

# Lehre und Wehre.

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## Use and Abuse of the Analogy of Faith.

At the free conference held in Milwaukee in September of this year, the proceedings also turned to the "analogy of faith". It had been decided in Watertown to discuss all the scriptural passages dealing with eternal election at the next conference. When this task was approached in Milwaukee, the question soon arose as to whether the scriptural statements dealing with election were to be taken at face value, or were to be "interpreted" or limited according to the analogy of faith. On the one hand (from members of the Synodical Conference), it was held that the doctrine of election could be inferred from the passages in Scripture that deal with this doctrine (i.e., the *sedes doctrinae*). Thus, in particular, the relation of faith to eternal election is to be determined solely from those passages of Scripture which reveal this relation to us. The clear statements of Scripture concerning a doctrine are to be adhered to even when we cannot recognize the rational connection of this doctrine with other revealed doctrines or when this doctrine seems to contradict other revealed doctrines to our reason. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was cited as an example, where the complete, undivided and indivisible unity of the essence of the Trinity or real distinction of persons seems to contradict the Trinity or real difference of persons. On the other hand, it was emphasized that the scriptural statements about the individual doctrines had to be interpreted or restricted according to the "analogy of faith". So the question arose as to what the analogy of the faith is. From our side, namely from members of the Synodical Conference, it was maintained that the "analogy of the faith" is not something subjective, not an insight into the reasonable connection of the individual Christian teachings, but something objective, namely, the clear statements of Scripture themselves, which we assemble and allow to stand side by side, even if we are not able to prove

how individual parts agree with other parts in accordance with reason. Therefore, no clear statements of Scripture should be dismissed or reinterpreted on the pretext that they contradict other clear statements of Scripture. The old theologians would therefore not only have defined the analogy of faith thus: “By the rule of faith we understand the clear passages of Scripture in which the articles of faith are presented in clear and explicit words,”<sup>1)</sup> but would also have added: “the rule of faith is to be accepted in its entirety, and the individual parts of it must not be set against each other”.<sup>2)</sup> [ 1) So Gerhard, ‘Loci’, *L. de interpretatione Sc. s.*, § 75.; 2) Gerhard, I. c., § 154.] We do not want to describe the opposing position, as far as it was expressed in Milwaukee, in detail for the time being. The *Kirchenblatt* of the Iowa Synod reports the following [**Dr. Pieper’s comments interspersed in () parentheses**]:

“Dr. Allwardt of the Ohio Synod had been instructed to deliver a paper for this assembly. He had to present the scriptural passages dealing with the election of grace in an exegetical, that is, interpretive, way. However, before he went into his work, he explained in more detail the principles of interpretation that guided him. He touched on a very important topic here, namely the analogy of faith, that is, the similarity or agreement of the Christian faith, Rom. 12:6. This was hotly debated for the first few days. Pastor Allwardt represented the ecclesiastical” (?) “side of the correct relationship of Christian doctrines among and to each other. The members of the Synodical Conference, with Missouri in the lead, represent an “unbiblical” (?) and “unhistorical” (?) analogy of faith. Pastor Allwardt emphasized that all Christian doctrines must be in harmony, that is, in agreement” (according to the judgment of faith or according to the judgment of human reason?). “One should not explain Scripture in such a way that the individual doctrines come into conflict with clear and unambiguous scriptural passages. That this” (what?) “was right, however, was denied by the Synodical Conference in its representatives. And before the doctrine of election could be discussed, a fundamental disagreement had already emerged among the participants in the assembly. It was only natural that the doctrine of election and also of conversion, insofar as it was touched upon, revealed anew the great gulf that must be bridged if real and true agreement is to be achieved in these matters. Here the representatives of the Synodical Conference returned to and asserted the old standpoint. They said that the correct analogy of faith is that one derives and proves the individual teachings of faith solely from those passages of Scripture that are the seat of doctrine. But the interpretation of such passages has nothing to do with whether and how such doctrines harmonize with other scriptural doctrines”

(in the judgment of blind human reason), “whether and how they stand in the right relationship to one another. Decades ago, the Missouri Synod spoke quite differently, as can be proved to it with its own testimonies.”

The writer of the above report [[from the Iowa Synod](#)] is still in the dark about the point at issue. <sup>1)</sup> [The discussions about \*analogia fidei\* were not concluded.](#) The assembly agreed to take up this topic again at the next meeting, in order to discuss all the passages in Scripture that deal with eternal election.

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1) In retrospect, we see that the *Theol. Zeitblätter* of the Ohio Synod also deals in detail with the position we took in Milwaukee. Unfortunately, this report also overlooks the very point at issue in Milwaukee. From the very beginning of the dispute, the question in Milwaukee was not whether Christian doctrine and all its articles form a [perfect unity](#), an [intimately connected](#), harmonious whole [in the sense of Holy Scripture](#), which cannot contradict itself, but whether Christian doctrine and all its articles form a unity, a system [in the sense of human reason](#). Regarding the former, it was said in [Lehre und Wehre in 1881, p. 6](#):

“There is no doubt that there is a necessary inner connection between all the individual doctrines. Just as there is the most perfect harmony without any contradiction in the one [God](#) of all, so also is the [revelation of God in Scripture](#) certainly perfectly harmonious, intimately and necessarily connected. This close inner connection also follows from the fact that the violation of [one](#) of the articles of faith also has a disintegrating and destructive effect on the others. This is where Luther’s sayings belong, in which he compares the revealed truths to a golden [chain](#), a [ring](#), a [bell](#) or a [mathematical point](#).”

What was and is in question is whether the articles of Christian doctrine form a system in the sense of [human reason](#), so that if something does not fit into the framework of the [rational](#) context, the theologian would be justified in [reinterpreting](#) or [completely denying clear](#) statements of Scripture. In Milwaukee we proved that the old Lutheran theologians also understand the harmonious unity of Christian doctrine only as a unity in the sense of the divine revelation of Holy Scripture, not in the sense of [human reason](#). We proved this in Milwaukee by the fact that the old theologians say in one way or another: “*partes analogiae fidei sibi invicem non opponendas esse*”, that the parts of the analogy of faith must not be [set against](#) each other, and: “*judicium de contradictione in articulis fidei non esse permittendum rationi humanae*”, that the judgment as to whether there is a contradiction between the individual articles of faith must not be left to [human reason](#). When the *Theologische Zeitblätter* of the Ohio Synod quotes 12 quotations from old Lutheran theologians about the analogy of faith in general, but does not quote a single quotation in which the same theologians say that the individual parts of the analogy of faith are not to be [set against](#) each other, that the judgment concerning the harmony of Christian doctrine is not to be left to [human reason](#), is an [incomplete](#) and therefore [incorrect](#) and [misleading](#) representation.

In several reports on the Milwaukee conference, we find the remark that a new difference has emerged in the disagreement over the use of the analogy of faith. This is an erroneous assumption. From the very beginning of the last doctrinal dispute, attention was drawn to the difference in the conception and application of the analogy of faith. And not just in passing, but in great detail. For example, in the preface to *Lehre und Wehre* (Doctrine and Defense) of 1881, almost 23 years ago, the writer dealt at length with the fact that the two sides' doctrinal position is based on a different attitude towards Scripture. It was explained that such an understanding and use of the analogy of faith on the part of the opponents was evident, whereby Scripture no longer remains the only source and norm of theology, but the subjective view of the theologian takes the place of Scripture. We will take the liberty of returning to these remarks later.

There is a right and a wrong use of the analogy of faith in the interpretation of Scripture. When used correctly, it serves to keep human thoughts out of theology. At all times there have been people who, when faced with difficulties in interpreting certain passages of Scripture, have inserted their own thoughts into them. For example, in certain parts of the Revelation of St. John, they found an outwardly glorious kingdom of Christ on earth, and from there they argued against the clear passages of Scripture. These human thoughts have been rightly rejected by relying on the analogy of faith, that is, on the absolutely clear statements of Scripture. Furthermore, there have been people at all times who, from James 2:21 ("Was not Abraham justified by works?"), from the exhortations of Scripture to believe, to work for salvation with fear and trembling, to refrain from opposing, etc., have concluded that conversion, justification and salvation are based not only on God's grace but also on the works, good behavior, etc., of man. These people have rightly been confronted with the analogy of faith and told, "You are interpreting Scripture against the clear Gospel." As Luther remarks on Romans 12:6 ("If any man have prophecy, let it be according to the analogy [*ähnlich*] of faith"), "Herewith is all teaching and interpretation of Scripture is powerfully rejected, so as to lead us to our works, and under the name of faith make false Christians and works saints." ([Erl. Aug. 8, 23 \[sic: 8, 22\]](#))

But then there is also a false use of the analogy of faith. As church history teaches, the analogy of faith has been invoked to reject clear teachings of Scripture under a good appearance. One has confused one's own ego with the analogy of faith. They did not want to believe certain teachings that are as clear as day in Scripture

and did not want to give their reason to be enslaved by obedience to Christ. But instead of openly admitting this to themselves and to others, they asserted that the teachings in question contradicted Scripture, or rather the analogy of faith.

We shall give only a few instances in which, according to the Lutheran admission, there is an improper use of the analogy of faith. Scripture says, as is well known, that the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary. Gal. 4:4. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman." Scripture also says that the Son of God was crucified. 1 Cor. 2:8: "If they had known it [the (the wisdom of God), they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Nevertheless, Nestorius most decidedly denied that Mary should be called θεοτόχος (Mother of God) and that she should testify to the suffering and death of the Son of God. And for this denial he appealed to the analogy of faith and to such scriptural passages as say that God is immutable, is life itself, and thus cannot die. To speak of a birth of God, as well as to say that God died, is "heathen" and "contrary to Scripture." <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) In Thomasius, "Dogmengeschichte," vol. 1, pp. 321 ff.] It is obvious that the analogy of faith is used here to reject the clear teaching of Scripture. The same game was repeated by Zwingli. Zwingli also denied that the Son of God died on the grounds that according to Scripture, God cannot die. In the interest of the analogy of faith, or to bring Scripture into harmony with Scripture, Zwingli allowed himself a small correction in the passages that speak of the Son of God suffering and dying. One must always substitute the "human nature" for the "Son of God." Then everything is correct. Then Scripture is interpreted "according to faith." This is Zwingli's αλλοίωσις. For this wonderful argument, he demands acceptance by force of the analogy of faith. He treats Luther like a schoolboy and accuses him of "the greatest heresies" because Luther does not also want to interpret Scripture according to the analogy of faith. Let us listen to Zwingli in a little more detail. Zwingli says: "As Christ says in Luke 24 [:26]: 'Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things and so enter into his glory?' Here Christ is only taken for the human nature, which might suffer and die, but not the divine." In reference to John 1:14, 'The Word was made flesh,' Zwingli demands, in the name of the analogy of faith, that the matter be reversed and it be said, "The flesh has become the Word." He writes: "John 1: 'The Word became man' or 'God became man' is to be understood correctly by the counter-change (*alloiosis*) as follows: since God cannot become anything, or he would be imperfect, this word cannot be understood

at first glance <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) That is, as the words sound.] but must have the meaning: Man has become God; thus, that which is said of the divinity, that it has become man, must be understood by the human race through the change: Man has become God.” After turning everything upside down and inside out, Zwingli gives Luther the following extra lesson on the interpretation of Scripture [like J. P. Koehler], specifically on the use of the analogy of faith to interpret individual passages:

”You see, dear Luther, how the most sacred words concerning the eternal divinity and true humanity of Christ must be skilfully explained by figures and tropes in the light of the true sense, which is inviolable to faith” (that is, does not contradict the analogy of faith). “Why then do you not want to allow tropes or figurative speech? ... Pious Christian, do not let yourself be seduced by such madness (of Luther). They are word fighters whose honor is easily broken when one looks at the bottom of the truth and at the right meaning and holds the art of figurative speech and tropes in high regard. As here, I mean, the words are more precious: “The Word was made flesh“ is neither ‘Eat, this is my body,’ nor do they have to be understood only by figurative explanation, or else we would fall into the greatest heresies that have ever been.” <sup>2)</sup> [ 2) Zwingli's reply to Luther's writing: “That these words,” etc.

Printed in Luther's Works, St. L. Ed. XX. 1195 ff.]

That Zwingli here misuses the “analogy of faith” to distort and deny clear statements of Scripture is admitted by all.

The same abuse of the analogy of faith is found throughout the works of Reformed theologians when they deny the essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper and Christ's presence on earth according to his human nature, and instead claim that only bread and wine are present in the Lord's Supper and Christ according to his human nature is in heaven. The latter, he says, is required by Scripture when it says that Christ's body is a true human body and that Christ, according to his human nature, has ascended to heaven. If one does not want to bring Scripture into contradiction with itself and thus go against the analogy of faith, then one must interpret the scriptural statements, which state the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, differently. Luther forcefully demonstrates the gross misuse of the correct statement: “Scripture cannot be at odds with itself.” Luther shows that the enthusiasts here confuse their own ego with the analogy of faith, that they interpret Scripture not according to the analogy of faith but according to the analogy of unbelief.

Luther writes:

“They say, the Scriptures are self-contradictory, and cannot be reconciled” (that is, harmonized),

“where it is not believed that mere bread and wine are in the Lord's Supper. Answer: What Scripture? They say: Well, since the article of faith is established that Christ ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God in his honor. Again, that meat-eating is of no use, John 6:63: 'Flesh is of no use.' If there were now to be flesh and blood in the Lord's Supper, then he could not sit at the right hand of God in his honor, and would also give us to eat that is of no use for salvation. Therefore, one Scripture (any Scripture) must be interpreted and the sign of Christ's body must be made a sign of the body of Christ; that must be the text at the Lord's Supper.... Now compare the interpretations of the enthusiasts and the interpreters of Scripture. Carlstadt came up with this; it would not stand up. Then Zwingli came along and wanted to improve on it with his quibbling; that is even worse. After that, Oecolampad comes with his body as the ultimate proof, and it is the worst of all. For this is his argument: I, Oecolampadius, say that Scripture is contradictory in this matter. Is that not a very delicate foundation for faith? When a person says: Although God's word says, “This is my body”; yet because I cannot comprehend it nor believe it, and it seems to me that the Scripture is opposed to it, therefore it is not true, and must have another interpretation, regardless of how clearly the Word of God states it. That is Oecolampadius' spirit and highly praised truth, that human conceit and unbelief should take precedence over God's Word and found our faith. Who could not do the same in all other articles? Satan is said to have led such people astray to such a depth. So now this reason of Oecolampad's is refuted with one word, that is: No, these scriptures are not opposed to each other; you can say it and let yourself be thought so, but you cannot prove it. So then all his pomp lies in the dirt. Do you want scripture from us, dear enthusiasts? There it is: 'Take, eat, this is my body.' Take this and eat, this time in the present, and afterward you will receive more. Oh, how certain you were, not thinking that this saying of mine would ever again be” (that is, ever) “rejected or brought up against you. For you had not only crucified him, but also buried him and set guards around the tomb so that he would never be found again. But he has now risen from the dead and will never die, and in doing so he has made you, his enemies, his footstools. This is what deceived the good man Oecolampadius: that passages of Scripture that are opposed to each other must indeed be reconciled, and one part must be understood to agree with the other; because it is certain that Scripture cannot contradict itself. But he did not realize or consider that he would be the one to assert and prove such a disagreement in Scripture; instead, he accepted it and presented it as if it were certain and conclusively proven. There he falls and misses. But if they had thought beforehand and seen to it that they said nothing but



God's Word, as St. Peter teaches, and left their own saying and setting at home, they would not have caused so much misfortune. This word: "Scripture is not against Scripture" would not have seduced Oecolampadius, for it is grounded in God's Word that God does not lie, nor His Word lie. But the addition of his own word (I, Oecolampadius, say that Scripture is here opposed to itself) makes him deny, twist, interpret, and distort God's Word as he pleases. Lord God, how easily it has happened for such a terrible thing; and we are still safe and do not fear such a slippery path. But I will better stir and report their real reason, which moves them to such error, and I will bet on it for my body and soul (which I would not like to lose either), that I will not fail; for I, a poor sinner, also know a little of the spirit, and a great deal of the old rascal that rages in us, I mean the flesh. The only piece that moves them most highly is that it is before reason, out of moderation foolish to believe that we should eat and drink Christ's body and blood physically in the Lord's Supper. And they know full well that if this were the final triumph, they would say: Yes, I thought it so; it could not be right; it never occurred to me that Christ's body and blood should be treated in this way. They talk among themselves in secret, and the rabble blabs openly. But they would gladly conceal it, for they are ashamed to confess it, know full well that it is of no avail, but like to see the fact that the foolish mob is driving with it, neither speaking nor writing against it. But it is shameful that there is not enough honesty and respectability in them to freely confess what they do wish for in their hearts, like to have, see and hear, but pretend that the Scriptures force them, which they know is not true, but attack the Scriptures with cunning and wickedness, to adorn themselves with them before the people, and use their name under the Scriptures to spread their poison among the people. But although they conceal such things with great diligence, the roguishness still comes out and makes itself abundantly known. The Zwingel confesses so much that he never believed it all his life.... Well, from such a confession it is easy to see that he does not have such a belief from Scripture, which he found long afterwards, as his book *Subsidium* in particular, and others prove; but long before, before he found such Scripture, he believed so, and now, first of all, he runs, seeks Scripture and forces it onto such a belief. Dr. Carlstadt also, before he wrote, long before, said to one: Dear, you will not persuade me that God is in the bread and wine. So they come forth unexpectedly, by the power of God. Likewise Oecolampadius, when he has leaped over the Scripture that is presented to him: God help us, how he lures, how randy he is, how he dances in his conceit and asks: What use is it? Why the disciples did not worship the bread? Why the Scripture indicates no miracle? What does it help



that Christ is invisible? Why should Christians believe such a difficult thing? How does it add up that the King of Glory would allow such evil men to play with him? Who should not grasp here what they are thinking in their hearts? If they were moved by the Scriptures, they would leave such filth and deal with the Scriptures. It is the resentment and disgust of natural reason that does not want and like this article; that is why it spits and thus objects to it, and after that wants to wrap itself in the Scriptures so that one should not recognize it.”<sup>1)</sup> [1) [St. L. Aug. XX, 793-800 \(4E 37, 46-53\)](#)]

So far Luther. Lutherans will agree that the way in which Nestorius, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, etc. want to use the analogy of faith in interpreting Scripture is an abuse of the analogy of faith. Lutherans should agree on the following:

Clear passages of Scripture are not to be set against other clear passages of Scripture, that is, clear passages of Scripture are not to be dismissed or reinterpreted because reason cannot recognize how they harmonize with other clear passages.

If this nevertheless happens, that is, if one dismisses clear scriptural statements on the grounds that reason cannot recognize how they rhyme with other clear scriptural statements, then one does not interpret Scripture according to the analogy of faith, but according to the analogy of unbelief, which does not want to submit to God's Word, but to master God's Word. F. P.

(The conclusion follows.)

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## Use and Abuse of the Analogy of Faith.

(continuation instead of conclusion.)

We have shown by a few examples how the analogy of faith has been invoked to reject clear teachings of Scripture under a good appearance. We have purposely chosen examples in which practically everything that still calls itself Lutheran admits to an abuse of the analogy of faith. When Nestorius denies that the Son of God was born of the Virgin and was crucified because this contradicts the analogy of faith, and when the Reformed Church, for the same reason, denies the essential presence of the body and blood in the Lord's Supper, the Lutherans generally agree that the analogy of faith, or rather the harmonization of scriptural statements, is being used in an evil way.

We now go one step further with Luther. We point out that the reinterpretation of clear scriptural statements is based on a falsification of the analogy of faith. When the Reformed claimed that the substantial presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper contradicts the scriptural teaching of the true human nature of Christ, of Christ's ascension and of his sitting at the right hand of God, Luther proved to them that they determined the properties of the human nature of Christ, not according to Scripture, but according to their own thoughts; that they had not Scriptural thoughts, but "childish, fleshly thoughts" of the Ascension of Christ and of His sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>1)</sup> [1] St. L. ed. XX, 802 ff.; (AE 37, 55)] The situation that arises from the Reformed polemic against the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper is this: since the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and this in the supposed interest of preserving the analogy of faith, it is evident that they also falsify the doctrine of the person of

Christ. They deny, against plain Scripture, that the human nature of Christ has communicated in the manner of (*communicative*) the divine glory and divine attributes, especially the illocal, divine manner of presence. The Reformed “analogy of faith” finally turns out, on close analysis, to be the philosophical proposition: “*Finitum non est capax infiniti*”, the finite is incapable of the infinite, a proposition which basically abolishes the Incarnation of the Son of God and with it the whole of Christianity.

Here again the wonderful unity and inner harmony of Holy Writ comes to light. Holy Writ is so consistent that if it is distorted in one doctrine, other doctrines are immediately and consequentially affected. As soon as someone, in the interest of his point of view, is forced to distort clear words of Scripture, it is a sign that somewhere, or even in several places, he is not quite right. We undertake to show in detail that all those who reinterpret clear words of Scripture apply not the *analogia fidei*, but their own opinion as a standard and make it the principle of their interpretation of Scripture.

We will now explain this in more detail with regard to the doctrine of election. We will show that if one remains within the doctrine of election, especially in determining the relationship of election to the temporal Christian state of the elect, with the clear wording of Scripture, then one remains in agreement with the analogy of faith, especially with the doctrine of the general way of salvation. But if one allows himself to deviate from the wording of Scripture in the popular manner of the past and present, this involves a violation of the analogy of faith, a falsification of the doctrine of the general way of salvation, and indeed, fundamentally, a complete denial of the gospel.

If we adhere to the literal wording of Scripture in the doctrine of election, we have the teaching that Christians owe their temporal state of grace, from their calling to their introduction into eternal life, to their eternal election, or that their temporal state of grace is a consequence of their eternal election. 2 Tim. 1:9: “God has 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 Jesus before the time of the world.” Acts 13:48. “And were baptized, both men and women, whom God had ordained to eternal life.” Romans 8:29-30. “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, etc. And those whom He foreknew, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.” Eph. 1:3-5. “Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places through Christ How he chose us through him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love, and has ordained us to childhood against himself through Jesus Christ.” These and other passages of Scripture that speak *disertis verbis* [“in eloquent words”] about the relation of eternal election to the temporal state of grace of the children of God are not obscure, but clear. So clear that every simple Christian who reads or hears them immediately understands them correctly and, on the basis of them, believes that eternal election is a cause of his temporal state of grace. As the Formula of Concord also confesses on the basis of the wording of Scripture concerning election:

“The eternal election of God not only foresees and knows the salvation of the elect beforehand, but also, by the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, is a cause of our salvation and of everything pertaining to it, working, helping, and furthering it.” <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) Müller, p. 705 (*Triglotta*, p. 1065, § 8)]

And again:

“God has in such counsel, purpose and decree not only prepared salvation in general, but has also provided each and every person of the elect, who shall be saved through Christ, has bestowed grace upon them, has elected them to salvation, and has ordained that he will help, promote, strengthen, and sustain them in this way, as now stated, through his grace, gifts, and works, to bring it about.” <sup>2)</sup> [ 1) Müller, p. 708 (*Triglotta*, p. 1069, § 23)]

Chemnitz also says, remaining with the wording of the Holy Scripture:

“In the same way, God’s election does not follow our faith and righteousness, but precedes them as the cause of everything. For those whom He ordained or chose, He also called and justified, Rom. 8 [:30]. And in Eph. 1 [:4], Paul does not say that we were chosen because we were or would become holy, but rather, We have been chosen so that we would become holy. For the election of grace is the cause of everything that pertains to salvation, as Paul says: ‘We have come to the inheritance, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we might be something to the praise of His glory, and according to that working we believe,’ etc.” <sup>3)</sup> [ 3) *Enchiridion*, p. 109].

Now, this doctrine [**Election of Grace**], according to which God in his eternal election did not consider the better conduct of the elect, etc., but chose solely by grace in Christ according to the good pleasure of his will, has certainly been claimed from the beginning to be contrary to the analogy of faith, to be contrary to the general path of salvation, to be depriving Christians of consolation, etc. This was the argument against the Formula of Concord, and, as is well known, this is the argument against us to this day.

But they are laboring under a great delusion. The doctrine just described, which is derived from the wording of Scripture, is not in contradiction, but in harmony, with what we otherwise know from Holy

Scripture concerning the general way of salvation and the salvation of men. If we leave out of consideration for the time being the passages which speak of eternal election, we know this much: that all who are saved are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:8-9.: “By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast.” God has brought the gospel to them by grace, Isaiah 65:1. God works by grace in them faith in the gospel, Ephesians 1:19-20: “We believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” By grace He preserves their faith unto the end, 1 Peter 1:5: “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed.” Quite apart from what Scripture says about eternal election, we know that the beginning, middle and end of the Christian life depends on God's working of grace in Christ. Phil. 2:13: “It is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” If we now turn our attention to the passages of Scripture that deal with eternal election, we learn basically only one new thing, namely, that God has decided from all eternity to do for each of those saved what He does for them in time. In the passages that deal with eternal election, Scripture reveals to us that God even from eternity has provided his children with calling, conversion, justification, sanctification, and preservation, and has chosen, appointed, etc., them for these. There is no contradiction to the gospel here, but merely a confirmation of what we already know about the way of salvation and how people become saved. That is why the Formula of Concord says of its doctrine of eternal election, according to which election is a cause of the faith and the entire Christian state of the elect: “It **confirms** most powerfully the article that we are justified and saved without any of our works or merit, purely by grace, for the sake of Christ alone. For before the foundation of the world, before we had come into existence, indeed before the world was laid, since we could not possibly have done any good, we have been elected by God's decree, by grace, through Christ, to salvation (Rom. 9:20-21; 2 Tim. 1:9). Thereby also are all opinions and erroneous doctrines laid aside from the powers of our natural will, because God in His counsel before the foundation of the world has purposed and ordained that He Himself would work in us all that is necessary for our conversion through the Word, with the power of His Holy Spirit.” <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) Müller, pp. 713 f. ([Triglotta p. 1077](#), [§ 43-44](#))]

On the other hand, the doctrine according to which God, in making the eternal election, is supposed to have looked

upon the better conduct of the elect, immediately comes into contradiction with the plain Scripture or with the analogy of faith. According to all that we otherwise know of the gospel and the way of salvation, God works faith and maintains faith by grace through faith for Christ's sake according to His own pleasure. Phil. 2:13: "It is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." To speak of "better behavior" as a reason or "explanation" for conversion and preservation in the faith is contrary to the gospel of grace, because the gospel saves by grace. The whole of Scripture protests against the view that God converts and saves those men who have less guilt before God, who are better or who behave better than others. There is no difference among men. They are all equally dead in sins and all are equally utterly incapable of faith and full of enmity against the gospel. There is not the slightest merit in any man. But the gospel lifts us out of the *massa perditionis* [those unsaved]. "God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love, with which he loved us when we were dead in sins, made us alive together with Christ.... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. 2:4-5, 8-9. It is therefore quite clear that every teaching according to which conversion and preservation in the faith depends on human behavior instead of being based solely on God's grace in Christ, contradicts the gospel and the general way of salvation. The general way of salvation is a way of grace. Whoever teaches a general way of salvation, according to which God converts and saves those who in some way favorably distinguish themselves from others, does not teach the way of salvation of Scripture, but has devised a way of salvation. He is also in contradiction to the "rule of faith," as it is compiled from Scripture in our small Lutheran catechism. The Small Catechism says, "I believe that I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, nor come to Him by my own reason or strength, but that the Holy Spirit, through the gospel, has called me, enlightened me with His gifts, and has sanctified and preserved me in the true faith." In short, the matter stands thus: With the way of salvation taught in the Holy Scripture and witnessed in the Lutheran Small Catechism, only the doctrine of eternal election is correct, according to which God does not regard any better behavior in the elect, but has merely bestowed on them, by grace, for the sake of Christ, faith and the preservation of faith. On the other hand, the doctrine taught in Scripture and attested in the Lutheran Small Catechism is contradicted by every teaching according to which God, in making the eternal election, is said to have seen better behavior, less reluctance, less guilt, etc.

Thus one operates with a falsified analogy of faith, with a falsified gospel and with a falsified way of salvation, when one has asserted previously and now that an eternal election alone out of grace for Christ's sake to faith and to the entire Christian estate is contrary to the analogy of faith, to the general way of salvation, to the gospel, as it is otherwise taught in Scripture. The strange “analogy of faith”, according to which, since Melancthon, one wants to regulate and “interpret” the clear scriptural statements about the election of grace, is clearly recognizable. Just as the Reformed objection to the communication of the divine glory to the human nature of Christ is not based on any scriptural statement, but on the human proposition: “*Finitum non est capax infiniti*”, so the contradiction against the doctrine of predestination, according to which the entire state of grace in time and especially the faith of Christians is a consequence of and effect of their eternal election, is based on the rationalistic proposition which Melancthon formulated thus: “*Necesse est, in nobis esse aliquam discriminis causam*” etc., there **must** necessarily be a cause of difference in us human beings, etc.’ It is taken as self-evident, as an axiom, that those who are converted and saved, or are chosen, must in some way be better or behave better, be less guilty, resist less, etc., than those who are lost. This abominable proposition, which in reality subverts the gospel of grace and the whole of Christianity, has dominated all dogmatic systems and all exegetical expositions since the sixteenth century, and has been directed against the teaching of Scripture and the confession that election is a cause of faith and of the fact that the elect are Christians. One deceives oneself and others if one thinks that one wants to regulate the scriptural passages that deal with the relationship between faith and election according to the Scripture or according to the analogy of faith. One wants to interpret the scriptural passages in such a way that they agree with the proposition: “*Necesse est, in nobis esse aliquam discriminis causam*”.

Furthermore, it is indeed one of the characteristics of the true doctrine that it neither tempts to carnal security nor drives to despair. But this characteristic is also inherent in the doctrine by which we remain with the wording of Scripture and according to which the whole of the Christian church in time is a consequence of eternal election. On the basis of Scripture, one does not teach a mere singling out of persons, but an extraction from the world and a preservation from the world through the means of grace and by way of conversion, justification, sanctification, patience under the cross, etc. All this already belongs to the eternal election. Thus the scriptural doctrine of election leads to the diligent use of the means of grace, to constant examination of whether one also stands in faith, to uncompromising



crucifixion of the flesh, to patient endurance under the cross, etc. We also refer here to the experience of all Christians who, by God's grace, know and practice the scriptural doctrine of election. The doctrine, on the other hand, according to which God is said to have looked at the better behavior in the eternal election, leads either to despair or to carnal security. The Christian who knows himself knows that nothing good dwells in him, that is, in his flesh. If eternal election depends on his behavior, then he must despair. Or it may be the case that a Christian thinks he will behave better than others. Then he will experience what Peter went through. Peter said to the Lord, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I," Mark 14:29. Soon afterward, Peter fell more shamefully than all the other disciples.

There is absolutely no justification for the objection that the doctrine of election, which we teach and confess on the basis of the clear words of Scripture, is in conflict with the gospel and the general way of salvation, or leads to despair and carnal security.

We now want to examine the doctrine of election in view of faith in terms of its relationship to the gospel. F. P.

(to be continued)

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## **The Use and Abuse of the Analogy of Faith.**

(Conclusion.)

The doctrine that eternal election is based “on the basis of persevering faith” is not a doctrine of the Holy Scripture. In all the passages in which Scripture speaks of the relationship between the temporal state of faith of the children of God and their eternal election, it refers to faith as a fruit and consequence of their eternal election. Chemnitz gives a brief summary of the doctrine of Scripture on this point, when he says in his *Enchiridion*, <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) p. 109]: “Thus also the election of God does not follow our faith and righteousness, but precedes it as the cause of

all things.” Chemnitz also bases this doctrine on Romans 8, in which later theologians have added “the view of persevering faith” [John Gerhard: “*intuitu fidei*”].

The doctrine that eternal election is based on the consideration of persevering faith is not the teaching of the Lutheran Confession either. The Lutheran Confession also regards the faith of the elect in time as a consequence and effect of their eternal election when it says, among other things, that God's eternal election is “of God's gracious will and pleasure in Christ Jesus a cause, whereby our salvation and what belongs to it is created, worked, helped and furthered,” and cites especially Acts 13:48: “And they that were ordained to eternal life believed.” <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) Formula of Concord, Art. XI. Müller, p. 705-706 ([Triglotta p. 1064, § 8](#))] No synodical decree can make the doctrine of election “in view of persevering faith” a Lutheran doctrine. The Lutheran Confession simply does not have this doctrine. The Lutheran confession also does not understand the προγνώσκειν, Rom. 8:29, as a “foreseeing of persevering faith” that precedes election, but rather places it among the expressions that describe the eternal election itself: “Paul speaks Rom. 8 [:29-30]: Whom God predestinated, elected, and foreordained, He also called.” <sup>2)</sup> [ 2) Müller, p. 709, § 27 ([Triglotta p. 1071, § 27](#))]

But it is true that Lutheran theologians [*i.e.* Gerhard] soon after the Formula of Concord began to expound a doctrine of election “in view of persevering faith”, first alongside the doctrine of the Formula of Concord and later almost exclusively. We have set forth the historical facts in regard to the *intuitu fidei* theory in [Lehre und Wehre 1881, pp. 97 ff.](#) On rereading it, we find no reason to change anything in this exposition.

But we still wanted to examine the doctrine of election “in view of persevering faith” in terms of its relationship to the analogy of faith. How does this doctrine correspond to the analogy or rule of faith?

Our confession defines the rule of faith as “clear Scripture.” Thus it says in the Apology [*On Monastic Vows*]: “The intelligent and learned know well that all examples” (such as the example of the Rechabites) “should be interpreted or introduced according to the rule, that is, according to the clear Scripture, and not against the rule or Scripture.” In the Latin text: “*Exempla juxta regulam, hoc est, juxta scripturas certas et claras, non contra regulam seu contra scripturas interpretari convenit.*” <sup>3)</sup> [ 3) Müller, p. 284 ([Triglotta p. 441, § 59-60](#))] Analogy or the rule of faith and the clear Scripture, *scripturae certae et clarae*, are synonymous terms in the confession. The rule of faith is not something outside of and beside Scripture, but the clear Scripture itself. If we collect or compile

what Scripture says in clear passages about Christian doctrine, we have the rule of faith. We have a brief rule of faith in the Apostles Creed. We have a somewhat more detailed rule of faith in Luther's Small Catechism. But if we now ask further: Where is Scripture clear about the individual Christian doctrines, the answer is: In the passages where Scripture explicitly deals with these doctrines. The doctrine of justification is to be found in the passages that deal with justification, such as Romans 3 and 4, where Scripture says that we are justified before God by faith apart from the works of the law. The doctrine of justification cannot be derived from 1 Peter 4:8, for example, ("Love covers a multitude of sins"), where the subject is not justification but sanctification or good works. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper is to be gathered from the scriptural passages which treat of the Lord's Supper, and not from John 6, where the Lord Christ does not speak of the Lord's Supper at all, but inculcates faith in Himself as the incarnate Son of God, who was slain for the sins of the world. He who would extract the individual Christian doctrines from passages of Scripture that do not treat of these doctrines, draws these doctrines, not from Scripture, but from his own thoughts; he only appears to hold fast the Scriptural principle; in reality he has abandoned it. That is why the old Lutheran theologians say in one form or another: if there is to be a correct compilation of the articles of Christian doctrine from Scripture, then one must take the individual doctrines from the passages and evaluate them from the passages that explicitly deal with these doctrines. Thus, for example, Quenstedt says, after reminding us that Scripture alone is the principle of knowledge for the articles of faith: "It should be noted, however, that each article of faith has its own peculiar and proper place in Scripture, from which it must also be judged.... Therefore, the articles of faith are rightly judged and explained from these doctrinal seats because they are explicitly treated here. By neglecting this, the Papists and Calvinists get into the greatest difficulties and most serious errors, for example, the former by wanting to explain the article of justification from the 2nd chapter of the Epistle of Jacob, the latter by wanting to take the judgment on the Lord's Supper from John 6." <sup>1)</sup> [ 1) *Systema* I, 349: „*Ubi observandum, quemlibet articulum fidei in S. Scriptura habere propriam suam et nativam sedem, ex qua etiam debet judicari.... Ex his ergo sedibus recte judicantur et explicantur articuli fidei, utpote in quibus ex professo tractantur. Quod cum negligant Papistae et Calviuistae, in maximas difficultates et gravissimos errores incidunt, v. g., illi, dum articulum de justificatione ex capite 2. Jacobi explicatum volunt, hi, dum de Coena Domini ex Joh. 6. cap. judicium sumunt.*" ] Measured against this, the doctrine that eternal

election occurred “in view of the persevering faith” of the elect is in contradiction to the rule or analogy of faith. According to the theory that God chose on the basis of persevering faith, faith comes to stand before the elect before their election, while all scriptural passages that deal with election and describe the relation of the temporal faith of the elect to their election, clearly and distinctly teach that faith, like the entire Christian state of the elect, is a consequence and effect of their eternal election, as already explained. Not only is the doctrine that election takes place in view of persevering faith lacking in *clear Scripture*, but it is also *contra claram Scripturam*.

Let us examine the relation of the *intuitu fidei* theory to the analogy of faith from yet another side. The articles of faith are also connected among themselves. They are not a disjointed aggregate of doctrines, but are grouped around the doctrine of justification, that is, around the doctrine that man is justified and saved by grace through faith in the crucified Christ, not by his own works. The doctrine that we are saved by grace through faith is the centerpiece of Christian doctrine or, as it has also been expressed, the “common thread” that runs through all of Christian doctrine. This connection of Christian doctrine was not invented by theologians, but revealed in Holy Scripture. The Apostle Paul says, on the one hand, that he preached all the doctrines revealed by God (Acts 20:27): “I have not shunned any of the things that are necessary for you to know, that I have not proclaimed the whole counsel of God.” On the other hand, he assures us that he preached only one doctrine, 1 Cor. 2:2: “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” The statements do not contradict each other, but both are to be retained in their wording. The apostle preached all doctrines in such a way that Christ and Him crucified remained the center and goal of all teaching. We know how vehemently Luther speaks about the centrality of the article of Justification. On the one hand, Luther does not want to abandon a single word of Scripture, not even the slightest part of it. He says:

“He who is so bold as to deny God or to refute the truth in a single word, and does so wantonly and in defiance of what he has been warned or taught about once or twice, can and will deny God and refute the truth in all of His words. Therefore, it is said, roundly and purely, wholly and in all things believed or disbelieved. The Holy Ghost cannot be divided nor separated, so that one part should truly teach and believe one thing and the other falsely.” <sup>1)</sup> [1] St. L. Aug. XX, 1781 (AE 38, 308)]

On the other hand, Luther says of the article that we are saved by faith through

grace:

“Therefore this article is altogether about Christ and everything depends on it; whoever has this has everything, and because of it Christians must stand in the highest battle and constantly fight so that they may hold fast to it, and this is why Christ and the apostles, not without reason, urge upon this everywhere; ... for in this all depends and stands, and it draws all the others with it, and everything revolves around this, so that whoever errs in the others certainly does not have this right either, and even if he holds the others and does not have this, it is all in vain.... Although the words of faith and of Christ have been retained, as they remained in popery, yet there is no foundation of any article in the heart, and what remains there is vain foam and uncertain persuasions or conceit, or a painted, colored faith.”<sup>1)</sup> [ 1) [Ibid. VIII, 627 ff. \(AE 24, 319\)](#)]

Yes, Luther says: “If the article of justification is lost, then the whole of Christian doctrine is lost; ... for from this doctrine and in this doctrine the church comes into being and exists.”<sup>2)</sup> [ 2) *Amissio articulo justificationis amissa est simul tota doctrina Christiana. ... Ex illa enim et in illa sola doctrina fit et consistit ecclesia, (Comm. in ep. S. Pauli ad Gal. Cur. Irmischer I, 20 sq.)*] Luther clings so firmly to the doctrine of grace as the center of Christian doctrine, to which everything else is subservient and with which everything else is most intimately connected. That is why he also calls the doctrine that we are justified and saved by grace through faith in the Church Postil simply “the faith,” with which all interpretation of Scripture must agree. He writes about Romans 12:6 (“If anyone has a prophecy, let it be in accordance with the faith” [“Hat jemand Weissagung, so sei sie dem Glauben ähnlich”]):

“This is his (the apostle's) opinion: those who have the grace to interpret Scripture should see to it that they interpret it in such a way that it is in harmony with the faith [dem Glauben], and not against it, nor otherwise, than the faith [der Glaube] teaches, just as he says in 1 Cor. 3 [:11-12]: Let the foundation (Christ) be laid, and let no one lay any other foundation; but let each one see to it that he build on it, that he build not straw, hay, and wood on it, for that does not rhyme with such a foundation, but gold, silver, and precious stones. All doctrine and interpretation of Scripture is hereby powerfully rejected that leads us to our works and, in the name of faith, makes false Christians and works saints. For what teaches us to expel sin and become saved or pious and have a clear conscience before God, otherwise than through faith alone without works, is no longer analogous to the faith and does not go with it, as there are also all monastic lives and the poltergeist appearances, of purgatory and the like.”<sup>3)</sup> [ 3) Erl. Aug. 8, 23 ([1827 ed. 8, 22; St. L. ed. 12, 334](#))]

Let us now examine the theory that God chose “in view of persevering faith.” We have already shown that this theory is contrary to the analogy of faith, if by analogy or rule of faith we understand

our confession “*scripturae certae et clarae*” which deals with the individual doctrines. Election “in view of persevering faith” is not a Scriptural truth, but a human concept. How does this human concept relate to the central truth of the Christian religion, to the doctrine that we are saved by grace through faith and not by our goodness?

Every human concept introduced into theology has the tendency to damage the whole of the doctrine and especially the central article. Every human thought is a foreign body in the body of Christian doctrine. Christian doctrine consists of nothing but divine thoughts. “Let every man speak as the word of God,” admonishes Peter (1 Peter 4:11 [LED](#)), and Jeremiah: “How do the straw and the wheat rhyme?” (Jer. 23:28) A human thought belongs in the doctrinal body just as little as a splinter or a bullet belongs in the human body. But it can happen that foreign bodies that have entered the human body remain relatively harmless. The damage is localized. The foreign bodies are, as the medical term goes, “calcified” [*“eingekalkt”*] and do not cause any further inflammation. This can also happen when human thoughts enter the body of Christian doctrine. They can remain relatively harmless, not causing an inflammation of the whole, but being “calcified”. This can be the case, and has been the case, with the human thought of an election “in view of persevering faith”, if it is maintained that the foreseen faith is in solidum, an effect and gift of God's grace and that any human cooperation in bringing about faith remains excluded. Of course, this is not the intention of the theory. The theory of eternal election was invented in order to gain a *causa discriminis* in man that explains to human understanding why some are chosen before others. But a faith produced solely by divine grace explains nothing. A rationalistic approach is adopted in order to achieve a certain goal. But it stops halfway. In order to explain a cause of difference in man, one should teach that one person, in contrast to another, makes a contribution to the development and maintenance of faith. But this is not done because the existing Christian understanding rebels against it. Faith is allowed to remain a gift of God's grace. Thus, although they are afflicted with the human thought of the *intuitu fidei* theory, the doctrine of grace and the article of justification remain with them. The scriptural doctrine of election is simply dropped by them. But the matter presents itself differently as soon as the doctrine of election “in view of persevering faith” has a synergistic basis, that is, if the realization of faith is not attributed to the grace of God alone.



But this synergistic basis is there if one attributes the conversion of certain people to circumstances or explains it by the fact that, compared to others, they have done something, e.g. used “offered powers of grace” for conversion or for “self-decision”, etc., or that, compared to others, they have omitted something, e.g. wilful resistance. Whether one calls this a “merit,” a “cause,” etc., or not, in this case man always brings about his own conversion decisively. The Pelagian-synergistic idea is only slightly differently formulated when one cites “different behavior” toward grace as a reason or “explanatory reason” why some believe before others. For as long as one has a concept of this “different behavior,” one imagines a better behavior in those who believe and decisively attributes the occurrence of conversion to this better behavior. Thus one denies what the Formula of Concord so decidedly affirms, that those who are converted are “in the same guilt” as those who are lost and also “behave badly.” Thus they deny that man believes and remains a believer by grace for Christ's sake. Faith and the preservation of faith are made a partial work of man, and with such a doctrine of the origin and preservation of faith, the doctrine of election in view of faith is a direct denial of the doctrine of grace and the article of justification.

The same applies when the doctrine of election “in view of persevering faith” is examined by the analogy of faith. How greatly mistaken, therefore, are those who appeal to the analogy of faith in favor of this doctrine! The fact of the matter is that this doctrine [“persevering faith”] is in contradiction to the analogy of faith because it contradicts the scriptural passages that expressly speak of election. But if, as is usually the case, this doctrine is also given a Pelagian-synergistic basis, then it also contradicts the central article of Christian doctrine, the doctrine of justification, the gospel of the grace of God in Christ, the one general way of salvation, which is precisely a way of pure grace and not of merit.

We conclude with a few propositions about the analogy of faith.

1. By analogy or rule of faith, we understand with our confession the “clear Scripture” itself.
2. We have “clear Scripture” in relation to the articles of the Christian faith in those passages of Scripture that explicitly deal with the individual doctrines, that is, in the so-called *sedes doctrinae*. [“seat of doctrine”]
3. A correct compilation or summary of Christian doctrine can therefore only be obtained by taking the individual doctrines from the *sedes doctrinae* and judging them.

4. Any doctrine that is not taken from the scriptural passages that explicitly deal with that doctrine is not a scriptural doctrine, but a human thought.

5. In the process of merely taking the individual Christian doctrines from the scriptural passages that deal with these doctrines, there is never any contradiction between the individual doctrines or parts of the analogy of faith, because Scripture is the word of God in all its words, which cannot contradict itself.

6. As for the connection of the individual doctrines with one another, this is not to be constructed by theologians apart from Scripture, but is likewise to be taken from Scripture, in so far as it is revealed therein.

7. Holy Scripture reveals that the article of justification, that is, the doctrine that we are justified and saved by grace through faith, without works, is the scope and brief content of the whole of Scripture. Acts 10:43: “Of Him (Christ) all the prophets bear witness, that through His name everyone who believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Acts 20:27. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:2; 2 John 5:39.

8. Every interpretation of Scripture that is contrary to the Article of Justification is false and, on closer examination, proves not to be an interpretation of Scripture, but a perversion of the words of Scripture.

9. Although the article on justification is the central article of Christian doctrine, the other articles of faith are not to be constructed from the article on justification, but are merely to be taken from the passages in Scripture that deal with the individual doctrines.

10. There is not a single passage in Scripture that needs to be reconciled with other passages by human interpretation, since Scripture, without any adjustment on the part of theologians, is free of all contradiction. The rightly used analogy of faith is not a guard for the Scriptures, but for the exegetes, who are inclined to insert their own thoughts into obscure passages, and sometimes even into clear passages of Scripture.

11. The doctrine that eternal election is a cause of faith, and the entire Christian state of the elect, is in harmony with the analogy of faith because it is “clear Scripture” and does not harm but confirms the article that we are saved by grace through faith, without works.

12. The doctrine that election is in view of the persevering faith of the elect is in contradiction to the analogy of faith, because not only does it have no “clear Scripture” for itself, but it also contradicts the “clear Scripture”. If it is based on synergism, it is also a direct denial of the central article of the Christian religion, that we are saved by grace through faith, without works. F. P.