speaks dialectically in the writing against Erasmus, he speaks to the people in his sermons and interpretations, i.e. popularly; his purpose is not to convince such an opponent and dissuade him from his errors, but to teach the people. This alone gives the impression that Luther has changed his doctrine, but this is not the case.

Of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

At the request of a committee, the Synod issued the following statement about it: Under the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Art. 3. By the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Art. 3, "enlightened with his gifts") is not to be understood law and gospel, as is said in many catechisms of modern times. The law does not bring about enlightenment. 2 Cor. 4, 6: The knowledge of the law is not enlightenment and clarity, but the way to it. The Holy Spirit works through the law, but does not come through it. Cain and Judas recognized their sins, but were still caught in hellish darkness. Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the most For this reason, the catechism immediately goes on to say: "sanctified in the right faith. The one who is justified by faith does holy works, no longer out of fear of punishment, but because of love. See Luther, in Keyl's Catechism II, Fr. 501. It is not contrary to this if one understands by the gifts of the Holy Spirit all the powers that can be exercised by the Holy Spirit. Spirit all the powers that the Holy Spirit gives, so that we may love Jesus. Spirit gives, so that we can recognize and accept Jesus Christ. "No one can call Jesus a Lord without the Holy Spirit. First it is said in the third article that we cannot believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him by our own reason or strength; then it is shown how we can come to Christ and believe in Him, namely not by the law but by the gospel; man is called out of the world by the gospel, he receives power to believe, is enlightened and justified by such faith; sanctification then follows such faith. From the words: "sanctified in the right faith" we see that in the preceding words: "enlightened with his gifts", faith is included; therefore enlightenment and justification coincide.

On the difference between children born within and outside Christendom in regard to baptism.

The same committee pointed out that the 500th question of Dietrich's Catechism was attacked by many, and that for this reason we were deprived of the pre-