

The Lutheran

“God’s Word and Luther’s Doctrine pure shall to eternity endure!”

Published by C. F. W. Walther.

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The Evangelical Church in North America (Continuation)

In the last issue of our paper we had presented the reasons from God’s Word forcing us to take a stand to renounce any churchly union that claims to be united in faith and in doctrine but that, as in this case, after having reached only a few important points of doctrinal agreement, deems it acceptable that other doctrines can at the same time be overlooked and ignored (so that in these doctrines part of the new Church can still believe and teach contrary to God’s Word). Now since the members of the “Evangelical Church Union of the West” have even presented this as their basis in the ‘Statutes of the Christian Church’ which they published, and because, additionally, they will spare no effort to establish this union, we regard it our duty to also speak out about it and explain why our conscience is disturbed by the reasons these men have given for their union. The first one being:

“In consideration of the promise of the Lord that a time should come when there would be only one flock under one Shepherd.”

This initial statue, we must admit, has amazed us greatly. For isn’t it hard to believe that the people establishing this union could play so fast and loose with Scriptures by taking this reckless first step as their lead-in to establishing this union, that could be for the benefit or harm of so many souls, in plain sight of the whole Christian church and especially the church here in the West? Isn’t it hard to accept that men to whom the holy preaching office is entrusted should not have first carefully considered whether the Words of our most beloved LORD and Savior, JESUS Christ, really mean what they are alleging that they mean in this statute? – Yet it’s quite obvious that the members of this union consistently give a meaning to these Words of

our LORD contrary to their real meaning and, thus, only misuse them to their own ends. Now far be it from us to judge the hearts of the members of the union. As Christians we much rather have only the best hopes for them. But obviously we can’t deny the truth for love’s sake! – We must consider the passage in its context. We quote directly from John 10.16 as follows: “And I have still other sheep that are not of this fold. And I must lead them here and they will hear my voice and they will be one flock with one Shepherd.” It is certainly nothing new for us to see these Words being rallied by those who hope for a future thousand year kingdom on earth where Christ will rule without opposition with his believers to support their peculiar ideas. We know full well that all who support unionism see this passage as their iron wall, just as Zwingli used those Words: “the flesh avails nothing.”¹⁷ – but we ask the impartial reader: Is this legitimate? Does the Savior even hint that he intends to say anything like that with these Words? In no way. In the first place, Christ is speaking to the Jews about other sheep that were not from this flock (the Jewish Church). Most obviously Christ has in mind here those who are not Jews, but Gentiles. Now he goes on to say of them that he must bring them, that they will also hear his voice, that is, they would receive his Word and, finally, the division would be removed so one flock would be established under one Shepherd. So what is this one flock under one Shepherd? It is nothing other than Christianity, gathered in the New Testament from Jews and Gentiles. So already from the moment that the former dividing wall fell between the Jews and Gentiles and the apostles with their Gospel turned also to the Gentiles, even right then the promise of one flock under one Shepherd was being fulfilled. St. Paul clearly interprets this prophecy of Christ that way

¹⁷That is, Zwingli asserted that the Words: “The flesh avails nothing” (John 6.63.), should refer to JESUS’ flesh in order to attack the LORD’s Supper, which is obviously a horrible blasphemy, which must still occasionally be heard. Christ says of his flesh, “The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6.51.) And should that flesh, then, be so useless?

when he writes this to the Ephesians and others who had been converted, having been Gentiles: “Remember that you had formerly been Gentiles according to the flesh – that you up till that time had been without Christ, foreigners and apart from the citizens of Israel, – but now you who were formally apart are in Christ, now you have drawn near through the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made one (one flock) out of the two and has broken down the dividing wall. – So now you are no longer guests and foreigners, but citizens with the saints and part of the household of God.” (Eph. 2.11-19.) The holy apostle expresses the same thing in Romans 10.12: “There is no distinction between Jew and Greek (Gentile), for there is one Lord (Shepherd) of all.”

Therefore when the members of the Evangelical Union say, according to the promise of the LORD, that first now the time “shall come when collective Christianity will be only one flock under one Shepherd,” as they do in their founding principle, they err in this. For the time should not first come now since it’s already come. Even now there is only one Shepherd of Christians, JESUS Christ, and only one flock, that is the holy Christian church that is scattered over the face of the whole world, the invisible communion of saints. So that means that the church is one body and one Spirit and has one hope, one LORD, one faith, one Baptism and one God and Father, who is there over all his members, and through them all and in all. (Eph. 4.4-6.) This one flock has existed now for 1800 years and even now maintains her unity, but the fleshly eyes of spiritually blind men can see nothing in the church but a house of discord, when it sees such great division among her teachers.”¹⁸ But whether

¹⁸This judgement on the ruinous state of the unity of the Christian church that a person must make when he lays eyes upon her can be appraised by the sad evidence given by Mr. Oertel in his last issue of *Friend of Truth*. There he makes the following conclusion: Because there are so many conflicts between their theologians, that church they confess then lacks true unity! Yet a man who can write that way has no concept of the true church, of true unity, of the real nature of the Kingdom of God on earth, etc.! Mt. 13.12.

or not it will ever come to pass that amongst all who call themselves Christians all discord and every divisive heresy would cease and a perfect outward peace would ensue, that's a question these Words of Christ don't address at all, for here he's not even talking about what should take place amongst Christians, but rather: That Japheth would dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. 9.27.), that is, that Christ would also call the Gentiles (Acts 2.39) and would make one flock of them and the people of the Old Covenant.

Must the Evangelicals themselves not admit, if they stick with the simple meaning of the Words of Christ, that by applying the same to some anticipated union of all Christian religious parties, that they must entangle themselves in insoluble difficulties? So whom do they want to call "other sheep" who "are not from this fold", as Christ says? – Lutherans? – or the Reformed? So which of the two, in their way of thinking, do not belong to the true church? Which one of them have not heard the voice of Christ? Which of them do not yet have Christ as their Shepherd? By this application Evangelicals make of this passage, they obviously either reject one party or the other. So don't they contradict themselves, since they claim they don't want to do this in what they wrote? – Oh, how necessary it is still to first rightly and carefully consider the Words of JESUS Christ in their context before using them to prove one's own preconceived notions! It's just as dangerous to explain it by what he only seems to be saying, merely by one's first impression! It's obviously true that if a friend of that union only lets his hearers hear the words: "There should be one flock and one Shepherd," he can count on the fact that many people are unfamiliar with its context in Scripture, and most of their hearers will heedlessly accept that false interpretation of the words he presents them. But God will demand an accounting from those who so misuse God's Word and thereby lead the naive into error.

We see the hope that others invent, that in the latter days the church would once more be set in a glorious, flowering condition, when the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, would be converted and the church would consist of only saints, as an enthusiastic (*schwaermerische*) hope without any Scriptural foundation at all. For the Bible much rather describes Christ's kingdom on earth for us as a kingdom of the cross. It describes the last days as the most horrid of times. It teaches Christians to anticipate the dawning of the last day every moment and consistently promises them peace some day, in heaven and in eternal life. Therefore, far from our making ourselves safe and secure with sweet thoughts about some future day when the kingdom of God would bloom, we

should, therefore, not allow ourselves to be deceived by the "great luminaries" of this last and fallen age, so we much rather rightly pray to the LORD, that he would also now preserve his pure truth to us at a time when, were it possible, even the elect would be misled into heresy. However, we constantly bear in mind that a time will come when the LORD's actions will explain why we do not take part in the (chiliastic) hopes of those who appear today in greater numbers, and yet confess they believe God's Word.

(To be continued.)

 "If your brother sins against you, go and reprove him between him and you alone. If he hears you, you have won your brother. If he does not hear you, then take one or two with you, so that the whole matter can be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses. If he does not listen to you, then tell it to the church. If he will not hear the church, then regard him as a heathen and a tax collector. Mt. 18.15-17.

"These days – writes Luther – many of you are blaming the servants of the church, the pastors and preachers, as if their negligence were to blame for the ban's (the exclusion of manifest sinners from the fellowship of the church) having fallen into misuse. . . . But the saying and command of Christ (Mt. 18.) clearly shows that a sinner must be specifically and privately admonished and warned beforehand [by others], before those holding the public office of Pastor pronounce the sentence (verdict) and, even then, that sentence is not publicly declared before a public servant of the church has first applied a serious and Christian admonition. If the sinner ignores that and persists in his sin, if he will not stop or give up his sin, then the public ban must be published.

So, in our day, what now stands in the way of applying the ban? Nothing, except that no one is doing their duty that is required of a Christian in this matter. You have a neighbor whose life and walk is well known and recognized by you, but your pastor is either unaware of it or doesn't know it so well, for how can he know the details about how everyone is living his life? Therefore whenever you see that your neighbor is getting rich through dishonest business or commerce, you see that he is practicing unchastity or adultery, or is being lax or negligent in raising and governing his family, you must seriously admonish him and give him a Christian warning, that he might see his salvation and put his offense away. And oh, what an utterly good, holy work you have done if you win him over that way! But, friend, who does that? For, in the first place, the truth hurts. Whoever tells the truth will make others unhappy. So you would rather stay friends and in your

neighbor's good graces than anger him and make him your enemy. This is also the case when the second, the third, the fourth neighbor also takes part in this, when the second and the third admonitions, by which a neighbor could have been restored again to the right path, fall on deaf ears along with the first one. So you will only admonish what you must by your duties of office, and nothing more [as a brother would].

Secondly, this also happens because, since we are all subject to the same blasphemies, our hands are dirty, we are afraid if we want to take the cinder out of our neighbor's eye that he might well accuse us and tell us to remove the beam from our own eye. This is really the foremost reason that the ban has practically disappeared, because there are altogether so few true Christians, such a small flock, very few in number. For if we were all at once as just and fair as we should be, having preference in our hearts for true piety and God's Word, then we would regard the command of the LORD Christ as greater and more precious than anything we value in this temporal life. Then this command to admonish and warn a brother who is sinning would be just as necessary for us as these: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal, etc. But since you always neglect this admonition, either out of fear or for some other reason, your neighbor isn't in peril of losing property or life, but his soul's salvation." (Luther's Works. Halle. IV, p. 2404-6.)

Augustine writes about this same situation: "Why do you rebuke your neighbor? Because you're angry he's sinned against you? May it never be! If you are doing it out of love for yourself, you're wasting your time. Do it out of love for him. Then your actions will be perfectly right. You must do it for his sake, so that you win him. – If you don't do it, you're worse than him. Remember, he has committed a sin against you and has thereby wounded himself deeply, so how can you ignore your brother's wounds? You see him perishing. Will you look the other way? You are worse for your silence than he is through the offense caused by his sinning against you. – Ignore your hurt feelings, but not your brother's wounds. Therefore admonish him between you and him alone because you want to see his improvement, but spare him disgrace. For see, he might otherwise, out of shame, begin to defend his sins, and since you want his improvement, you would thus only make him worse. – So if you alone know he's sinned against you and you want to broadcast his sin to everyone you're not accusing, but betraying him." (*Augustini Opp. Bas. T.S, fol. 69.*)

If there's ever been a time when these complaints and admonitions of Luther and Augustine were well founded and necessary, it must be now. For when has the prescribed rebuke of sinful brothers ordained by Christ been less practiced than right now? A brother or sister is seen sinning, so what happens?

The person who sees it goes off and writes him off as an unbeliever or despises him in his heart as a poor Christian – and does not admonish him. Or his sin is trotted out, he is spoken of as evil behind his back, he is gossiped about and slandered but he himself is not confronted. Is that the love Christians should have for one another, so that everyone will know they, indeed, are disciples of Christ? Oh, no! For God says through his servant, Moses: “Thou shalt not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall rebuke your neighbor, so that you should not, for his sake, bear guilt.” Lev. 19.17. Thus, not admonishing your neighbor when you see him sin is, according to God’s Word, called hating him.

(Submitted)
Concerning the Discontinuance

**of the Un-Lutheran Distribution Formula
at Holy Communion: Christ said, etc.**

Dr. Sihler, a Lutheran pastor, along with three of his co-workers, presented a letter to the Lutheran Synod of Ohio requesting the discontinuance of the stated formula, which was quoted in its entirety in a report of that Synod in issue 21 of her Lutheran church newspaper, a summary of which was reported in issue 9 of this newspaper.

So now, as encouraging as it is, on the one hand, to see in this letter of request evidence that recently zeal for the untarnished Lutheran confession, that has been slumbering for so long, is awakening here and there, it is, on the other hand, among other things, just as disheartening that what this letter of request would accomplish stands at an impasse.

When rightly fashioned Lutherans who are unfamiliar with the condition of the Lutheran Church here or in Germany read a report like this, they must be astounded that Lutheran preachers in this country even need preachers in a Lutheran synod to state four reasons to remove such an un-Lutheran distribution formula. Further, they would find it inexplicable that this synod has made public this request’s content, yet didn’t immediately and decisively make an official accession to it, in order, without hesitation, to satisfy the request itself, not only to thus relieve the conscience of those making the request, but also to save themselves from giving the Church any appearance of being associated with such a thing or of not caring about it.

But it must be even more striking to every Lutheran to learn that this formula had not merely insinuated itself here and there, but it had even been given Churchly sanction in the foreword of an agenda, and, indeed, not only in ancient history from 1818 but even in the most recent, so-called Evangelical Lutheran Agenda of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and

surrounding states, which appeared in 1842 (Philadelphia, by J. Boettcher). It says therein, in the first holy Communion formula on page 173:

“At the distribution of the bread, the pastor says: Jesus said: Take and eat, this is my body, that is given for you, do this in remembrance of me. May it strengthen and preserve you in true faith unto life everlasting. At the giving of the cup he says: Jesus said: Take and drink of it all of you. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; may this strengthen, etc.”

Along with this, the remark is offered: “It also serves as a great encouragement, for comfort and for supporting this devotion when, at the conclusion of the distribution, the preacher adds an appropriate verse, passage or wish.”

As apparent as it is that the additions between and after the words of distribution are unchurchly and disturbing, what is left out of this foreword in the three formulas that followed is most striking, since not a single one of them is found to contain a legitimate one, which is to say, a formula that rises to the level of Christ’s Words of institution, and was, therefore, the usual formula used in the Lutheran Church for 300 years: Take and eat, this is the true body, etc.

But now whoever considers these four communion formulas more closely and tests them according to the pattern of wholesome doctrine will recognize with mounting astonishment an unbelievable degree of the leaven of false, that is, Reformed doctrine. But unfortunately, even the entire agenda is thoroughly leavened thereby. Indeed, it is issued as “Evangelical Lutheran,” but it is, in deed and truth, so little that as so many other recent agendas, for example, the Saxon, the Prussian, and others, and therefore it cannot be suffered in the conscience of a Lutheran any more than those others. For an agenda that so often and so clearly departs from the specific churchly ceremonies and practices of all of the ancient Lutheran agendas, an agenda that contains so many substantial falsifications of pure Lutheran doctrine in the most important articles of the same and so many of the errors rejected in the symbolic books, an agenda that so completely departs from the pattern of the ancient language of the Lutheran church in its terminology, and inserts such a dangerous mishmash of unbiblical, unchurchly, and all kinds of other contrary words and patterns of speech in their place, an agenda in which an intention is hidden to bring about a false union between Lutherans and the Reformed, especially with its Communion formulas, without saying it in so many words, an agenda whose formulas respect neither the ceremonies nor the doctrine, nor the language nor concerns for unionistic inventions, yes, that in many formulas in all these matters departs from the

example of the Lutheran Church – to declare such an agenda to be Lutheran, to accept it with universal acclaim, to use it for three whole years and to praise it publicly, and during that time never to raise the slightest objection to it, truly, this presupposes, sad to say, such deep blindness and self-deception, and is such an unacknowledged sign of the most profound fall of the Lutheran church, even in these Western lands, that any attempt to use words to describe it or to lament over it falls short.

This is all clearly highlighted by the fact that the intent of that letter of request, with all of its fine discernment, simply fell short of abolishing the un-Lutheran formula of distribution. Logically, it even will and must at the same time force them to abolish this formula at the Lord’s Supper and the entire un-Lutheran agenda itself, while also necessitating the production of a new and unfalsified agenda with all zeal and diligence. God also grant all who have had to take part in this business divine courage, good advice and appropriate deeds, but also grant those who have enjoyed the benefit of one of the ancient, pure agendas, and especially the undisturbed pure preaching of his Word, thankful hearts, by which they also serve him in pure faith by his grace!

E.G.W. Keyl,

Lutheran Pastor in Perry Co., Mo.

**Witnesses from the Last Century of Hopes
for a Lutheran Church in America People
Had, Even Then**

Dr. Fresenius says in the introduction to the 20th volume of his Pastoral Anthology, 1756, which contained reports from Lutheran congregations in New York, the following:

“Let us pray for a better planting and extension of the vineyard of God in America. Let us lend our aid in every way possible to supply his building. Let us bear in mind that perhaps this distant part of the world might become a haven of refuge and redemption for the few believers who are left when God visits European Christians with severe punishments for their great ingratitude.”

In Gera, in the year 1784, Diakonius Uhrlandt in his paper, *On the Signs of our Times*, says this after he had discussed the loss of true Christian doctrine:

“So as well founded as is this fear that has been caused by so many thousands of other circumstances which are there, and I am well aware of, but which I cannot possibly describe nor stress too greatly, yet we must not despair for the church of JESUS Christ itself. She shall and will remain, even if she must also rebuild herself outside of Europe, for the world is wide. And here too, as I have already

issued eight years ago in my publication, political conditions are more and more pointing to the possibility that now, all of a sudden, in the West an independent, Christian, free country (even with reports that we have received from the same, stating what they may with respect to the religious conditions prevailing there) is arising.

A Congregation's Instructions to her Preacher

After Luther's death, when the emperor had used every means to pressure Protestants, Melancthon, Bugenhagen and other theologians allowed themselves to be moved to write a document (called the Leipzig Interim), by which, for the sake of peace in electoral Saxony, at least a few papistic ceremonies should be received again. So when W. Pfentner, the Superintendent in Annaberg at the time, was obliged at Leipzig to once again rub consecrating salt on a child being baptized, to process banners and candles in the church, etc., he explained that he personally could not join in doing such a foolish thing and stated in addition: "Even if I were tempted to do so, the children of my parish won't have it. For they have stated in writing to me, and given me explicit orders, and they have therein asked me not to give consent to any godless articles, or else I shouldn't bother to return to them. So I would rather have my head chopped off in Leipzig and suffer that with a clear conscience than to annoy my dear congregation." Blessed the preacher who is deemed worthy to serve a congregation like that! – Besides that, the precious Melancthon later acknowledged that he was wrong for his false accessions for the sake of peace and wrote of it in 1556: "I confess that I failed in that matter, and had done wrong, and pray God's forgiveness, because I had not nimbly fled from all those cunning and clever assaults." That is, Melancthon perceived that these foes had not sought peace as they pretended, but, as always, suppression of the truth.

Salvation by Grace

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless!
 My heart believ'st thou this or not?
 Why tremblest thou with terror groundless?
 Has Scripture e'er a falsehood taught?
 Then this word also true must be:
 By grace there is a crown for thee.

By grace! Our works are all rejected,
 All claims of merit pass for naught;
 The mighty Savior, long expected,
 To us this blissful truth has brought,
 That he by death redeems our race

And we are saved alone by grace.

By grace! Mark well these words' true meaning.
 When thou dost sorrow sin-oppress.
 When Satan tempts with pride o'erweening,
 When troubled conscience sighs for rest.
 What reason cannot comprehend
 It pleases God by grace to send.

By grace His Son, on earth appearing,
 Vouchsafed beneath they woe to bend;
 Hadst thou, damnation justly fearing,
 Done aught to render Him thy Friend?
 Was't not that He thy welfare sought
 And but by grace deliverance wrought?

By grace! This ground of our salvation,
 As long as God is true, endures:
 What saints have penned by inspiration,
 What God by His own Word assures,
 What all our faith must rest upon,
 Is grace, free grace, through his dear Son.

By grace! But think not, thou who livest
 Securely on in godless ways,
 That thou – though all are called – receivest
 The promised rest that wakes our praise.
 By grace none find in heaven a place
 Who live in sin in hope of grace.

By grace! They who have heard this sentence
 Must all hypocrisy forego;
 For only after deep repentance
 Can any soul his treasure know;
 To sin free grace a trifle seems,
 To faith it bright with glory beams.

By grace the timid hearts that languish
 Find access to the Father's heart,
 When conflicts fierce and bitter anguish
 Bid all their joy and hopes depart.
 Where oft-times should I strength obtain,
 Did grace my anchor not remain!

By grace! On this in death I'll rest me,
 Rejoicing e'en though feeling naught;
 I know my sin, – oft it oppressed me, –
 But Him, too, who salvation brought.
 My heart exults, grief flees a pace,
 Because my soul is saved by grace.

By grace! May sin and Satan hearken!
 I bear my flag of faith in hand
 And pass – for doubts my joy can't darken –
 The Red Sea to the Promised Land.
 I cling to what my Savior taught
 And trust it, whether felt or not.
 C.L. Scheidt, tr. M. Loy

Christian Composure

As A. Tillemann, a Lutheran knife smith who was a famous patron of the poor, would

be burned to death in the Winter of the year 1541 in Brussels for the sake of his Lutheran faith, he asked about the huge fire stand that had been built for his execution: "Why did you pile up so much wood to consume my miserable body in fire when there are so many poor, dear people who are freezing?" – compare to Mt. 9.13.

Something for Mr. Oertel

Before we can take up Mr. O's scruples about the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, we would pray the same pleasant exception he made for the decree of Pope Gregory III. *Cap. Quod proposuisti* 32. Q.7. *Tom. 2. Concil. P.* 441. Cf. *Gerbl.L. The Art. De conj. P.* 203.

If, besides that, Mr. O. wants to make his reader believe by his clever presentation that Funk and Krell had been executed as heretics or because of heresy, then this is just one of those untruths with which his *Friend of the Truth* is so richly sown. For that first man was, according to his verdict, a lord paramount of the royal Polish commission and the latter, according to the memoirs of an appeals judge in Prague was beheaded for high treason. So we aren't sure if we can excuse his presentation as being the result of ignorance when Mr. O. indeed names Wolfgang Menzel as his authority, and yet naively admits that he obviously "is negligent in many points, because he is not objective – yet concerning the Lutheran situation in Germany he seems to draw the right conclusion."

Receipts

Having paid for the first half year of *The Lutheran*: C. Alt, J. Beck, H. Drenckhahn, N. Frahs, G. Huch, J. Horn, G. Henfling, Husmann, Heiner, Just, Kaempfe, Kleinschmidt, S. Koch, W. Kautz, Preiss, Rosswage, Dr. Sihler (2), F. Straub, Windecker.

Having paid for the whole year: Brandt, Pastor Buerger, Pastor Ernst (3), Gruenhagen, Gerding, Pastor Meissner, Th. Schieferdecker, Pastor Wege (6), Pastor Wyneken (2), Professor Winkler, Hoeckendorf (2).

To Cincinnati: We have regularly sent *The Lutheran* to the offices of "Apologetics" and "Friend of the Truth" from the beginning.

The Lutheran is always available at the homes of our general agent, Mr. Graeber (South fifth Street, across from the oil mill), also of Mr. Quast (Olive Street, between 2nd and 3rd below the theater) and of the publisher.
