# THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY BAPTISM is a doctrine that has brought out clearly for many of our contemporaries the difference between the confessions that go back to the period of the Reformation.

It is true that, in addition to the controversy about the Lord's Supper, there was even in the 16th century a lively, highly informative debate on the subject of baptism, especially at the Moempelgard Colloquium between Andreae and Beza. However, since both the Lutherans and the Reformed maintained and defended the practice of infant baptism over against the Anabaptists, the radical difference between the confessions regarding the meaning of this particular means of grace was not sufficiently noted at that time.

It is Karl Barth who deserves the credit for having clearly pointed out what to him is "a wound in the body of the Church" (Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe," Theol. Existenz Heute, new series 4, 1947). And although his demand that the Reformed churches revise their doctrine and practice of baptism has met with determined resistance, the question still remains whether Barth in this respect has not been more Reformed than the Reformed, whether he has not seen more clearly than any Reformed theologian before him certain inconsistencies of Zwingli and Calvin which resulted from their opposition to the Anabaptists of the 16th century.

The need of concerning ourselves about the meaning of Baptism and about Barth's objections to infant baptism is brought home to us Lutherans by the fact that disciples of Karl Barth have attempted to read his doctrine of Baptism into the Augsburg Confession, and that even in the Lutheran dogmatics of our day a considerable uncertainty may be observed regarding the rationale of infant baptism and thus concerning the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism in general.

## I

## Baptism a Sacrament

Any discussion of the Sacrament of Baptism must begin with the fact that Baptism is a sacrament, a means of grace in the strict sense, and not merely a more or less beautiful, more or less justifiable usage of the Church, like, let us say, confirmation, or the marriage rite, or the funeral service. This at once makes all arguments irrelevant that are based on the view that Baptism is a symbolical act, a symbol, perhaps, of the gratia praeveniens that precedes all human action, or a symbol of the "community church" as distinguished from what Troeltsch has called the "sect" in the sense of a second type of church that has grown out of the radical, anabaptistic movement of the Reformation period. (Translator's Note. --The term "community church" is to be taken here in the sense of the German Volkskirche, not of our well known American community churches. P.H.B.)

Today it is customary to say "free church" instead of "sect", and it is claimed that a surrender of infant baptism must inevitably result in the dissolution of the community church in favor of the free church. But disregarding the fact that all free churches except the Baptists practice infant baptism, certainly the very serious dogmatical question must be raised, whether the Sacrament of Baptism can be used as a means for preserving the community church, if infant baptism cannot be justified dogmatically. As distinguished from the concept of baptism, which has been a part of Christian dogmatics since the days of the days of the apostles, the concept of the community church is a concept of religious sociology, barely a hundred years old, theologically legitimate, coined (as far as we know) by Johann Hinrich Wichern, at any rate popularized by him. The theological nonsense of this concept, which

no educated theologian should ever use, becomes clear from the constantly repeated statement that one becomes a member of the free church by a conscious act of the will, while one is "born into" the community church. One never becomes a member of the church by a resolution of the will or by birth --the latter is true only of certain state churches like Zurich, the prototype of the community church since the days of Zwingli, where today one can exercise all the rights of a church member except the strictly spiritual without even being baptized. According to the testimony of the New Testament (1 Cor 12,13) one becomes a member of the Church by baptism. And the only theologically legitimate question, which also determines the right or wrong of infant baptism, is, Who may be baptized: those only who can confess their faith in Jesus Christ, i.e. adults and older children who are able to do so, or also minor children, infantes in the strict sense?

## II
## The Early Church

So the question of infant baptism is a theological question, not merely one of practical sociology. Neither is it a question that is to be answered from history. Thomas Aquinas (S.Th.,III Quaestio, 68:9) meets the objection that intention and faith are necessary for baptism with a quotation from the last chapter of the "Heavenly Hierarchy" of Dionysius Areopagita, according to which the apostles approved the baptism of infants. But that is, to say the least, a tradition that cannot be checked.

However, Joachim Jeremias (Hat die Aelteste Christenheit die Kindertaufe Geuebt? 1938) and W. F. Flemington (The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, 1948) have advanced a mass of weighty arguments showing the probability that infant baptism, which is first mentioned expressis verbis by Irenaeus (ca. 185), goes back to the apostolic age, where it was practiced following the pattern of the Jewish baptism of proselytes, which as is well know was administered not only to adults but, in cases where entire families were admitted, to all the members of a household, including the children. The well known examples of Lydia, the seller of purple, and of the jailer at Philippi (Acts 16) who were baptized together with all those in their households after they themselves had come to faith, come to mind here.

When Polycarp at the trial preceding his martyrdom testifies that he has been serving the Lord for 86 years (Mart.Pol.,9), the reference can only be to his membership in the church. Accordingly, his baptism must have taken place in the apostolic age, even prior to the year 70. The statement of Justin (Apol. 1:15) that at that time there were many Christians 60 and 70 years old who from the days of their childhood ematheusanto to Christo can refer only to members of the church who were baptized as children during the period between 80 and 90 A.D. We have already mentioned Irenaeus. He testifies that Christ came to save all, "all who by Him are regenerated unto God; babes (infantes) little children, boys, youths and men" (Adv.Haer., II,22:4). In the Church Order of his disciple Hippolytus the baptism of little children is mentioned in so many words. They are to be baptized before the adults and their parents or some relative are to take their places at the "Amen" and confession of faith by speaking vicariously for them.

When Tertullian in his Treatise on Baptism directs his polemics against the custom of infant baptism, he certainly is not attacking it as an innovation; even as later on Pelagius in his battle against Augustine's doctrine of original sin had to admit the argument that, after all, infants were baptized too; at least he does not deny the fact. Likewise Origen and Cyprian presuppose the baptism of infants; the former in the claim later transmitted to the Middle Ages by Dionysius Areopagita that the baptism of infants goes back to a tradition given

by the Lord to His apostles (Commentary on Romans 5:9); Cyprian in the well known instruction given to Bishop Fidus (Ep.64) not to defer baptism to the eighth day analogous to circumcision. Jeremias is right when he claims that a later introduction of infant baptism would have stirred up a great excitement and thus have left definite traces in the history of the Church. The results of church-historical investigation rather indicate that in the ancient Church, precisely as in our modern mission fields, both forms of baptism, adult and infant, have always existed side by side. If that is true, then infant baptism must go back to the apostolic age. The baptism of children must then be included in the baptism of entire families, of which we have examples in the New Testament, even though the children are not specifically mentioned.

## III
## A Theological Question

It is obvious from the above that the historical question whether the Church of the apostolic age knew and practiced infant baptism must be answered in the affirmative with a very high degree of probability. But that fact in no wise decides the theological question concerning the right of infant baptism. After all, the church of Corinth in the days of the apostle Paul practiced a vicarious baptism for the dead. It is possible, therefore, that we are dealing here with a very ancient abuse. Theologically infant baptism can be grounded only on Scripture evidence which proves it to be a legitimate form of baptism.

The argument against infant baptism formerly raised by the Anabaptists and today by Karl Barth is that the essence of the Sacrament of Baptism includes "the responsible willingness and readiness of the person to be baptized" to receive the divine promise and to accept the divine obligation (Barth, op.cit., p.23). In an essay in the Berlin religious weekly, Die Kirche, some time ago, a disciple of Barth attempted to prove the correctness of this view by a reference to the story of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) where, as he maintained, not only an expression of the will of the candidate preceded his baptism but also his confession of faith as a condition for receiving it. Unfortunately that theologian had overlooked the fact that verse 37 with its solicitation of a confession of faith and the making of that confession is an ancient addition to the original text, as is shown by a study of the manuscripts. The oldest and best manuscripts do not have it and thus confirm the fact that in the primitive Church (cf. Acts 2,41) baptism was sometimes administered without a spoken Credo.

So the question is, What is Baptism according to the testimony of the New Testament? What does it give or profit? What is the relation of Baptism to the faith of the baptismal candidate? Is it necessary for salvation or not? Our first answer must be that acc. to the clear teaching of the New Testament Baptism is "the washing of regeneration." The ancient Church, which always actually identified Baptism and regeneration, and the Church of all times with the exception of the Reformed denominations, have understood Titus 3:5 in this sense, and rightly so. There Baptism is said to be"the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

In Baptism the Holy Ghost is communicated; we are "all baptized into the one body" (1 Cor 12,13). Those who are baptized have been baptized into Christ's death (Rom.6,3). These are all realities that take place, not alongside of Baptism but in Baptism. In the New Testament, Baptism with water, inasmuch as it is a Baptism into Christ, into the name of Christ, is Baptism with the Spirit, it is a being born anew and at the same time from above "of water and of the Spirit"(Jn3,5). Certainly the New Testament knows of no regeneration without Baptism and independent of Baptism. Baptism, therefore, is not a sign but a

but a means of regeneration. To take it only as a sign of a regeneration that also takes place without it and independently of it is unbiblical.

The Reformed Church in its doctrine of Baptism, precisely as in its doctrine of the Lord's Supper, on the one hand rejects the pure symbolism of Zwingli, as though Baptism were nothing but an "ostensible" sign of the Christian profession like the white cross which the confederate attaches to his garment in order to show that he is a confederate; but on the other hand it also rejects both the opus operatum of the Roman sacramental doctrine and the Lutheran and New Testament identification of sign and substance.

Why does it do this? In the final analysis, it is because of the aversion of Calvin and his medieval theological predecessors to the view that an external, physical act can evoke spiritual effects like the forgiveness of sins. But this is, in the first place, a philosophical prejudice, and in the second place it is a misunderstanding of the significance of the Word of God in Baptism. "For without the Word of God the water is simply water and no Baptism; but with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is,a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration." Even in Catholic doctrine the Word as forma is inseparably united with the sacrament; as Augustine's famous dictum, quoted over and over again by all occidental churches, puts it: Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum.

That which separates Luther from the Catholic doctrine of Baptism is best stated in his own words in the Smalcald Articles, where he draws the line between himself and Thomism as well as Scotism at the same time. "Therefore we do not hold with Thomas and the monastic preachers or Dominicans, who forget the Word and say that God has imparted to the water a spiritual power which, through the water, washes away sin. Nor do we agree with Scotus and the Barefoot Monks who teach that by the assistance of the divine will Baptism washes away sins, and that this ablution occurs only through the will of God and by no means through the Word and water." For Luther, everything depends on the close connection of water and the Word: "God, however, is a God of life. Now, because He is in this water, it must be the true aqua vitae that expels death and hell and quickens forever (WA 52,102:9). But that this presence of God or Christ cannot be any other presence than that in His Word will not need to be proved, we trust, in the case of Luther. All effects of Baptism, in the view of Luther and the Lutheran Church, are effects brought about by the Word connected with the water.

Consequently the Reformed objection to the Lutheran interpretation of Baptism is none other than the objection to the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace in general. That God gives His Spirit, and with Him forgiveness of sin, life and salvation, to no one without the external means of His grace, without the external Word, without Baptism, without the Lord's Supper: that is the point against which the objection is directed. "The power of Jesus Christ, which is the only power of Baptism, is not bound to the execution of baptism."(Barth, op.cit,p.14f). A favorite distinction made by the older Reformed theologians was the one between external baptism by water and internal baptism by the Holy Spirit and the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth us from all sin. The reception of both, they said, does not always coincide; it is possible to have the one without the other. Whether an individual receives the Spirit and Blood baptism together with the water baptism depends upon whether he is one of the predestined or not. This point of view also accounts for the objection to emergency baptism which has been raised again and again since Calvin, especially against the Weibertaufe (baptism by women, midwives). Even so late a document as the Union Constitution of the Palatinate contains the sentence: "The Protestant Evangelical Christian Church of the Palatinate does not recognize emergency baptism"(E.F.K.Mueller.Bekenntnisschriften der Ev.Ref.Kirche

After all (they say) Baptism cannot give man anything he would not have without Baptism. Salvation and damnation do not in any sense depend upon Baptism, but only upon the question whether a man has been predestinated unto salvation or not. That is classic Reformed doctrine. And even where, as in the school of Barth, the old predestination doctrine has been softened up or surrendered, the conclusion still stands: Baptism has been instituted by Christ --Calvin agrees with Luther and the universal tradition of the eastern and western churches that the institution is identical with the baptism of Jesus-- hence it must also be practiced as an ordinance of Christ, but it is not necessary for salvation. According to Karl Barth (op.cit.,p.15), one can only speak of a necessitas praecepti, never of a necessitas medii.

## IV.
## Baptism and Faith

When, over against this view, the Lutheran Church maintains the necessitas medii, the character of Baptism as a means of grace in the strict sense, it does not of course contradict the ancient Catholic dictum: Deus non alligatur sacramentis suis (God is not bound to His sacraments). Our Church has never denied that God has still other ways of saving men; the writings of Luther and the Old Lutherans concerning the fate of children who die unbaptized prove that. What we must guard against is the tearing asunder of Spirit and Word, of external and internal baptism. It is the water baptism inseparably connected with God's Word of which Luther sings;

Blind sense but water sees, and spurns:
"Pray, how can water save us?"
Faith marks the Word, and well discerns
Christ's merits that here lave us;
Faith sees this cleansing fountain red
With the dear blood of Jesus,
Which both from sin inherited
From fallen Adam frees us,
And sins we have committed.
(Richard Massie's translation).

And as for the relationship of the miracle of regeneration wrought in Baptism to the fact that some who have been baptized are lost, that question belongs to the secrets of divine predestination concerning which nothing has been revealed to us in the Gospel, but which, as Luther explains toward the end of his De Servo Arbitro, we shall fully understand in the light of glory. We simply hold to the Gospel and to the promises attached to Baptism in the Gospel, when we confess concerning Baptism as the washing of regeneration: "It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promises of God declare."

But what about the faith of the person to be baptized? As we raise this question, we touch the very heart and core of the Reformed objection to the Lutheran doctrine of Baptism, an objection which had its parallel in the Reformed world a century ago in the so-called Gorham controversy in England, when the denial of baptismal regeneration on the part of the Evangelicals so deeply disturbed the Church of England. For one who stands on the ground of infant baptism, the following alternative seems inescapable. Either there is such a thing as forgiveness of sins and regeneration unto eternal life in Baptism, even without the personal faith of the individual baptized or his personal confession (that is the answer of the Catholic Church, which lets the faith of the Church take the place of that of the infant that is to be baptized); or forgiveness of sins and regeneration are separated from the act of baptism--which in turn leads to several practical observations.

It is possible, then, to retain infant baptism, as most of the Reformed do, by taking a stand on Col 2:11 and viewing it as the New Testament sign of the covenant analogous to the Old Testament sign of circumcision. Or, on the other hand, following the example of the Anabaptists of the Reformation period and of the modern "congregations of Christians baptized as believers," one can discard infant baptism entirely. Or, again, one can follow Karl Barth along the middle way between these two possibilities and consider infant baptism as valid indeed but nevertheless as a practice that rests upon false or erroneous presuppositions connected with the idea of the community church, and that should therefore be revised. That Barth himself in the meantime has probably come to see that none of the great Reformed churches is inclined to take his advice and give up a custom that has been so firmly established since Zwingli and Calvin, is a matter which we need not discuss here.

But on the periphery the question might be raised whether the principles and practice of the Baptists are not after all the most consistent application of the Reformed doctrine of Baptism, and whether the retention of infant baptism in the Reformed Church is not to be accounted for as a compromise with the force of a tradition of 1500 years and with the opposition to the enthusiasts of the 16th century. For despite Col.2:11 Baptism cannot be taken as a counterpart to circumcision because circumcision lacks the very thing that makes Baptism a Baptism. They are at least as different from each other as the Old Covenant is from the New, or as the Israel of the flesh is from the Israel of the spirit. If this parallel is insisted upon, Baptism can never be anything else than a symbol of grace. Then it can never ben a means of grace in the strict sense, despite every effort of the Reformed to retain this concept of Baptism.

Here too, as elsewhere, Luther walked his lonely way between Rome and the enthusiasts. Over against the latter, among whom he also counted Zwingli and his adherents, and would have counted the Calvinists had he lived to know them, Luther held firmly to the Sacrament of Baptism with all that belongs to it: infant baptism, necessity for salvation, regeneration. Over against Rome he held with equal firmness to the sola fide: it is only through faith that we receive forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Just as in the sacrament of the altar only he receives forgiveness of sins and with it life and salvation who believes "these words" (viz., the promise, "Given and shed for the remission of sins"), so it is also true of Baptism: "It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe it as the words and promises of God declare." And he is not talking here about a future faith which is then confessed in the rite of confirmation as though the latter were a necessary complement of Baptism.

Bucer, who was the first to introduce pietistic notions into the Church, carried an un-Lutheran element into confirmation (in itself a proper rite), which had its roots not in Biblical ideas but in a sociological concept of the Church, and which came to maturity in the age of pietism and rationalism. It is a significant fact that in the 18th century confirmation was never introduced in Wittenberg, where the First Communion was deemed sufficient, but it was introduced in the synagogue. At that time it seemed impossible to conceive of the Church as anything else but a "society", a "religious association" which/joined by an act of the will. For Luther, on the other hand, the faith of which we speak in connection with infant baptism is not the future faith to be produced by Christian education; neither is it a kind of germ-faith implanted in Baptism as many 19th century Lutherans thought; but it is the faith, a faith with which children come to Baptism precisely the the same as adults (es ist der Glaube, mit dem die Kinder zur Taufe

kommen genau wie die Erwachsenen), with only this difference that in children it is not yet a conscious faith which they themselves can confess.

In his Large Catechism Luther quite properly called attention to the fact that even the faith of the adult never suffices as a ground for baptism. "For I myself also, and all who are baptized, must speak thus before God: 'I come in my faith and in that of others, yet I cannot rest in this, viz, that I believe, and that many people pray for me; but in this I can rest that it is Thy Word and commandment. Just as I receive the Lord's Supper, trusting not in my faith but in the Word of Christ....' Thus we do also in infant baptism. We bring the child in the purpose and hope that it may believe (das Kind tragen wir herzu der Meinung und Hoffnung, dass es glaeube, und bitten), and we pray that God may grant it faith: but we do not baptize it upon that, but solely upon the command of God" (Jacob's translation). And the reason for this, he says, is that all men may err and deceive, but God, who has given the command to baptize, cannot err.

But that God by His Holy Spirit can also give faith to a child, the same as to an adult, no one can deny who remembers how Jesus blessed the little children and set a child before His disciples as an example. In fact, when you examine it closely, even the most heroic faith, even the faith of an Athanasius and a Luther is no more than the faith of a little child.

Or when would you say that faith begins on the basis of which we should venture to baptize? Perhaps at the present age of confirmation? Or in little children when they can confess with the mouth, as Thomas Muenzer of old would have it? Why, it would be the equivalent of turning the miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit into a psychologically perceptible fact, if any attempt were made here to fix a time limit for the working of the Spirit.

Here, too, Luther goes his lonely way between Rome xxx with its hierarchical and the enthusiasts with their psychological sanctions--the lonely way of the Reformer who heeds only the Word of God and trusts that this Word can do all things, even the humanly impossible. In this way, and only in this way, has Luther and the Lutheran Church after him been able to hold both the objectivity of the sacrament and the sola fide, not forgetting that justifying faith is not a matter of a single moment but the content of an entire human life. For this faith certainly is not the individual act of surrender to God, consciously felt and experienced at certain moments of our life, but it is the continuing trust---though overshadowed again and again--in the Gospel promise of grace; just as repentance according to the evangelical conception xxxx is not a single act but something that goes on continually throughout our life. So too our baptism is not a finished act but it goes with us throughout our life. To be a Christian does not mean simply to have been baptized sometime in the past, but it means to live in the power of Baptism and to return to it again and again.

As is well known, our Small Catechism answers the question, "What does such baptizing with water signify?" by saying: "It signifies that the old Adam in us, by daily contrition and repentance should be drowned and die, with all sins and evil lusts, and that a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live in righteousness and purity before God forever." Just as we who are sinners and righteous at the same time live by daily contrituion and repentance and by daily forgiveness of sins, so too our dying and rising again with Christ, that real though incomprehensible anticipation of an eschatological event which takes place in Baptism, is something that determines our entire life

This, over against Rome and against the enthusiasts, was Luther's understanding of Baptism and of the faith that accepts Baptism. We embrace it not only at one given moment, whether it be at the moment we are baptized or at the moment of confirmation or any other given moment of our life that might be named, but we embrace it or should embrace it throughout our entire life, every day anew. This is the reason why Luther recognized no additional sacrament to supplement Baptism, whether it be confirmation or repentance, which would be anything else but a return to Baptism.

## V
## Conclusion

From this point of view the question of infant vs. adult baptism becomes theologically irrelevant, important as it is for churchly practice. This explains, too, why that question cuts no figure either in the New Testament or in Luther. Aside from the fact that adult candidates for baptism voice their assent and confess their faith personally, Baptism has always been administered in the Church "just as though" the persons to be baptized themselves desire Baptism and believe that which is spoken in the baptismal confession of faith. This practice must not be accounted for on the basis of liturgical traditionalism and ecclesiastical conservatism, but it belongs to the very essence of the rite. We baptize infants "just as though" they were adults, even as we adults believe "just as though" we were infants. Whatever the difference between adults and infants may signify for us humans and for our estimate of a man, for God it signifies nothing. A human being is a human being, is a child of Adam or a child of God, without regard to his age. That is the deeper reason why all baptismal rituals treat the infant "just as though" it were grown up. Only the Nestorian and the Reformed Churches have produced special rituals for infant baptism.

And down to the time of Calvin this, too, was a part of the act of Baptism that it did not take place in the presence of the assembled congregation. In the primitive Church those who wished to be baptized received the sacrament outside of the space used for worship, while the congregation was assembled there to engage in intercessory prayer for the candidates. This arrangement was not merely one of propriety, for the Baptists immerse their candidates in full view of the congregation. The baptisterium, whether it was a fully developed baptismal chapel or a simple baptismal font, in earliest times always had its place in front of the entrance to the church. It is more interesting to observe that the same Calvin who, as we believe, destroyed the dogmatic content of Baptism, moved this sacrament out of the area of privacy and individuality, out of the outer court, as it were, into the sanctuary of the assembled congregation. He probably got his idea for this, as for so many other changes, from Bucer in Strasbourg, who very likely is also responsible for the corresponding rubric in the Hesse church order of 1539, which in turn reappears in later Reformed church orders like that of the Palatinate of 1563 and Betheim of 1588. There is an internal connection here with the rule that the Reformed Church reserves the administration of Baptism to the clergy and prohibits emergency baptism by laymen or even women, whereas we find that precisely in the New Testament the administration of Baptism takes a subordinate position after the apostolic office (waehrend wir doch gerade im Neuen Testament den Vollzug der Taufe beim apostolischen Amte zurucktreten sehen.).

Moreover in the Reformed Church, and in that wing of Protestanism in general which is influenced by modern Calvinism, the service in which a baptism is administered is then designated as a "sacramental service", and it is forgotten that "sacrament" in the sense of a sacramental service is always the sacrament of the altar, the sacramentum sacramentorum, the Lord's Supper as such, as Luther's usage abundantly shows. Never would he have called a service in which in conjunction with the Creed a child is baptized a "sacramental service." For him the sacramental service was the "mass", i.e., the combination of the service of the Word and the administration of the Lord's Supper. In this respect he fully agreed with the entire, universal church. Whatever reforms may still be needed in order to bring back the Sacrament of Baptism to its place of honor in the Lutheran Church, under no circumstances must our church lose sight of the goal of restoring the real sacramental service of the Church of all ages, including the Lutheran Reformation. A deeper understanding and a new appreciation of ~~the~~ Baptism is possible only through a return to that which Luther's Catechism teaches on the basis of the New Testament, and in the simplicity of faith concerning Baptism as the washing of regeneration.

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"I still do as a child who is being taught the catechism," writes Luther in his preface to the Large Catechism, "every morning and whenever I have time I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, etc. And I must still read and study daily and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain, and that too gladly, a child and pupil of the catechism." What a difference it would make for us Lutheran pastors, for our Church, if we heeded these words of Luther more attentively and applied them in our life and our ministry! How many false conceptions of Lutheranism would then disappear, quite spontaneously, from our own minds, and how many prejudices against our Church in the world would be removed. Kyrie eleison!

H. Sasse

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