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LUTHER AND ZWINGLI.

A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST.

1.

Dr. Kattenbusch thinks that a comparison of Luther and Zwingli will in every sincere Protestant induce the wish that nature might have made these two men into one.¹⁾ Each, he thinks, possesses that which is the principal lack of the other. They seemed destined to supplement each other, at least, to so shape their labors as to make them serve their joint interests. Reciprocal kindness and mutual helpfulness should have characterized their coexistence in an era that was big with promise for the good of the Church and of humanity in general. As a matter of fact, their meeting in the arena of historical events presents a most melancholy spectacle. It is the most fatal accident that could happen to the cause of the Reformation. With a discretion that is more wise than just Dr. Kattenbusch holds that it will not do to determine the amount of guilt that must be charged against either the one or the other of these two remarkable men, who brought on the saddest of the many internal conflicts in which Protestantism during the last four hundred years has had to engage. In this conflict, it is said, each of the original combatants appears limited by the peculiarities of his character. The

1) PRE 3 16, 156.

THE PROOF TEXTS OF THE CATECHISM WITH A PRACTICAL COMMENTARY.

THE THIRD ARTICLE.

(Continued.)

OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Matt. 24, 13: *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

Christ had spoken of the terrible dangers threatening the Christians in the last times. Among other things He had told His disciples of severe persecutions that were to come upon them because of their faith in Him; of the rise of false prophets disseminating soul-destroying errors; of the multiplication of iniquity and the waxing cold of the love of many

text. Luther says: "He adds somewhat to the term 'baptize,' viz., 'for the dead.' This has been interpreted in accordance with the Latin rendering 'pro mortuis' to mean that they were baptized in the place of the dead, that is, of the unbelievers in heathendom, hence, that they were baptized twice, once for themselves, the second time for their friends. But this is no interpretation at all. For Peter says, Acts 2, 38: 'Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ,' etc. Being baptized in the place of another is an unwarranted procedure, even as each must repent, believe, and profess his faith for himself. Hence I adhere to the opinion of the old Greek teachers, which I have indicated in a marginal note, thus: In the days of Paul this article of the resurrection was unknown to the heathen and seemed an unheard-of doctrine to the most learned men of Greece, although they went so far as to fancy that the soul after quitting would continue to live, without arriving at any certain conclusions in this matter; but they were entirely ignorant of the fact that the entire man will rise again, and soul and body will be reunited. For this reason it seemed hard to them to believe the preaching of the apostles, and those who did believe had to suffer much ridicule. Accordingly, to strengthen the faith of people in this article, they had themselves baptized among the graves for a sure sign that they firmly believed the dead who lay buried there, and over whose graves they were being baptized, would rise again. They believed the resurrection so firmly that they pointed their finger, as it were, at the graves that were to open. We might likewise administer baptism publicly in a graveyard or common burial-ground. There is a legend, too, that the church at Aquileja used to recite the words

in consequence thereof. Hereto He annexes the solemn warning: "*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*" "*The same,*" οὗτος, reverts to the pronoun "he" of the main clause, stressing the truth that *he, and he only, and no other,* shall be saved. Steadfastness in faith *unto the end* is inculcated in the text. Similar exhortations abound in the Scriptures, *e. g.*, Rev. 2, 10: "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*"

What did it avail Lot's wife to leave Sodom? She looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt. It availed Judas nothing to have been at one time a disciple of the Lord. He did not watch and pray, avarice took possession of his heart, he betrayed his Master, and "went to his place." Demas, an associate of Paul, became a backslider. Paul mournfully writes of him: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."—From such fate preserve us, heavenly Father!

Per contra. Paul at the end of his life exultingly exclaims: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Stephen, the martyr, endured to the end, dying, amidst a hail of stones, with the prayer on his lips: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

in the Article thus: 'I believe the resurrection of this flesh.' This was done, no doubt, for the purpose of clearly and properly teaching and professing the article of the resurrection of the flesh. The blessed apostles and fathers used to observe this custom in order to inculcate this article both by words and symbolical acts, because this teaching was still new, just as we must teach our rude youths and drive home our teaching by ceremonies and external acts, in order that they must grasp it with their hands, so to speak, and be less inclined to doubt; otherwise they will readily forget it and lose it out of their hearts. Thus they used to baptize persons among the grave-diggers, as if to say: I am having myself baptized here, as a witness to my faith that the dead who are lying here will all rise, and that I decline the belief that only spooks shall appear here, or that other bodies than those that were buried will rise. I believe that the very Paul and Peter who died and were buried, or, to speak with the Creed, this flesh which is now seen standing here, going there, being buried here, will arise. Just as the very same Christ who was born of Mary was nailed to the cross, truly rose, and not another; for He shows His disciples the prints in His hands and His side." (8, 1196 f.) D.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, grant that we may serve Thee with steadfast faith, and continue in the confession of Thy name *unto our end*, through Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, our Lord. Amen.

Eph. 1, 3—6: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*

Eph. 1, 3—6 and Rom. 8, 28—30 are universally recognized as the principal seats of the doctrine of Election. They are placed here at the conclusion of the Third Article to teach the comforting truth that a believer can and should be sure of his final salvation.

Let us briefly analyze Eph. 1, 3—6. We have, 1. an *exhortation* to praise God: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; 2. the *reason* therefor: "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; 3. the *source* of these blessings—election: "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world"; 4. the *purpose* and *aim* of election: "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself"; 5. the *motive* of election: "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Now we are ready for a more detailed explanation of the text. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" At first sight the word "blessed" in this connection: "Blessed be God" may seem peculiar to English readers; but familiarity with New Testament diction teaches them to interpret it by "praised." This is correct. The Greek word *εὐλογεῖν*, with God as its object, means: to praise God. So we

render the phrase: "*Praised be God.*" In what respect God is to be praised is indicated by the addition: Praised be "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" God, as the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the God who has sent His Son into the world for our salvation. The God who did this, this *gracious* God, is to be praised. Paul addresses these words to Christians, who joyously confess: "*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me,*" etc. By faith in Him, the Redeemer, He has become "*our Lord Jesus Christ,*" and God has become our Father. Paul praises God for the riches of His grace; not only he, however, is to do this, but all the Ephesian Christians, as is clearly indicated by the use of the pronouns "us" and "we" going through the whole paragraph, and with the Ephesian Christians all believers everywhere should unite in praising God. — The reason why we should praise God, the apostle puts thus: "*Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*" Which are such "spiritual blessings"? If we run our eye along the following context, we immediately perceive that amongst them are: "the adoption of children," "the redemption through His [Christ's] blood, the forgiveness of sins," *et al.* Now, in time, we Christians possess "*all spiritual blessings.*" Our present blissful state of faith is thus briefly outlined. And to show us whence these "spiritual blessings" were bestowed the apostle says: they are "*spiritual blessings in heavenly places,*" *i. e., in what is heavenly:* not from the earth did they come, but from heaven. And these spiritual blessings—*all* of them—are given us *in Christ.* By Him they were merited; by Him they are mediated (vv. 6. 13. 20, *et al.*). No spiritual blessings without Christ! No praise of God for gracious gifts possible without Christ!

Having thus stated the reason that should impel us to unite with him in eulogy of God's grace, the apostle traces

these spiritual blessings to their source and begins to enumerate them. "Praised be God—who blessed us—in Christ, *according* (καθώς) as He hath chosen us in Him [in Christ] before the foundation of the world." "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ—these we possess now, here in time—*according* as He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world." The choice in Christ *precedes* the blessings in Christ. The choice in Christ dates back to *all eternity*; the blessings in Christ we receive *in time*. Clearly, the nexus of these two statements is this: Since God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, we now are blessed with all spiritual blessings. The former is the cause; the latter the effect. This decree of God, His eternal election, has been made manifest in us in the very blessings we now enjoy. Now as to the statement itself: "He hath chosen us in Him," *i. e.*, in Christ. "He hath chosen," ἐξελέξατο, from ἐκλέγομαι, in the medial form, means: *to single out for one's self, to choose to make one's own*; and the prefix ἐξ, ἐκ, indicates the choosing of some objects *from*, or *out of*, a number; it refers to the *massa perditā* out of (ἐξ) which the elect have been taken. The object of the verb "chosen" is "us." Paul speaks of himself and the Ephesian Christians when he says: "He hath chosen *us*." These same people he had designated in v. 1 as "the saints which are at Ephesus," the faithful in Christ Jesus." These Christians are to consider themselves the chosen of God: "He hath chosen *us*."—As he had just said: "He hath *blessed us in Christ*," so he now says: "He hath *chosen us in Christ*." Thus it is patent that before the foundation of the world, the decree of redemption was prior to the decree of election, for the decree of election is *based* on the decree of redemption: "He hath *chosen us in Christ*!" Election is founded on Christ, the foreordained Redeemer of the world. Hence it is an election of *grace*, as the apostle subsequently states, and as we read *expressis verbis* in Rom. 11, 5.

Says Dr. Graebner (THEOL. QUART., Vol. V, p. 31): "This, then, was the order of the divine decrees of redemption and of predestination. Hav-

ing foreseen the fall of man, which He had not purposed and decreed, God foreordained Christ before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet. 1, 20; Acts 2, 23; 4, 28, to be the Redeemer of the fallen race. Then, in Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King, in consideration of His ordained work for man's salvation, and in every way determined by Christ, God furthermore, also *πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου*, chose unto Himself by another eternal decree, an election of grace in Christ Jesus, all those who in time, as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness unto His marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2, 9.) It is a perversion of this order and of the nature of these decrees when Calvinists teach an absolute decree of election, not in every or any way determined by Christ, and a subsequent decree of redemption conceived as a measure for the execution of the decree of election and restricted to the elect. In this as in other points of doctrine the difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism is fundamental. They differ in their material principles. In Calvinism the cardinal and ruling doctrine, the doctrine which forms the base of all other doctrines, the central doctrine from which all other doctrines radiate, and to which they all converge, is the doctrine of the sovereign majesty of God. In Lutheran theology, the theology of St. Paul and all the Scriptures, the center is Christ, our Righteousness, to whom all the prophets give witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins. (Acts 10, 43.)

"On the other hand, Lutheran theology with St. Paul also excludes all manner of synergism. While its *Soli Deo Gloria!* is not chiefly and primarily a praise of the sovereign majesty of God, but a praise of God's grace in Christ Jesus, and its *sola gratia* is nowhere a grace of God without Christ, it also emphasizes the *Soli* and *Sola*, and rejects everything which would in any way or measure make man a determining factor in his salvation. This applies also to the doctrine of election and predestination. It was not our holiness or anything in our conduct which determined God in His election of grace. The nexus of cause and effect is not such as to place the cause in us and the effect in God, but the reverse."

The text proceeds: "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and without blame before Him.*" The "that" clause, in Greek, the infinitive: *εἶναι ἡμῶς ἁγίους κτλ.*, states the purpose for which God has chosen us. When God in eternity chose us to be His own, He did it with the purpose that by virtue of this choice, this election, we, in time, "should be holy and blameless before Him." Our "being holy and blameless before Him" is an outflow of election. In time God wrought faith in our hearts through the Gospel, faith in Christ. By faith in Christ we are

“holy and blameless before Him.” (Eph. 5, 26. 27.) Thus God’s election in eternity was realized in time.

There is a question about the phrase “in love.” Does it go with v. 4, or does it modify the verb “predestinated” in v. 5, so as to make it read: “*in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ*”? Dr. Graebner answers the question thus: “The phrase, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, is, in the English Bible, connected with the preceding verse. This connection is based upon the supposition that the holiness and blamelessness spoken of in v. 4 is a Christian’s walk in newness of life, sanctification, the fruit of faith which worketh by love. (Gal. 5, 6.) Remembering, however, that the keynote of the entire context is a eulogy of the goodness of God, who has blessed us with all manner of spiritual blessing, and that the words, ἀγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, would seem to refer to the holiness and blamelessness of justification rather than to sanctification, the mention of *our* love would seem to introduce a notion foreign to, and out of keeping with, the context. For the same reasons, the connection of ἐν ἀγάπῃ with προορίσας seems in every way preferable. Thus referred, the love here mentioned is the love of God, that everlasting love wherewith He from eternity longed for union and communion with the objects of His holy desire, and which prompted Him to choose them unto Himself, and to predestinate them to eternal bliss and glory.” (THEOL. QUART., Vol. V, p. 36.)

“He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love having predestinated us *unto*, εἰς, the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself.” That says that at the same time when God *chose us*, He also *predestinated us*, προορίσας ἡμᾶς, determined beforehand, predestined our status — we should become His children. How? “*By Jesus Christ.*” Plainly, faith in Christ is an outflow of election. For “we are all *children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*” (Gal. 3, 26; 4, 4. 5.) To maintain that we are elected in view of faith, *intuitu fidei*, manifestly militates against this *clara Scriptura*:

God "predestinated us *unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.*" Since we are predestinated unto the *adoption of children*, we are *eo ipso* predestinated to faith. Clear as this thought is in itself, it becomes still more evident by the addition: "*unto Himself*," which shows the close relation in which we stand to Him: we are His children. In the decree of election faith was *included*, not presupposed. We believe because we are elected.

What moved God to choose us in Christ, and to predestinate us unto the adoption of children? The apostle answers: He did it "*according to, κατά, the good pleasure of His will*"; *κατά, according to*, expresses the motive that prompted the act. What moved God to do as He did? "*His will.*" Why did He so will it? Because it was His *good pleasure*. Was there anything in man that God foresaw, and that would make Him inclined to act as He did? No, Paul knows nothing thereof. He did it "*according to the good pleasure of His will.*"

And so the decree of election and predestination redounds "*to the praise of the glory of His grace,*" *εις ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ*. An emphatic statement, indeed! Separating the thought into its elements so as to show the emphasis, we might say: it all redounds "*to the praise of His grace.*" — Thus God's *love* to us, which in reference to *sinner*s manifests itself as *grace*, would already be highly glorified, but in order to emphasize this idea of grace still more, the apostle says: "*to the praise of the glory of His grace.*" It is a glorious grace; but how weak is the thought: "*to the praise of His glorious grace*" when contrasted with the literal rendering of the text: "*to the praise of the glory of His grace*"! The greatness, the richness, of this grace is thus prominently brought to the fore. "He hath chosen us in Christ" — that is grace; "He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ" — that is grace; "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ" — that is grace. The aim of election is to magnify and glorify the riches of His grace toward us miserable sinners, who deserved nothing but punishment.

The apostle proceeds to show the execution of this gracious decree of eternity in time. He continues: "to the praise of the glory of His grace, *wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved,*" *i. e.*, in Christ. (Cf. context; also Col. 1, 13; Matt. 3, 17; John 17, 23—26, *et al.*) In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son to redeem mankind. And how great is God's love for us, since He gave His "*Beloved*" into death for us, that we might *be made accepted in Him*, that God might be able to grant us grace! In the course of man's life the Gospel of salvation is preached to him, and God carries out His eternal decree of mercy regarding the sinner. We, whom God has called from darkness to light, and thus "*made accepted in Christ,*" shall thereby know that God had from eternity embraced us in His eternal decree of election, and that "He that began the good work in us will also fulfil it unto the day of Jesus Christ." We, who with the Ephesians are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ," are thereby to know and confidently to believe that we are numbered among the elect. This is the only way according to Scriptures by which we can ascertain this blessed truth. (1 Thess. 1, 4 ff.; 2 Thess. 2, 13 ff.; Rom. 8, 28 ff.)

We tabulate some of the important truths gained from the passage.

1. There is a decree of election and predestination unto salvation: "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."

2. This decree embraces certain persons: ἐξελέξατο = "He hath chosen out of to Himself." An election of *all* is a contradiction in itself. "He hath chosen *us*."

3. There are but two causes of election: 1. *God's grace*; His "good pleasure": "to the praise of the glory of His grace." 2. *Christ's merit*: "He hath chosen us *in Him*"; "He hath made us accepted in the *Beloved*."

4. Logically considered, the decree of redemption is prior to the decree of election: "He hath chosen us *in Christ*."

5. In the decree of election and predestination the *faith* of the elect is not presupposed, but it is *included*: "He predestinated us *unto*, *εις*, the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." Faith flows out of election as its source. — In fact, all spiritual blessings bestowed upon the Christians in time flow out of their election in eternity as their cause. This is evident from the entire text and its context: He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ—*according as He hath chosen us in Him.*"

6. All Christians are to consider themselves the elect of God. From the fact that the Ephesian Christians had been blessed in time with all spiritual blessings, they should know: God has chosen you before the foundation of the world. So we. We possess the *result*; we know the *cause*.

7. The blessings of the eternal election rest on an immovable foundation: God's grace in Christ. What great *comfort* for the Christians! This doctrine—which is Gospel throughout—is one for which Christians should feel impelled to unite with the apostle in thanksgiving: "*Praised be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" etc.

Is there a predestination unto death? No. This *sedes doctrinae* of election knows nothing thereof, neither does any other passage of Scripture teach it. Calvin's "*horribile decretum,*" thank God, has no foundation in Scripture. It is a figment of reason.

Is synergism Scriptural, according to which God, foreseeing man's faith, man's good conduct towards grace, elected him? No. This text knows nothing thereof, neither do other texts treating of this matter. On the contrary, this text teaches that faith is an outflow of election. Because we are elected, we believe. (Cf. 2 Tim. 1, 9; John 15, 16; Rom. 8, 28—30.)

Are there mysteries in this doctrine? Yes. What are we to do in view of them? We are to take our reason captive under the obedience of Christ, and wait for a solution of the

mysteries in the school of theology up above. Meanwhile, while wandering in this vale of tears, we are to offer God thanks for His great mercy toward us, saying: "Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

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(To be continued.)
