

A Quote from The Book of Concord

“God has ordained in his counsel that the Holy Spirit would call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word and that he would justify and save all who [receive] Christ through true faith, so he has also ordained in his counsel that he would harden, reject, and condemn all who, when they are called through the Word, spurn the Word and persistently resist the Holy Spirit who wants to work [effectively] in them through the Word.”

Walther, the author of the Thirteen Theses, wrote them in order to defend the charge that the Missouri Synod was Calvinistic. He also wanted to make it known that these Theses were a proper interpretation of the Formula of Concord, Article XI, Election, rather than something new.

The following is a summary of the Thirteen Theses:

- 1. God . . . created all men unto salvation, none unto damnation, and that He earnestly wills the salvation of all men.**
- 2. [Christ] bore and expiated [atoned for] the sins of all men.**
- 3. God calls through the means of grace all men earnestly.**

4. No one perishes because God was not willing that he be saved, . . . all men that perish, perish because of their own fault, because of their unbelief and because they [stubbornly] resisted the Word and grace unto the end. The cause of this contempt . . . is man's perverted will.
5. Elect or predestinated persons are only the true believers, who truly believe unto their end.
6. No elect person can become [an unrepentant sinner] and perish.

7. It is foolish and soul-endangering . . . to endeavor to become or be sure of our own election . . . by means of searching out the eternal secret decree of God.
8. A true believer ought to endeavor to become sure of his election from God's revealed will.
9. Election is not simply God's foreknowledge and it does not extend universally to all men. Neither does it include those who believe only for a while, or is it merely God's decision to save those who believe unto the end.

10. The cause which moved God to elect, is alone His grace and the merit of Jesus Christ, and not anything good foreseen by God in the elect.
11. Election is not merely divine foresight . . . but also a cause of their salvation.
12. God has also concealed and kept secret many things concerning the mystery of election and reserved them for His wisdom and knowledge alone.
13. It is necessary and [beneficial] that the mysterious doctrine of election, in so far as it is clearly revealed in God's Word, be presented also publicly to Christian people.