

The Doctrine Of Election As Taught By The Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians

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The purpose of this study is to ascertain as far as possible what the Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century taught and believed regarding predestination and election and to judge to what degree their tenets agree with Scripture and the Lutheran confessions. The Lutheran teachers of that century treat the doctrine of election in a manner which is sometimes unclear and involved. Occasionally they contradict each other and themselves. For this reason I feel that if we are to come to any clear understanding of their position, we must allow them to speak for themselves as much as possible. I have therefore included quite extensive quotations from many of them. This will add length to my investigation and will mean a certain amount of repetition, but it will help greatly toward an appreciation of their arguments and will afford an insight into the exact nature of their inconsistencies. My study is divided into three parts.

1. a brief resume of their teaching insofar as they are in general agreement.
2. a tracing of the development of the teaching from the Formula of Concord to David Hollaz,
3. a criticism and explanation of their aberrations.

1. The doctrine of election is not discussed in the same connection by all dogmaticians. Hutter considers the doctrine after his treatment of repentance and faith, Brochmand after his treatment of creation, providence, and divine grace, Gerhard after his treatment of redemption and providence. The later dogmaticians (Dannhauer, Calov, Quenstedt, Hollaz) deal with the doctrine of election after they have spoken of universal grace, which in turn follows upon their discussion of anthropology. Not until later is predestination considered under the subject of soteriology. It is generally approached within the context of God's universal benevolence.

This universal benevolence of God is an act of divine grace¹ whereby God, beholding man in the misery of his sin, is moved to wish his salvation and to send Christ as a Mediator for procuring the same. He also provides the means whereby man can come to faith in Christ and through this faith partake of the salvation prepared for him. The object of this benevolence is the entire fallen human race, no one excepted. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. 11:32. The basis [*fundamentum*] of this universal benevolence is the intervention of the Son of God, His redemptive work. This is in opposition to Calvinism: the benevolence is "according to his grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Tim. 1:9. In this passage the *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων* cannot refer to the beginning of time as the Calvinists assert, but to eternity, cf. Col. 1:26. God's benevolence is intense, Rom. 8:23; serious, Ezek. 33:11; equal (*respiciens ex aequo sine discrimine* προσωπολημψία *omnes homines, omnia individua hominum*), Rom. 3:22; and ordinate, John 3:16.² This universal benevolence of God is usually called the antecedent will of God because it precedes all consideration of man's attitude toward God's proffered grace. Hollaz explains in what sense this antecedent Will is to be considered ordinate:³ "The saving benevolence of God is ordinate in that God in His most deep wisdom has established a certain τάξις or order of means which he regards in bringing sinners to salvation. These means are the word of God and the sacraments by means of which God intends seriously to call sinners into His kingdom of grace and convert, regenerate, justify, and save them. According to this ordinate will God not only desires that all men might be saved, but also that all might come to a knowledge of the truth, I Tim. 2:4... It is called conditional not because God wills only the end and not the means or because He wills the end upon a condition which He by His good pleasure is unwilling to fulfill in

1 Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, 1750 ed. p. 586, speaks of the benevolence of God *in actu primo* as an essential attribute of God and *in actu secundo* as an active intention of God to deliver man from his misery.

2 Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*, 1715 ed. II, 7.

3 Hollaz, 600.

many, but God's will is called conditional insofar as God, desiring to save men, does not desire that they should be saved apart from the fulfilling of any satisfaction or condition, but that they be led to salvation under the condition of certain means."

This universal benevolence of God must be distinguished from His particular benevolence which is called His consequent will. The particular benevolence of God is practically equated with His eternal election. Hollaz says,⁴ "The consequent will is that by which God elects from our fallen human race those of whom He has foreseen that they would use the ordinary means and remain steadfast in faith in Christ till the end of their lives." There is also a negative side to this consequent will, "On the other hand God damns from our human race those of whom He has foreseen that they would persistently reject the ordinary means and remain in unbelief to the last breath of their life." This division into an antecedent and consequent will, which is common to all the dogmaticians, does not mean to imply that there are two wills in God, but rather it is a looking at God's benevolent will from different points of view. Gerhard explains,⁵ "This division does not pertain to the will itself which in God is one and undivided, just as His essence is also one, but to the twofold way of looking at it. In the antecedent will we regard the means to salvation insofar as, on God's part, they have been ordered and offered to all. In the consequent will we regard the same means, but insofar as they are accepted or neglected by men. The will is called antecedent because it precedes any consideration of obedience or disobedience on the part of man and consists simply in God's beneficent will which He has in equal measure toward all. The will is called consequent when it follows a consideration of men's obedience or disobedience." Quenstedt defines more clearly the difference between the antecedent and consequent will of God,⁶ "We must distinguish between the compassionate will of God, or His saving purpose, and the decree of God. The former pertains to all men, fallen in sin; the latter concerns only some. The former provides salvation and the means for securing it; the latter decrees salvation for those who avail themselves of the means, but abandons for damnation those who reject the means. The former can be hindered and often is, as when because of obstacles the ordinary means are not accepted or the use of the means obstructed; the latter never fails in its end."

Both Calvin and Huber placed predestination in the antecedent will of God; Calvin limiting predestination to only some but then denying universal grace, Huber holding to universal grace and thus denying particular election. One of these two aberrations must be the consequence when predestination is assigned to the antecedent will of God. The Lutherans are careful to assign election to God's consequent will, but unfortunately often in such a way as practically to equate election with God's will to save believers, as we shall later see.

The dogmaticians make a very thorough study of the many words in Scripture which speak of God's eternal election. In general they are correct, pointing out that προορισμός indicates usually a determination of something before it is done, used in a general sense of things and persons (Acts 4:27, 28; I Cor. 2:7; Acts 17:26) and also in a stricter sense as practically synonymous with election (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4, 5). The ἐκλέγω points more to the actual choosing than to the end of election. Their one serious mistake is in definition of πρόγνωσις as "the foreseeing of individuals who would believe in Christ to the end."⁷ Any interpretation of the word as an appropriating foreknowing is rejected as Calvinism.⁸ They do not understand the word as speaking of God's general foreknowledge but restrict it always to His foreseeing faith in believers.

The older dogmaticians offer the better definitions of election. Brochmand says,⁹ "Predestination or election is the decree or purpose of the divine will according to which before the foundations of the world God determined within Himself out of pure mercy to ordain in Christ and choose for eternal life sinful men, but men

4 Hollaz, 586.

5 *Loci theologici*, Cotta, ed. 1764, IV, 169.

6 op. cit., II, 9.

7 loc. cit., II, 26. *Est autem πρόθεσις electionis principium dirigens primum, sed non immediatum, verum mediatum, mediante enim προγνώσει seu praevisione individuorum finaliter credituorum, ad electionem concurrat.*

8 ibid. Sic Petrus I Ep. 1:2. *Electos dicit credentes κατά πρόγνωσιν. Ergo πρόγνωσις non est ipsa Electio, quod contra Calvinianos observandum.*

9 *Universae Theologiae Systema*, edirio V, 1658, p. 250.

who would believe in Christ to the end by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the preaching of the Gospel—and all this to the praise of the glory of His grace.” He is careful to mention that election can only be spoken of in bonam partem and that it is a *decretum evangelicum*, not a *decretum legale*. Gerhard¹⁰ is more detailed in his definition and brings into his delineation of the doctrine the objectionable interpretation of πρόγνωσις, “The one who has chosen us is God. Eph. 1:3. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us (in time) with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, the same hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. Now election is a work of the entire Holy Trinity, and hence common to all three Persons, but according to the order and distinction of the Persons. The Father is the Fountain of the Trinity, and so by reason of order election is attributed to Him in the first place, but the Son and the Holy Spirit are of the same will and essence with the Father and therefore election must be attributed to the Son and the Holy Spirit also. The part of the Son of God in election must be considered in a twofold sense: first as the true God with the Father and the Holy Spirit who chooses us to life eternal by one undivided action; second as the appointed Redeemer and Mediator of the human race on account of whom we have been chosen to eternal life. Whence it follows that we have been chosen before the foundations of the world not only by Christ, but also in Christ... Election has taken place according to the purpose of God, Eph. 1:11, ‘Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;’ Rom. 9:11, ‘That the purpose of God according to election might stand;’ II Tim. 1:9, ‘According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ.’ This purpose, counsel and good pleasure of God is His decree, planned from eternity in Christ and revealed to us through the Gospel, to save men through faith in Christ, according to his πρόγνωσις foreknowledge, I Pet. 1:1–2, ‘elect κατὰ πρόγνωσις Θεοῦ πατρὸς Rom. 8:29, ‘whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.’ This πρόγνωσις of necessity looks to faith in Christ, for God does not predestinate all whom He foreknows in some way; but those whom He foreknew from eternity according to his infallible knowledge that they would perseveringly believe in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the Gospel, them He chose or predestinated to everlasting life. And not only is the purpose and foreknowledge of God eternal, but also the election which is according to that foreknowledge and purpose is eternal.”

It is more difficult to get an exact definition of election from the later dogmaticians. One of the reasons is that they speak mistakenly of election in a threefold sense, 1. as embracing the entire plan of salvation along with the means, 2. in a more strict sense, as denoting the election of the faithful to salvation, according to God’s eternal purpose and foreknowledge, and 3. in the strictest sense as distinguishing predestination from the purpose and foreknowledge of God, and thus denoting the eternal decree of God toward certain individuals whom He chose to save from the mass of common corruption “because He saw clearly that they would believe in Christ to the end” (*quod illos in Christum finaliter credituros esse, distincte praevidit*).¹¹ It is significant to note at this point that the dogmaticians cannot at this stage state the position of the Formula of Concord. They mention that the Formula of Concord speaks of predestination in the wide sense (XI, 14–24) when it states that the entire purpose and will of God pertaining to our redemption, call, justification, and salvation is comprised in the doctrine of election. In this, of course, they are completely wrong, as we shall show later. Hollaz also argues that when certain theologians, such as Luther himself, spoke of faith in Christ as a result of election, they were thinking of election in the first sense above. However, it is quite clear that no true Lutheran from Luther to the Formula of Concord ever conceived of predestination in a wider sense.

The dogmaticians further define election as ordinate, not absolute, i.e. God ordains to save a certain number by bringing them to faith in Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit. In this sense it is conditional. But inasmuch as election is founded upon the grace of God, who sees that in the elect this prevenient grace will not be prevented, it is not conditional, but simple and categorical. Finally election is immutable since the elect, if they should fall away from God temporarily, in the end cannot perish. This further definition is common to the later-dogmaticians.

10 op. cit. IV, 161 ff.

11 Hollaz, 608ff. Quenstedt, II, 23.

Because of their scholastic methodology the dogmaticians become very involved in their discussion regarding the causes of election, and progressively so. Brochmand,¹² living in the early part of the century, is quite straightforward: he simply says that the moving cause in election is the pure grace of God, Eph. 1:5–6; Rom. 9:11; II Tim. 1:9. Christ is the basis of election as He is the basis of every evangelical teaching. Quenstedt¹³ probably is the most involved in his consideration of causes. The *causa efficiens agens* is the will of the Triune God. The *causa movens interna* is the free grace of God, excluding all human works and even faith is *meritum Christi* as a condition or something in man. The *causa movens externa* is the Gospel but viewed as being appropriated by faith. The *principium dirigens mediatum* is God's πρόθεσις to save all who believe in Christ to the very end. The *principium dirigens seu normans immediatum* is God's πρόγνωσις of final faith in certain individuals. The *forma* of election consists in the entire order by means of which God has decreed to save men. The *objectum* or *materia circa quam* of election is not Christ, as the Calvinists teach, but men who have fallen into sin but of whom God sees that they will believe and remain in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. Schertzer¹⁴ offers the most extravagant definition of the object of election, "We contend that the material object of predestination is man, and the adequate and formal object of predestination is man as called, justified, and believing unto the end. Not man as such, but man submitting to the call and retaining to the end the grace of justification has been predestinated from eternity." The end of election with respect to man is first his enjoyment of divine grace and finally eternal life; with respect to God it is the praise of the glory of His grace. Now it is quite clear that Quenstedt's discussion of causes becomes quite complicated. Furthermore, no two of the dogmaticians use the same terminology, since a person's own personal judgment can always condition and dictate his terminology. So the whole approach to the doctrine from the point of view of causal *nexus* becomes an extravagant and useless expense, like a storm blowing itself out in the middle of an ocean. There is simply nothing compelling about this sort of argumentation, and many do not follow it. Gerhard's approach, like that of all the earlier dogmaticians, is easier to follow.¹⁵

He states two principles, 1) election is in view of the merits of Christ, 2) election is in view of faith. I quote his discussion of these two principles, "If neither the cause of election nor the cause of reprobation is to be sought in or fixed in the absolute will of God,¹⁶ then we ask: What does the difference between the elect and the reprobate hang on? What is the reason why some are chosen from eternity while others are rejected? We will consider reprobation later. To the question concerning election we answer according to the words of the apostle, "God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." To be chosen in Christ means according to the Greek phrase to be chosen through Christ and on account of Christ as He is apprehended by faith. So the cause of election must not be sought in some unconditioned decree of God, but predestination occurs because God saw from eternity that Adam by his sin would plunge into eternal death along with all who followed him, and therefore it was necessary for Christ to intercede because of the strength of the Law. Christ appeased the wrath of God and turned God from a stern avenger into a dear Father. So we say Christ is the cause of election, or, to say the same thing, God in view of the satisfaction guaranteed by Christ and apprehended by faith made a decree of election; and of this the apostle wishes to speak when he says, 'We have been chosen in Christ.' ... But Polanus takes exception to this and says, 'To be chosen in Christ is not the same as to be chosen on account of Christ,' *de praedest.* p. 45. And Piscator argues in his annals, p. 80, 'That God has chosen us in Christ means that He has chosen us through Christ. That is to say, Christ with his merit is only the means with which God in time carries out His decree of election; God, however, does not issue His decree of election in view of the merit of Christ.' I reply that the apostle speaks in unmistakable terms of election itself, and in speaking of the election itself as well as the end of election he includes Christ. He distinguishes clearly between the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us in time and the act of election by which God has chosen us to eternal life before the foundation of the world. Both acts embrace Christ as their cause. 'God hath

12 Brochmand, 250.

13 op. cit., II, 23ff.

14 *Systema Theologiae*, 1698. p. 502.

15 *Loci Theologici*, IV, 200ff.

16 *Absoluta* means unconditional or naked here, as the original sense.

blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as καθὼς he hath chosen us in him.’

The inference is this: we are blessed in Christ, that is, on account of Christ who has merited grace for us; therefore we have also been chosen in Christ, or, on account of Christ. Now bring verse 7 into the picture: ‘In Christ we have redemption,’ and we see that Christ is the cause of our redemption. Now in exactly the same way God chooses us in Christ; so certainly Christ must be the cause of our election. Finally the apostle says that the election in Christ was made before the foundation of the world; how then can it be restricted to the bringing of salvation which is attained for believers in time?... So we reason in the following manner. As God justifies and saves men in time, He has in the same way decreed to justify and save them from eternity. Now all Scripture witnesses that God in time justifies and saves men on account of the merit of Christ (namely, as He is apprehended by faith): and so also from eternity He determined to justify and save on account of Christ (apprehended by faith), and consequently He has chosen them on account of Christ, because the decree to justify and to save is nothing else than election. The major proposition is surely clear enough, for the things God does in time are a manifestation of the things He decreed to do from eternity. What and how God acts in time—that He does one thing and not another and acts in one way and not another... He has decreed to do from eternity. The immutability of the divine essence does not allow us to speak of God decreeing one thing from eternity and doing another thing in time, and for the same reason we cannot assert that God decrees to act in one way from eternity and then acts in a different way in time. The apostle says, ‘God hath blessed us in Christ, even as καθὼς he has chosen us in him.’ Eph. 1:3. And Christ says, ‘This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.’ Now God not only determined to will this in time, it was also His will from eternity; hence the consideration (*intuitus*) of the merit of Christ cannot be excluded from the decree of election, because the decree is obviously the eternal decision of the divine will to save men in just that way. And so we offer a correct definition of the Gospel when we say that it is the public announcing of God’s eternal decision to save men for Christ’s sake...

Going on to the next argument: if the consideration of the merit of Christ is not included in the decree of election but is only a means through which God executes the decree, then it follows that election was made apart from Christ and must be limited to the absolute will and good pleasure of God. This conclusion which plainly contradicts the apostle when he says, ‘God chose us in Christ’ (Eph. 1:4), is absurd as we shall prove. If there is no remission of sin apart from Christ there can be no election of lost sinners apart from Him, since no one can enjoy eternal life unless he by his own righteousness conforms to the Law of God perfectly or has his sins forgiven by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him through faith.... “Gerhard continues to argue by way of the analogy of faith, so-called, which of course here is quite dangerous. We notice here also how closely he connects faith with the merits of Christ as the cause of election. The next step of course is the *intuitu fidei*. The later teachers do not hesitate to go on to make the so-called *causa impulsiva externa electionis* the merit of Christ apprehended by true and persevering faith.

And the following subject for Gerhard is the consideration of faith in the decree of election. He says, “We have shown that the merit of Christ is the cause of our election. But since the merit of Christ cannot profit anyone without faith, we say that the consideration (*intuitus*) of faith also must be included in the decree of election. With one voice we confess that we teach that God in choosing man to eternal life did not find anything good in man, either good works or the use of free will, or even faith itself, on account of which He was moved or because of which He chose certain ones. But it was entirely and only the merit of Christ, whose worth God regarded and it was from grace alone that the decree of election was made. Nevertheless, because we cannot partake of the merit of Christ except through faith, we say that election took place in view of the merit of Christ as it was apprehended by faith. Hence we say that all those and only those have been chosen from eternity by God to salvation of whom God saw that they would by the power of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the Gospel truly believe in Christ the Redeemer and remain faithful to the end of their lives.” If only the *praevidit* were lacking this would be a satisfactory description of the elect.

Gerhard continues, “May I briefly set forth my arguments for this opinion. 1) Election was made in Christ, Eph. 1:4. We are not ‘in Christ’ except through faith, Eph. 3:17. Therefore the μελλόντων πιστεύειν of

I Tim. 1:16 are the elect. 2) Election is an eternal decree of God to justify and save men. Now God does not justify and save men in time except through faith, Rom. 3 and 4. Gal. 2 and 3. Eph. 2. Therefore He has decreed from eternity to justify and save only believers and consequently He chose only and all those of whom He foresaw that they would remain in Christ through faith. 3) No one has been chosen apart from Christ. Sinful men without faith are apart from Christ. Therefore sinners are not elected without a consideration of their faith; as Paul says, ‘God hath chosen us in Christ,’ Eph. 1:4, and again he says, ‘God hath chosen us through faith,’ II Thess. 2:13 —because we cannot be chosen in Christ except in view of our apprehending Christ through faith. ‘Without faith it is impossible to please God.’ Heb. 11:6. 4) The elect are pleasing to God from eternity because ‘He prepared for them the kingdom of heaven from the foundation of the world.’ Matt. 25:34. But this could not have been except in view of their embracing Christ in faith...”

We notice here how Gerhard under point 2 practically identifies election as God’s *voluntas consequens* and no more as God’s decree to justify believers. Again we see too how he argues by way of analogy. In this discussion Acts 13:48 gives Gerhard a lot of trouble. He does not hesitate to go so far as to say: “Unless God Himself had ordained certain ones to eternal life, no one would believe, no one would be saved.” This sounds good, but he spoils it in going on to explain: “It is God who has determined from eternity this order that he who hears and learns the Word of God will come to faith and be saved by his hearing of the Word.” Again he has confused the issue by equating election with God’s simple consequent will. In his final explanation of the passage he reveals his fear of Calvinism which makes it impossible for him to approach the passage without preconceived ideas and impossible to state the correct position. He says: “It does not follow that election is absolutely and properly speaking the cause of faith. For a) they are said to be ordained not to faith, but to eternal life, b) the ordination or election is not absolute, c) another cause is ascribed to faith here, namely hearing the word, d) the evangelist in this context does not wish to offer the reason why some believed and others did not, but to demonstrate how God effected His decree in those who believed...” It is clear in all this that Gerhard’s discussion is based on polemical consideration and makes his exegesis wretched. Here is substantially the argument for *intuitu fidei*. And it is due at least partially to a misunderstanding of Calvinism, as we shall see later.

None of the dogmaticians either before or after Gerhard really goes beyond him; and they all insist on the consideration of faith in the decree of election. But they do approach the matter from slightly different angles, and the treatment of some is less objectionable than others. Hutter, for instance,¹⁷ who wrote before Gerhard, says the following, after he has pointed out that, strictly speaking, there is no prescience with God, since for Him there is only present and thus everything is before Him: “God did not simply foresee in a general way (*confuse*) that certain men would believe in Him, but he had a foreknowledge of exactly what individuals would believe and when they would believe. Therefore faith in this discussion of eternal election is not to be considered as something which has already actually happened and which now exists, having been kindled in the heart of men by the Holy Spirit (it is enough to be certain that it has happened in time); on the other hand, it is to be considered under the order and decree of God’s eternal predestination and also under his prescience and eternal knowledge. And this doctrine has nothing to do with the idle notion of the scholastics concerning foreseen works in view of which God is said to have chosen us. There is a great difference here. First of all we do not regard faith in this connection as a virtue or quality or any kind of work, but only insofar as it is related to Christ’s merits. Works, however, are as incompatible with grace in this article as in the article of justification; for these two (grace and works) exclude one another, as the apostle teaches, Rom. 11:6, ‘And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.’ Keeping this in mind the orthodox theologians rightly reject the expression, ‘We are elected for the sake of faith,’ which tacitly presupposes some merit on our part: but we say with Scripture, ‘We have been elected through faith, or in the faith of Jesus Christ, in the same plain meaning as we are accustomed to employ when we speak of justification, II Thess. 2:13: ἐν πίστει ἀληθείας.” Here we see justification, with faith occupying the identical place in each, what Franz Pieper calls the πρῶτον ψεῦδος of

¹⁷ *Loci Communes Theologici*, ed. .1619. P. 802–3.

their doctrine.¹⁸ It is clear also that Hutter misinterprets the passage from Thessalonians above: the ἐν ἀγιασμῶ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας following as it does immediately upon the ὅτι εἶλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς εἰς σωτηρίαν belong to the act of electing itself, and not merely to the carrying out of the act in time; the phrase should be understood as expressing means, but not in the sense of an *intuitus* which prompts God to elect certain ones. This fact which is so important is expressly denied by Hollaz,¹⁹ “The evangelical theologians do not teach that faith is an instrument of the decree of election itself by which election itself is executed or apprehended, but they hold that God in choosing certain men considered (*respexisse*) their persevering faith as an *organon leptikon*, or receptive instrument, through which the merit of Christ on account of which we are elected and also the grace of God who elects us to eternal life are received and apprehended by us. In a similar way faith is commonly called an instrumental cause of justification, not as though it were an instrument by which the act itself of justification is apprehended, but because it acts as an instrument by which we apprehend and receive that on account of which we are justified, namely, the merit of Christ.” This quotation clearly states what Hutter’s words above implied, that faith must be considered prior to election. Here the statement of Calov²⁰ is axiomatic, *Nam licet electio prior sit fide, quantum ad hujus actum, non tamen prior illa est quantum ad intuitum*. In this connexion Hollaz²¹ claims no less eminent authority than the Formula of Concord. He says, “Our theologians agree that faith, foreseen from eternity, must be conceived of in our manner of thinking as prior to the decree of election and therefore as being a reason for the decree, in view of which we have been chosen.” He then quotes the Formula of Concord, Thor. Decl. XI, 54 which says: “Thus there is no doubt that God most exactly and certainly foresaw before the time of the world, and still knows, which of those that are called will believe or will not believe; also which of the converted will persevere (in faith) and which will not persevere; which will return after a fall (into grievous sins), and which will fall into obduracy (will perish in their sins). So, too, the number, how many there are of these on either side, is beyond all doubt perfectly known to God.” However he omits any mention of the following paragraph in the Formula of Concord which warns us against investigating into such matters which God has not revealed to us, but to adhere only to His revealed Word. He also quotes par. 89 of Article XI in the Formula of Concord as teaching that the mercy of God and merits of Christ apprehended by faith are the only causes of predestination.

In spite of their incorrect understanding of the place of faith in the decree of election, the seventeenth century Lutheran teachers avoid any synergistic tinge in their teaching. Calov warns that in election faith must be considered passively (*in λήψει et ἀντιλήψει, yet γηψοδονία*) as having been worked in man by God; it must be viewed merely as accepting the grace of God and the merit of Christ.²² He says:²³ “We do not wish to be understood as though God elects us because of foreseen faith, as some sort of power in man, just as we are not justified because of faith as a quality or desert, but we are elected in view of faith insofar as it turns itself to Christ (who is the foundation of election) and looks to Him alone, embraces Him, takes refuge in Him, holds to Him and rests in Him.” A statement of Dannhauer’s²⁴ in which he attempts to expurgate all possible synergistic interpretations of his doctrine will probably show us as well as can be shown the place of faith in predestination as it was taught by the old dogmatists. The question just how faith is to be considered and just where it enters

18 *Lehre und Wehre*, 1881, p. 341.

19 *op. cit.*, 624.

20 *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 1655–77, X, 655.

21 *op. cit.*, p. 619.

22 *Systema*, X, 632.

23 *Systema*, X, 637.

24 *Christiana Ὀδοσοφία seu Theologia Positiva*, ed. 1713, p. 289ff: *Eaque sola, adeoque gratuita; non enim pendet praedestinatio ab opere aliquo, merito, motivo nostro, ex nobis, per nos, in nobis inhaerente, propter quod electio facta sit: non a fide, qua opus est, aut fidei fructus; sic enim not electionis decretum mere gratuitum esse dicimus. τὸ gratuitum excludit merita, non τῶν fides hic non est opus aut meritum, sed manus mendica praevisa. Unde nihil gloriolae vel minimae relinquitur fidei, quae accipit, non donat, aut acquirit. Unde nihil dignitatis activae Deus in homine vidit, nihil boni, quod non esset ex ipso... Unde manet, fidem esse ex ordine divino, quem tamen ordinem Deus & statuerit, & praeviderit, & juxta illum elegerit. Unde nihil impedit, aliquid esse effectum agentis & simul seu rationem seu causam ab agente praevisam; nam domus est & effectus artificis & causa finalis, quae artificem movit ad domum fabri faciendam...*

into the order of things is not easy to answer from reading the dogmaticians on election. The failure, in fact, to answer this question adequately is the real rub in their whole doctrine and consideration of election.

But here is what Dunnbauer says: “Predestination does not depend on any work or merit or motive emanating from us or through us or inhering in us, for the sake of which election might take place, —not even on faith inasmuch as it is a work or the fruit of faith. No., we say that the decree of election is a purely free one. The fact that it is free excludes merits, but not the order: faith in this connection is not a work or merit, but only the hand of the beggar as it was foreseen. Hence not even the smallest measure of glory is left to faith which receives, and does not give or earn. And so God saw no active worthiness in man, nothing good, which was not from God Himself. . . We conclude then that faith belongs to the divine order which God had instituted and foreseen and made a norm of His divine election. And so we have the right to say that something may be the effect of one acting and at the same time a reason or a foreseen cause of the one acting; a house, for instance, is both the work of the builder and the final cause moving the builder to erect the house. . . Although faith is not the cause of the decree of election, it is nevertheless the means for attaining salvation foreseen in the decree. We contend that the foreseeing of faith is prior (according to our way of thinking), not the actual faith itself. God remains the cause and never becomes that which is caused: in Him of course there is, properly speaking, nothing of the nature of priority of time, nor does His will depend upon foresight, although we conceive of this as prior. Not everything which is posterior to something else is immediately a dependent *ens*: The Son of God is second in order, but He is not for this reason dependent upon the Father. This testamentary condition (faith) is the reason for the decree of election. Not because God decreed that Paul should believe does he believe, but because Paul believed to the end and did not resist the means of salvation has he been elected. Now I say that reason is not a cause, properly speaking, certainly not a meritorious cause, but a part of the order of predestination.”

2. There is very little unique about the manner in which the Formula of Concord presents the doctrine of election of grace. It was discussed in very much the same manner by all the orthodox theologians of the day, such as Heshusius, Wigand, and Judex, and Flacius. And there can be little doubt that the Formula of Concord expressed the convictions of all these men regarding the doctrine of election. Typical of their approach to the doctrine is Heerbrand in his *Compendium Theologiae*, edited in 1582. I will offer a brief resume of his treatment of the doctrine to show you in what a simple and straightforward manner the doctrine was dealt with as compared with the presentation of the later dogmaticians.²⁵ Heerbrand insists first of all that predestination must always be viewed a *posteriori* from the point of view of God’s revealed will in the Gospel which offers God’s grace and mercy to all and teaches that “those are elect and predestinated who have been called through the ministry of the word and sacraments, who have been brought into the church and have grasped with faith the grace of God promised in and through Christ.” But he then goes on to say, *Nec enim alia est praedestinationis causa quam iustificationis*. And here we clearly have the germ of the later view. The statement may be permissible, if rightly understood. But the analogy of the causes of election and justification is new. Heerbrand then makes mention of the things one must keep in mind in considering this doctrine κρατήτεον ἄξιώματα 1. the doctrine must be derived from the Word of God alone, 2. the promise of grace is universal, 3. God is no respecter of persons, 4. in God there are not contradictory wills, 5. grace abounds over sin, 6. in Adam all die, in Christ all are justified, 7. God does not predestinate to damnation, 8. there is no different cause for predestination than for justification. This last is in antithesis obviously to Calvinism, as are all the points iterated. He then warns against considering predestination in an absolute sense and in this follows the FC almost word for word. He practically identifies the following words: προορισμός, προῖδεῖν, πρόγνωσις, ἐκλογή, πρόθεσις, and προετοιμάζειν, but demonstrates the different shades of meaning. The later dogmaticians after the Formula of Concord could not have done this. He understands predestination as the cause of faith; but in translating the προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν of Eph. 1:5 he has *qui praedestinavit nos, quos adoptaret in filios*. This construction can be purpose construction, but is more likely a subjunctive expressing future time in a

²⁵ *Compendium Theologiae*, ed. 1582, p. 480ff.

subordinate clause and therefore *would* be rendered in English, “He predestinated us whom he would adopt as children.” The later dogmaticians could easily accept this. To him the mystery is centered in the question why God gives faith to one and not another. He writes, “Is God to be reckoned unjust because He treats equals in an unequal manner? If the reward were reckoned of debt, then there would be room for such an objection. But since no one deserves anything except damnation because of sin, God can scarcely be considered unjust when He imposes righteous punishment on some, although remitting the guilt of others who according to His mercy have been received into grace. A magistrate when dealing with two criminals may acquit one while imposing the just punishment of the law upon the other; or a creditor may remit the debt of one while exacting the debt of another—yet they could not be accused of injustice. Do they not have the right to do what they wish with their own? Jesus says in the parable, ‘Is thine eye evil, because I am good?’” Yet with all this he is careful to guard against any form of supralapsarianism which would make God the author of sin. All in all Heerbrand’s approach to the doctrine of election is more clear and centered in Scripture than those which follow.

The theologian to make the most marked changes in the formulation of the doctrine was Aegidius Hunnius, who was a signer of the Formula of Concord and who wrote around the turn of the sixteenth century. The later teachers go further than Hunnius, but whatever they teach is incipient in his writings. It is highly important therefore to study his writings, which, unfortunately, are very difficult to come by. I shall try to make a list of his innovations. 1) He was the first of the Lutheran theologians to make use of the distinction between the *voluntas antecedens* and the *voluntas consequens* in his discussion of election. This distinction was first made by Chrysostom, then by Anselm and the medieval scholastics. Hunnius employed the terminology against both the Calvinists and against Huber. He often points out that election must be considered from the context of the antecedent and consequent will of God, rather than “*nude*.”²⁶ 2) As a result of his use of this distinction he insists that predestination must be viewed as a part of the *voluntas consequens*. This is clear to Hunnius in view of the fact that Scripture speaks of the elect always as believers in Christ, thus presupposing God’s *ordo salutis*.²⁷ This also means that when one speaks of a decree of reprobation he need and must not do so in a Calvinistic sense as being a part of God’s antecedent will. Thus there can and do exist two logically contradictory decrees of God in His consequent will.²⁸

This whole treatment is good insofar as it makes election presuppose universal grace which is correct against Calvinism. This I think is what Hunnius was attempting to do all the time. However, one must add that the distinction is arbitrary and liable to misunderstanding, since the will of God is one and never prior or posterior. In this connection I must also point out that Hunnius was the first to draw the false distinction between foreknowledge and predestination which was followed by all the later dogmaticians, the distinction which meant that one was dependent upon the other. He also made predestination a species of the genus providence.²⁹ 3) Hunnius was the originator of the formula of *intuitu fidei* and of the formula *intuitu Christi meriti fide apprehendendi*, later used commonly by all the Lutheran teachers. Again and again he states that election is not because of faith, but only because of the merits of Christ as they are apprehended by faith.³⁰ Here is a rather brief summary of this position,³¹ “In brief, just as in the case of justification and salvation God sees nothing in us the dignity or merit of which moves Him to justify or save us, although He does not justify and

26 *Articulus de Providentia Dei et Aeterna Praedestinatione Filiorum Dei ad Salutem, Francofurti ad Moenum, 1596. a3r, Nos vicissim electionem seu praedestinationem salutis non nude in Dei voluntate...Antecedens voluntas explicat desiderium aeternae omnium hominum salutis, qua vult Deus omnes homines per fidem in Christum mundi Redemptorem salvos fieri, ideoque filium etiam toti mundo Salvatorem mittit, ejusque meritum universis & singulis hominibus offeri iubet, & ab omnibus vult vera fide apprehendi...At voluntas consequens spectat homines, ut vel actu audituri verbum, & vel credituri erant. Et eos, quos operatione Spiritus sancti credituros praecognoscit, ad vitam praedestinat, ceteris ob nullam aliam causam (praeter solam finalem incredulitatem & impenitentiam) relictis & praeteritis...*

27 *ibid.* a5v.

28 *ibid.* a4d. *Atque hic demure sese offerunt duo decreta ἀντιδιηρέμενα alterum electionis ad vitam, alterum judicii ad condemnationem: idque non ex absoluto beneplacito, sed ob contemptu divini beneficium.*

29 Cf. O. Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*. Leipzig, 1908. IV, 147.

30 *op. cit.*, d2v.

31 *ibid.*

save in complete disregard of faith; so in like manner in the article of election He does not regard anything in us by the dignity or merit of which He is prompted to choose us, since not even faith in this sense enters into the decree of predestination, but only as it embraces the basis of our election, Jesus Christ.” We see here that Hunnius has fully developed the analogy between the part of faith in justification and in election.

This consideration of faith may give the impression, at least Hunnius seems to think, that his position weakens the immutability of the elective decree. This he denies most emphatically. I will take the liberty of quoting extensively from him in this, that the entire picture of his position might be given. He says:³² “Election is certain and pertains to those who believe and persevere to the end. And yet it is not by chance that they come to faith, but, according to His purpose which He has immutably resolved in eternity; God orders and decrees that He will be effectual through His Word in those who hear (the Word) and take it to heart, Joh. 6. Nor is it by accident that they are regenerated, justified and saved, but all this occurs according to an immutable decree of God, not in this one or that one indiscriminately, but in all those and only those who, hearing the Word, come to faith by the operation of God and who by the intercession of the Holy Spirit keep their faith in a pure heart and bring forth fruit. Those, on the other hand, who are damned are not condemned by mere chance, but because they do not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and this immutable decree is not fixed in God’s antecedent will (it does not antedate all causes as Toussain states), but in His consequent will, that he who does not believe is already condemned. Hence there remains the unchangeable decree of salvation in respect to those who believe and do not turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, and there remains the immutable decree of damnation upon those who do not believe, whoever they may be. These decrees are unchangeable and they remain unchangeable, although men change and dispose themselves now this way and now that way. If, after David had fallen into adultery, he had not repented, he would have been damned not simply by chance, but according to the immutable and eternal decree of God imposed upon all who do not repent. If, on the other hand, he had repented and continued constant in his faith unto the end, he would have been saved, again not by chance, but according to the immutable purpose and counsel of God (*ex immutabili proposito consilioque Dei*) by which He has purposed to save all those who repent and remain steadfast in their faith. He is a liar who says that these decrees of God are immutable and yet contends that man’s salvation or damnation does not depend upon the decree of God, but upon the movement of chance. And he is a liar also who says that some are chosen absolutely by this decree and others passed by absolutely.”

It is hard to see just how this statement can completely harmonize with everything Hunnius says elsewhere, for here he implies that faith is the result of a divine decree whereas elsewhere he clearly teaches that the decree of election is the result (in some sense, at least) of the foreknowledge of faith. Hunnius is not at all systematic, so it is not easy to discover his position and properly summarize it. It should be pointed out here too that Hunnius consistently rules out all possible synergistic interpretation of his position. His being less systematic than the later dogmaticians makes it possible for him to utter statements which they could not possibly have made. For instance he says:³³ “Among the causes which could be considered the fountain and source and chief cause of election the grace of God offers itself to us as the chief one, or, to use the apostolic expression, the good pleasure of His will by which, considering absolutely nothing in man, He elects him to eternal life by His grace.” The later Lutherans would have had to qualify the statement somewhat. Another statement which the later dogmaticians would have had to qualify is the following:³⁴ “Prescience denotes God’s knowledge of things known beforehand: predestination, however, means not only the knowledge, but is beside that the cause of salvation and is a special action of God which discerns, procures, effects, assists, promotes and brings about the desired end, the salvation of the elect.” As fine as the statement is, we must note that it does not imply that faith is the result of election.

Now may I just quote one more statement of Hunnius:³⁵ “Now we do not wish to be understood as though God had elected us on account of foreseen faith as some sort of virtue in man, just as we are not justified

32 *ibid.* c6r.

33 *Disputationes et orationes Academicæ. Opera Latina.* 1609. V., fol. 209.

34 *ibid.* V., fol. 215.

35 *ibid.* V., fol. 209.

on account of faith as a quality or dignity; but only insofar as faith in a man turns itself to Christ (who is the basis of election) and looks to Him alone, embraces Him, takes refuge in Him, holds to Him, and rests in Him.” Here we have the exact language of the later dogmaticians who took their cue from Hunnius. The statement is taken verbatim by Calov, as we have seen. Hunnius’ entire treatment of *intuitu fidei* is disjointed and unclear. He often says that God predestined those of whom He foresaw what they would believe, but often he treats these two actions as parallel actions of God in eternity with no priority being predicated of either. He is consciously trying to be loyal to the Formula of Concord while combating Calvinism. His use of the term *fides praevisa* is of course dangerous and often wrong. Even Bellarmine, who was no monergist, rejected a predestination *ex fide praevisa*. 4) Hunnius fails to state that election is a cause of faith, and here he has clearly departed from the Formula of Concord (Cf. Thor. Decl. XI, 8) and is sinning by omission. The best he can do in interpreting Eph. 1:5 is to say,³⁶ “It is clear that election to salvation is defined as predestination εἰς υἰοθεσίαν, unto the adoption of children Eph. 1.”

Hutter, who also signed the Formula of Concord, was very close to Hunnius in this teaching, but with one important advance. He made³⁷ faith a cause of election, not a meritorious or efficient cause, but an instrumental cause, and hence prior to election logically (although of course subsequent to election and the vocation in time). Both Hafenreffer and Balduin, who were contemporaries, speak in these same terms which were never used by Hunnius. I quote from Balduin,³⁸ “The meritorious cause of election, properly speaking, is not faith, but Christ with His universal merit: but since without faith this is of no use to us, God must also take into consideration this faith in His predestination, for faith looks to Christ, in whom we are elected. So we must distinguish in the doctrine of election between the persons to be chosen and the order of means which God has regard to in His election. In reference to order faith is certainly posterior to election, nay, even the call; for it has to do with the means through which God in time effects the salvation of men. But in regard to the persons whom God has chosen before all generations, the matter of the instrumental cause of election enters the picture, by which man in time apprehends the merit of Christ and which God from all eternity could not disregard. Therefore faith depends on election, not properly speaking, as effect upon cause, but as the determinant on its determination: that is to say, election does not bring about faith, but includes it as part of its order (sic). Contrariwise, election depends on faith, not as on a moving or meritorious cause, but only deferentially and conditionally; because without the true meritorious cause of election there is no faith, that is to say, there is no faith without Christ whom faith embraces.” This is completely different language from Hunnius. Here we see the danger of arbitrarily viewing something from different arbitrary points of view. Confusion results as when Hafenreffer defines election in the following manner:³⁹ “It is the will, counsel or good pleasure or purpose of God by which He has determined from eternity purely out of His grace and mercy through Christ and on account of Christ to save believers.” This is no definition of election.

Out of the fertile minds of Brochmand and John Gerhard came further developments in the doctrine. The dogmatics of the two men are markedly similar, so I shall follow Brochmand who is more brief, since I have already quoted from Gerhard at length. He begins his discussion by affirming that it is safe to speak of the doctrine and to do so publicly in the church. He then proceeds to emphasize that the doctrine is to confirm believers in the certainty of their faith and in love. “There is nothing which more forcibly engenders in us a love for God and our neighbor than an earnest and faithful contemplation of our predestination. For how can you help loving God, who, when you were dead in your sins and because of sins under the condemnation of eternal death, elected you unto eternal life?”⁴⁰ To Brochmand the contemplation of our eternal election is a basis of sanctification. Here is an approach which more closely approximates the spirit of Scripture and Luther. Brochmand sees some use for the doctrine except in the arena of polemics. Brochmand seems to mean two things by the term *intuitu fidei*: first, as meaning God’s foreseeing of faith which grasps the merits of Christ and

36 op. cit. 802.

37 ibid. V., fol. 218.

38 *Commentarius in Omnes Epistolas Beati Apostoli Pauli*, 1710. p. 166.

39 Hafenreffer, *Loci Theologici*, ed. 1622. p. 287.

40 op. cit., p. 263.

considers this in electing; and second, God's requiring this faith as a sort of condition in all those whom He has elected to eternal life (*anne fides conditio sit quam Deus in omnibus istis requirit, quos ad vitam aeternam eligit? Quod affirmamus*).⁴¹ This second meaning is not necessarily unorthodox, if it could stand by itself. Actually Brochmand and Gerhard do not go beyond their predecessors, although they often approach the doctrine in a more objective manner.

The last of the great dogmaticians (Calov, Schertzer, Quenstedt, Dannhauer, Hollaz) offer a development beyond Hutter and Balduin and Hafenreffer only in terminology. Sometimes this tends to clear the air and give sharper definition, although when they become involved as especially Quenstedt and Hollaz do in causal nexus it is very hard to follow them. Their definition of the object of predestination as man, fallen, redeemed, called, and justified, even though wrong, does clarify their position greatly.

3. I will now proceed to point out the faults and aberrations in the old dogmaticians' doctrine of eternal election.

a. It is a mistake practically to equate, as they do, predestination with the consequent will of God to save believers. Here they omit any consideration of the object of election, namely certain definite persons. This is virtually to deny predestination entirely. For instance, Hunnius says, "The doctrine of the Gospel is nothing else than the revelation or proclamation of God's predestination."⁴² This so-called *consilium salutis* was something which the earlier orthodox Lutherans regard by itself. Actually this involves the later Lutheran teachers in a sort of Calvinistic error (which they themselves oppose when it is under a different guise) of including election and reprobation as species under a common genus, namely the *voluntas consequens*. They are closer to the Calvinists than they think when they say that election is God's act of saving all of whom He foresaw that they would believe and reprobation is God's act of damning all of whom He foresaw that they would disbelieve.⁴³

b. It is a mistake to speak of predestination in a wider and narrower sense, as Quenstedt and Hollaz do. Predestination in a wider sense is a contradiction in terms, for if it is simply God's order of salvation which extends to all, there is no choice involved. When they appeal to the Formula of Concord in support of this distinction, they mistakenly take the 8 points in paragraphs 15ff to be a definition of predestination whereas they are really an enumeration of points to be included not in the doctrine but in our consideration of the doctrine. This mistake was made, I think, because they do not follow their own advice in viewing predestination always *a posteriori* as following upon a consideration of the Gospel.⁴⁴

c. It is a mistake to make an analogy between the place of faith in election and the place of faith in justification. This is based on a misinterpretation of II Thess. 2:13, as I have pointed out, and certainly denies Eph. 1:5 and par. 8 of Article XI of the Formula of Concord. If faith is said to be instrumental in election, it must be in a different sense than in justification (which is only confusing), unless in both cases it is spoken of only in reference to the appropriating of the merits of Christ—but then it cannot be said to be an instrumental cause of election.

d. It is a mistake to make the object of election believers. *Intuitu fidei* always does this. The object of predestination will be discussed later.

e. It is a mistake to make election include only the final awarding of eternal life as well as to deny or omit saying that faith is included in election as a result, Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:5.⁴⁵

41 *ibid.*

42 *opera Latina*, V., fol. 277.

43 Cf. Hollaz' statement, *op. cit.*, 604: *Praedestinatio est aeternum Dei decretum de conferenda salute aeterna omnibus & singulis hominibus, quia Deus in Christum finaliter credituros esse praevidit*, with the statement, p. 643: *Reprobatio est aeternum Dei decretum de condemnandis omnibus & singulis peccatoribus, quorum finalis meriti Christi reiectio ab aeterno praevisa est*.

44 Stoeckhardt (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1880, p. 147) refutes this opinion in an article, *Lehrt die Concordienformel eine Gnadenwahl im weitern Sinne? His conclusion is: Gott hat in seinem Rath nicht nur beschlossen, bestimmte Personen selig zu machen, sondern zugleich Art und Weise, wie er dieselben die in den Punkten beschriebene Stufenleiter der Heilsordnung hindureh-fuehren wolle*. He points out that par. 8 alone rules this idea out.

45 Cf. this with statement of Chemnitz, quoted by Walther, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1880, 44: *Denn die Wahl Gottes folgt nicht unserem Glauben und Gerechtigkeit, sondern geht ihr als die wirkende Ursache voraus*.

At least the last three errors spring directly from the doctrine of election *intuitu fidel*. Two different connotations were put into the term which confuses the issue greatly, and often one cannot know exactly what is meant by the term. It can mean simply that faith is included by God as part of the order by which He will bring to completion His election of grace. It can also mean—and this is the meaning which gradually gains pre-eminence—that faith as it embraces Christ is a factor in God’s determination to save some. I would say that in the case of the earlier dogmaticians we cannot know much of the time just how much they put into the term. This may be one reason why Walther was so patient with them. However, insofar as they use the term in the latter sense as though God’s election is dependent upon His foreknowledge of faith, they contradict Scripture and are guilty of false doctrine. Stoeckhardt makes the following criticism, which is correct: “There is no doubt that the dogmaticians of the 17th century in some way, however indefinite, make election dependent upon faith. When they make the *intuitu fidel* their shibboleth; when they understand in this same sense the phrase, God has elected those whose faith He has foreseen; when they bring out the so-called *syllabus praeordinarius*, whereby election results from the universal will of grace and foreknowledge of faith: they thereby state the dependence of election upon faith. They seek to explain the wonderful mystery of the *discretio personarum* and make it plausible to reason. And in this they have abandoned Scripture and the Symbol. Herein we cannot agree with them.”⁴⁶ I might just add that their doctrine of election *intuitu fidel* colored their exegesis of many clear passages, e.g. Eph. 1:4.

Is there any explanation for this departure from Scripture and our Confessions? There can be little doubt that their zeal to battle against the lapsarianism of the Calvinists gave rise to some of their excesses. They were obviously bothered by the arguments of the Calvinists, and more than once they unfortunately discarded the good with the bad. Polemics can compel a party to state its position more articulately (which is good), but sometimes it drives theologians to take an untenable position. In this case the Lutheran dogmaticians did just this. The fact that Gerhard uses nearly half of his locus on election to argue against the false doctrines of Calvinism indicates what an important consideration this was for the dogmaticians.

And so to appreciate properly the background and impetus for the dogmaticians’ new treatment of the doctrine we must understand first of all the Calvinistic doctrine. Calvinism taught that the decree of God was the effectual *principium* of all things and also of their order.⁴⁷ And yet the necessity of God’s decrees does not do away with freedom in rational creatures; because it is not a necessity of compulsion but one of immutability. Calvinists were either supralapsarians or infralapsarians. Those who ascend *supra lapsum* or above creation to constitute the decree of predestination placed the decree of predestination before the decree of creation and permission to fall, and God is conceived as having first thought of manifesting His glory in the exercise of His mercy and righteousness in the salvation or damnation of men before He thought of creating man and permitting his fall. According to this view the decrees of God must be considered as follows, 1. the decree to show forth His glory in the salvation or damnation of men, 2. creation, 3. permission to fall, 4. the sending of Christ for the salvation of those whom He decreed to save. This position of Beza and others became progressively less popular. The predominate position was infralapsarianism which considered the decrees of God in the following order, 1. creation, 2. permission to fall, 3. the election of certain individuals to salvation and the abandonment of others to the corruption into which they were born, 4. the sending of Christ to be the Savior of the elect, 5. The effectual calling of the elect and the gift of faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification. This second doctrine not only repudiated any consideration of faith in election, but also denied that election flowed from Christ’s merit as its meritorious cause. The sacrifice of Christ is only an effect of election. We are elected not *propter meritum Christi* but *respectu ad Christum et ad ipsius futurum meritum*. The *cur alii alii non* question was answered simply by appealing to the good pleasure of God. Yet the Calvinists too insisted on approaching predestination *a posteriori* by drawing out conclusions from it by God’s means of carrying it out. “First we must believe in the Gospel, then we must believe that we are elect.” Predestination to damnation was taught by all. A predestination to life naturally presupposes this. Election and reprobation were

⁴⁶ *Lehre und Wehre*, 1882, 158.

⁴⁷ Cf. Heppe, *Reformierte Dogmatik*, 1935 ed. p. 115ff.

species of the genus predestination. It is quite obvious how such a doctrine would presuppose a limited redemption. If we consider the object of election we can quite easily discern the fundamental difference in approach which Calvinists and Lutherans used.

1. Supralapsarianism. Predestination views man as *creabilis* or *labilis*, not yet created or fallen, as a *non ens*. The means also are predestinated.

2. Infralapsarianism. Predestination views man as already created and fallen. Creation and the fall are logical antecedents of predestination. God chooses from out of the world, from the *massa corrupta*.

3. The position of the Formula of Concord views man as having been created, having fallen, and having been redeemed by Christ.

4. The position of the later Lutheran dogmaticians views man as created, fallen, redeemed, and believing unto the end.

There is no reason why the first two views should not include a predestination unto damnation, for to them redemption in Christ is not a motive or cause, but only a consequence of election.

The influence of Huber on the formulation of the doctrine by Lutherans of the seventeenth century was not so profound, except perhaps in the case of Hunnius. Huber taught that not only justification, but also predestination was universal. He condemned as Pelagian all who included the thought of faith in election. Like the Calvinists he refused to distinguish between God's antecedent and consequent will. In combating his influence the Lutheran teachers emphasized that election was particular, but also that it pertained only to believers. The *intuitus fidel* formula then was used against Calvinists and Huber. The intensity of these controversies will do much to explain the insistence upon retaining this term. It was not in the interest of synergism that the term was employed. And yet synergism is incipient in the phrase. Now and then the dogmaticians reveal this fact, purely by accident. I think it was the failure to understand the doctrine of Huber and especially of Calvinism which, among other things, made it possible for F. A. Schmidt and others during the predestination controversy to evaluate properly the position of the Lutheran dogmaticians concerning election.

Walther⁴⁸ tries to explain and excuse the faulty expressions used by the dogmaticians on three counts, 1. the tendency to go too far in stating a position in times of controversy; 2. the fact that in their devotional literature and other writings they often gave a Scriptural presentation of the doctrine, considered in a simple *a posteriori* manner; 3. the fact that in all their discussion they successfully avoided synergism. I think that on this last count Walther is a little too kind to them. Probably in their hearts none was synergistic, but their terminology was plainly self-contradictory. Plain synergism actually came out in Hollaz, as it was bound to do sooner or later. He seems to be the originator of the distinction, so common today, between willful and natural resistance.⁴⁹

Finally it might be mentioned that their theological method and Aristotelian terminology did not stand them in good stead here. It is the natural function of this sort of methodology to try to close *lacunae*, answer questions, and solve mysteries. For instance, they argue that the merit of Christ alone could not be the external cause of election, because this applies also to the reprobate, and so their strong desire for logical consistency drives them to a conclusion as equally consistent but also as equally unwarranted as the conclusion of Calvinism. Their attempt to find a relationship between *πρόγινωσις* and predestination is also a fruit of their methodology. I might just add that the dogmaticians do not approach the doctrine of predestination with the same enthusiasm as they discuss other articles. Even Gerhard and Dannhauer, whose approach is usually quite fresh, seem to regard this locus as a chore.

48 *Lehre und Wehre*, 1881, 291.

49 Op. cit., 602: *Dist. inter resistantiam naturalem, & malitiosam. Illam Spiritus S. per gratiam praevenientem frangit & refrenat: haec in aliis hominibus minor, in aliis major & ferocior est, quae saepe impedit, quo minus vera fides in corde hominis irrogeniti accendantur.*