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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

## ART. IV.—SERVICES IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

**D**URING last summer it was our good fortune to spend a Sunday in Nienburg-on-the-Weser, in the province of Hanover. Nienburg is a small country town of about twelve thousand people. There were only two places of worship open to us: we must go either to the Roman Catholic Church or to the Lutheran. There was no division in our party: we were unanimous in choosing the Lutheran Church. We were the more ready to go because we remembered reading some interesting articles in the *Guardian* about the Lutheran Church in Norway. That first visit interested us so much that even when we went to places where more choice was afforded us, we still attended the Lutheran Church.

The churches, as buildings, first claim our attention. Those we saw were very much larger than our ordinary parish churches. There was certainly a need for this, for in many of the towns and cities there is but one church. Often a large rural district is served by the one church in the town. Some of the newer churches are very fine buildings, while the older ones in the country towns cannot fail to recall to one's mind the parish churches of England.

Inside the church, the attention is at once drawn to the altar (this is their own word). Now there cannot be the least question that in Northern Germany the great majority of the people are thoroughly Protestant. A convincing proof of this is seen in the number of statues of Luther, Melancthon, and Gustavus Adolphus in most of the towns which we visited. This was also confirmed by the people with whom we conversed on this subject. Yet there are many things in their churches which those who belong to the Reformation school of thought in our Church are inclined to think of, either as exclusively Popish, or at least the thin end of the wedge of Romanism. On every altar stood a crucifix, some of them very costly and beautiful. There was also a carved representation of the Agnus Dei. There are on the altar candles, which are lighted during the time of divine service. There were also in many of the churches carved figures and paintings of the Apostles and other saints forming a reredos at the back of the altar.

The pulpit would next attract our notice. All those we saw were beautifully carved, and, from the care which is taken of them, it would be a fair deduction to say that preaching holds a high place in the estimation of German Lutherans. The font is not placed near the door of the church as with us, but stands in the chancel. A word must also be said about

the organs in Lutheran churches. The Germans are noted for their congregational singing, and it was quite evident that no expense was spared to get both large and good organs. The choirs of the churches we attended were large, and men, women, and children were utilized for this service. Their position was in the west gallery in front of the organ. In spite of the large choirs (or perhaps we ought to say, because of them) the singing was thoroughly congregational, though most of the tunes were by no means easy. We certainly might learn from the Lutherans in the matter of hearty congregational, and yet tuneful, singing.

The congregations varied in point of numbers, as they do with us. In the fashionable suburban churches of Berlin it was difficult to get even standing room. In Nienburg there was a very fair congregation. But we were surprised everywhere at the enormous preponderance of women. The men do not attend church, and, so far as we could see and hear (and we made many diligent inquiries), the same must be said of all parts of Northern Germany. One of the explanations we heard is that, just as our Church passed through a rationalistic period at the end of last century, so the Lutheran Church is now having to contend against similar rationalistic forces, and consequently the men are not attending the services. It seems to us that, so far as Northern Germany is concerned, it will not do to claim any superiority for the Lutheran Church over the Roman Catholic in attracting men, at least at the present time. We do hope, however, that a change may quickly come, and that the men may once more be drawn to church. There is a small portion of the church reserved for women who may care to sit apart, but there is nothing like the separation of the sexes, which seems to be a practice peculiar to the more advanced of the Sacerdotalists in our Church.

It seems strange that though the Lutherans use the word "altar," yet neither do the people call their ministers anything but "pastor," nor do the pastors desire to be called priests. When officiating in church, the pastor wears a black robe, also using white bands. He would recall to one's mind a minister of the Scotch Presbyterian Church.

The service—there is only one, excepting a short catechizing in the afternoon for children, which seems to take the place of our Sunday-schools—began at ten o'clock with a hymn, sung sitting. When the pastor had given out the hymn he retired to the vestry, and did not come into church till we had reached the last verse. This happened each time a hymn was sung. To us this leaving the congregation seemed a strange proceeding, but it was evidently the custom. When

this hymn was finished, the Gloria Patri was sung, after which came the Kyrie, "Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us," also sung. Then followed the "Gloria in Excelsis," set to very beautiful music. Just before the collect for the day came the salutation, "The Lord be with you"; and the answer, "And with thy Spirit." After the collect came the Epistle. There is a rubric here which directs the pastor to read an appointed lesson from the Epistles in place of the Epistle for the day, if he is going to preach from the latter. Whenever Holy Scripture is read, whether it be Epistle, Gospel, or text, the people all stand—this is to show their reverence for God's Holy Word. The response made by the congregation when the Epistle is finished is a threefold "Hallelujah," sung. The Gospel was then read; and again there is a rubric which directs the pastor to read an appointed lesson from the Gospels, if he is preaching from the Gospel for the day. When the Gospel was finished, the people replied, "We love Thee, O Christ." Here it may be just as well to note that in the Lutheran Church there is nothing like the same quantity of Holy Scripture read in the public service as in our own Church. If the pastor chooses to preach from other parts of the Bible, the people only hear the Epistle and Gospel Sunday after Sunday. There is no provision made for reading the Old Testament, unless some portion of it happens to be taken for the text. This seems to us a great lack, for one can hardly suppose that it is fully compensated for in the private reading of the people. When the response, "We love Thee, O Christ," had been made, the Apostles' Creed was recited by pastor and people. On certain occasions the Nicene Creed takes the place of the Apostles' Creed. A threefold "Amen" is sung by the congregation at the end of the Creed.

When the Creed was finished, the pastor gave out another hymn, during the singing of which the offertory was collected. The bags were placed at the end of rods about six feet long; and there was a small bell attached to each bag, so that there was a continual tinkling going on. The offertory was not presented as our alms are, but was taken by the collectors to the back of the altar. Meanwhile the pastor had gone up into the pulpit and gave the salutation, "Peace be with you all." The text was then given out, the people all standing. The sermons we heard all exceeded half an hour in length, and appeared to be delivered without the aid of any notes. Supposing that the sermons we listened to were average sermons, then there can be no doubt that the preaching in the Lutheran Church is better than in our Church. Those sermons we heard were plain and simple, yet direct in their

teaching, and delivered with real force and eloquence. Yet, as we have pointed out already, they fail to attract the men. When the sermon was concluded, the pastor offered up prayer from the pulpit. Then came the notices and the bans of marriage, which also were read out from the pulpit. The pastor next gave the benediction, using the sign of the cross. The service was not yet concluded, for the pastor came down from the pulpit and went to the altar, the people all standing. At the altar he took the eastward position while saying the closing prayers. The pastor is directed to close the ordinary service in one of two ways: (1) He prays for the Church, then he gives thanks, "Our Father," then the closing benediction, followed by a hymn; or (2) he uses the salutation, "Peace be with you," then follows the hymn, next the prayer for the Church, and finally "Our Father." It is left to the pastor's discretion whether he chooses (1) or (2), but in one of these ways the service comes to an end. It may be that these final prayers are extempore; there are only these directions in the Prayer-Book, though, of course, the prayers themselves may be found in some other service book.

This is the ordinary Sunday service; if there is to be a celebration of the Holy Communion, it follows immediately after the ordinary service. We made inquiries, and found that the celebration usually takes place once a month. While in Berlin we had an opportunity of attending the service (a translation of which will be found at the end of this paper). For the ordinary service the church was crowded to excess, so that there was not even standing room. The communicants, however, did not number more than thirty. This may seem almost incredible, yet none the less it is true. Considering the great pains that are taken by the pastors in the preparation for confirmation and first Communion, it seems almost unaccountable. There is, however, a strong prejudice against communicating, except at the first Communion, unless, as one we asked put it to us, "you want to be very pious, or you feel you have not long to live." This, however, does not seem altogether adequate to explain the almost universal neglect of our Lord's command. It certainly is not explained by the habit of non-communicating attendance, for we were the only non-communicants present; nor can it be accounted for by too frequent celebrations, as usually there is only one a month, and it certainly is not the desire or wish of the pastors. During the celebration the pastor took the eastward position, and lights were burning on the altar. The pastor, instead of delivering the elements into the hands of the communicants, placed them in the mouth, although the words of delivery are,

“Take and eat”; “Take and drink.” It will be seen that the service is much shorter than our own.

Reviewing both services, it must be acknowledged that the services are bright, with plenty of singing; the preaching was good, and yet one came away on the whole dissatisfied. Perhaps this may be accounted for in some measure by the lack of prayer and supplication. This part of worship occupies a very subordinate position when compared with the service of praise. The prayers are few in number, and did not seem to touch the complex wants and needs of our manifold nature. We did not at all wonder that those who had some acquaintance with our Book of Common Prayer praised it highly. We were told more than once how highly we ought to value our Prayer-Book; and we came away more than ever convinced that we English Churchmen have in that book a priceless heritage, for it gives us not only words for praise, but also for prayer and supplication, and both in due proportion.

Translation :

#### CELEBRATION OF LORD'S SUPPER.

Song of the congregation or of the church choir :

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a confident spirit within me; lose me not from Thy sight, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

During the song the Communicants advance to the front of the altar.

*Pastor.* The Lord be with you.

*Congregation.* And with Thy Spirit.

*P.* Lift up your hearts.

*C.* We lift them up unto the Lord.

*P.* Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

*C.* It is meet and right so to do.

*P.* It is meet and right, reasonable and wholesome, that we should at all times and for all things give thanks unto Thee, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Everlasting God, through Christ our Lord, through Whom the Angels laud, the Lordships worship, the Powers fear, heaven and all the powers of heaven, together with the blessed Seraphim, with unanimous shout praise Thy Majesty. With them let us also join our voices, and worshipping, say to Thee :

Holy, Holy, Holy is God the Lord of Hosts. All lands are full of Thy Glory, Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the Highest.

*Pastor* reads the Exhortation :

My beloved in the Lord, he that will worthily eat and drink this Holy Sacrament must do two things : he must believe what Christ says, and do what He bids. He says, This is My body, which is given for you ; this is My blood, which is shed for you for remission of sins. This must you believe. But He bids Take, eat, and drink ye all thereof, and think of Me. This must you do according to His gracious Word and ordinance. But that the Almighty God and Merciful Father will richly bestow upon us His Holy Spirit, in order that we may apply ourselves to these two things from the bottom of our hearts, and also worthily receive the Holy Sacrament to the strengthening of our weak faith and bettering of our

sinful life, we will therefore call upon Him, and in the name of Christ pray from the bottom of our heart a devout Paternoster.

The Lord's Prayer without doxology follows.

*Congregation.* Amen.

*Pastor.* Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed took [the] bread, gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said : Take and eat ; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

Likewise He took also the cup after supper, gave thanks, gave it to them, and said : Drink ye all of it ; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me.

Then follows the distribution of the elements with the words :

Take and eat ; this is the body of Christ which is given for thee. May it strengthen and preserve thee unto eternal life. Amen.

Take and drink ; this is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for thy sins. May it strengthen and preserve thee unto eternal life. Amen.

*Conclusion :*

*Pastor.* Thank the Lord, for He is kind. Hallelujah !

*Congregation.* And His goodness endureth for ever. Hallelujah !

*Pastor* prays the collect :

We thank Thee, Almighty Lord God, that Thou hast quickened us through this wholesome gift, and we beseech Thy mercy that Thou mayest allow us so to thrive in strong faith towards Thee, and fervent love among ourselves, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Congregation.* Amen.

*Pastor* gives the Benediction.

*Congregation.* Amen.

I desire to express my obligations to the Rev. Superintendent Lührs, of Nienburg, for much information, also to the Rev. A. S. Thomson, M.A.

L. DEWHURST.

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#### ART. V.—WORLDLINESS.

GOD originally made the world very good. There is nothing but what is excellent in its wonderful beauty, nothing but what is admirable in its riches and possibilities. The various forms of human society which exist upon it are capable of being right, true, and useful. All the operations and creations of men in every branch of science and art may be carried on to the glory of God. Besides rejoicing in the works of nature which He caused to proceed stage by stage towards perfection, we are told that even the human race, with all its crimes, sins, and follies, was not an object of distaste to the Almighty Spirit of Good ; rather, He caused His Divine Presence to appear in human form for the rescue of the sinful inhabitants which He had placed on this little globe : God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.