

A History of Church Ceremonies in Saxony

Translations from Historie der
Kirchen Ceremonien in Sachsen
Christian Gerber (1732)

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Having seen quotes from Christian Gerber’s 1732 Historie der Kirchen Ceremonien in Sachsen in many books (including Stiller and Herl), three years ago I downloaded Gerber’s book to see what further information it contained. After having read it twice over the past two summers, I made it my sabbatical project this summer to translate portions of the book for those that have interest in these things. I do not have a masterful command of the German language, and have likely missed colloquial expressions and turns of phrases, but I believe the information is for the most part accurately, if not gracefully, presented. The copy I downloaded states: “The Hengstenberg Collection - in the Library of the - Baptist Union Theological Seminary – purchased from the estate of the late Prof. W. W. Hengstenberg, D. D., of Berlin, and deposited in the Library by an association of gentlemen – Chicago, Nov. 10, 1875.

The page number for each Chapter refers to my translation document. Within the body of the text page numbers of the downloaded Gerber book are indicated by []. My comments and summaries are also indicated within []. Omitted portions of Gerber’s text in the translation are indicated by ellipses.

August 29, 2011

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A HISTORY OF CHURCH CEREMONIES IN SAXONY

A history of church ceremonies in Saxony, according to their nature, with all possible brevity, including many personal insights and much unique information.

Written by Christian Gerber, Senior Pastor in Lochwitz.

PREFACE

On May 25, through a blessed death, it pleased God to call my dear Father to Himself before the following work was sent to the printer. I have undertaken to complete the Preface according to my Father's wishes...So then, take this as the last expression of his heart; he left no other work that can be considered a posthumous memorial...

Lochwitz, 20 August, 1731

Christian Gottlob Gerber, successor of his blessed Father.

PREFACE of the AUTHOR

To the reader, Beloved in Christ –

Published works on Church Ceremonies are often mentioned by author and title, and yet when one searches in book stores, the books are often no longer available, or, being in Latin, are not accessible to all.

For example, Georg Moz, Cantor in Tilse, in his In defense of Church Music (page 124), quotes from Ceremonias Lutheranas by Pastor Philipp Arnold (formerly a pastor in Tilse). Pastor Arnold argues on the basis of Ephesians 5: "Abound in the Spirit, making music to the Lord in your heart", and asserts that musical instruments were used in St. Paul's day, just as in the Old Testament. This assertion by Arnold and Cantor Moz cannot be easily supported by knowledgeable men. The Apostle does indeed say "Make music to the Lord", but as to how this should be done,

the Apostle continues “in your heart” – a spiritual music-making. Early Church worship was done in secret, and often in fear – hardly conducive to musical instruments, etc. At any rate, I’ve looked for this book - Ceremonias Lutheranas - in many libraries and book stores, but have not found it. If this book were available, my work would not be so necessary – ceremonies in Saxony not differing so greatly from those of other lands.

Another example – Origine Ceremoniarum Ecclesiasticarum by Musardus, Theologian in Lugdunensis, frequently quoted and described, cannot be found in the best libraries in Dresden, nor acquired in Leipzig or Hamburg. Therefore an educated person might well ask if such a book really exists, or is perhaps possessed by only one person – these conjectures of mine may have no basis in fact!

§2 Rituale ecclesiasticum of Caspar Calvör deals in matters great and small – extensively and in detail. For example: Offering boxes, Birettas (as preachers in Leipzig wear instead of hats), vestments (both ancient and Evangelical), [other things listed in Latin], the striking of the breast (though not customary today in public services), the signing of the cross, folding of the hands, kneeling for the reception of communion, wedding customs (in great detail of all lands and times). A sensible man will admit that Mr. Calvör has written way too much! In 1704, Mr. Doctor Philipp Müller(Jena) wished that the work would be translated into German, though much would need to be left out lest the book be too large and fat. To my knowledge no translation has been made

§3 In 1704 Mr. John Friderici, bishop in Frauen-Priesnitz, wrote a fine book on Liturgy – old and new, though it’s in Latin, which little serves the uneducated. Latin books well serve those who don’t read German: the French, English, Dutch, Danes, Swedes, Poles, etc. The Germans need something in their language so that they can become informed and edified. For many of the intelligentsia the Latin language is a kind of idolatrous shrine.

§4 When I decided to write such a history of church ceremonies, it pleased me to borrow the title of Johannes Durellii (Historia rituum ecclesiae Anglicanae) as the name of my poor work. Whether everybody will agree with this title, I do not know. If others wish to quarrel – so it must be. These days there is little that is not disputed. The educated seem to love to quarrel – as is all too well known in our troubled Evangelical Church. It’s nothing new – previous generations have experienced the same – witness the amount of ink spilled over Ambrose Lobwasser’s songs based on the psalms and their introduction in our

churches. It's well over a half-century since all the hub-bub and one has to ask whether all the fighting served any good purpose. [There follows a long section on un-useful debate and argument that exhibits little love and much vainglory.]

§7The unlearned complain that they don't know who to believe – what one preaches in the morning, another at mid-day says is false-teaching and heresy.

§8[A long quote from Counselor Plazens in Leipzig, supporting Gerber's comments about peace in the church and in society.]

1 ON CHURCH CEREMONIES IN GENERAL

We may rightly ask – from where do our Church Ceremonies come? If we answer correctly, we must say: very little from the holy Apostles and the Lord Jesus, but rather, in the largest part they were introduced and arranged by people. Read through the New Testament, especially the Book of Acts and the letters of Paul and Peter – you'll find very little regarding ceremonies; very little prescribed, mainly great simplicity without external appearance and pomp. They knew little of great churches, altars, baptismal fonts, confessional chairs, pulpits, surplices, mass vestments, bells, etc. and would to God it were still so. The more external ceremonies, the more the internal service of the heart is hindered. One experiences all too much how greatly the common folk depend on the externals, and seek the greater part of their devotion and worship in them. Therefore a wise “shepherd of souls” [Seelsorger] will take every opportunity to speak of this all-too-great love for external ceremonies and the dependence on them. Even so, there are also many preachers that put great stock in externals, and publicly make much about the costly, lovely altar, baptismal font, pulpit or chasubles a church has procured, and thereby the simple folk are confirmed and strengthened in their deluded treasuring of external liturgical things. It's not that I, in any way, do away with ceremonies and those related things, nor have I extinguished the candles on the altar, but rather, maintain that the people should be instructed in what to put their trust. Does a church have a lovely altar, font, pulpit and chasuble – the dear God is not more pleased with the service. If these things are not present – the service is not poorer – for God sees the heart, and his eye beholds the faith of the Assembly.

§2 So then, where do these present church ceremonies come from? No where else than from the papacy and the Roman Church. For, before the

time of Luther, we stood, as is well-known, under the power of the Pope, and were members of the Roman Church, with whom we shared all ceremonies, customs and ordinances, indeed, good and false teaching, in common. By the grace of God, Luther made known the scandalous abomination of the sale of indulgences for the forgiveness of sins, and further errors in the Roman Church; his judgment of these things being based on the Word of God, and for this was cast out of the Roman Church. Yet, because of the weak in the Church and their accustomed observance of these ceremonies, old ways were kept until, by proper instruction, the people could learn that the preaching of the Word, the right use of the Sacraments – ie. Prayer, Singing, Praise of God – the essence and constituent of worship is the practice of true Christianity as the love of God and neighbor. Paintings, images, lights, banners, crosses, surplices, chasubles, etc. are in no way essential parts of the service, but rather superfluous ornaments of it. These were, in part, introduced with the good intention of arousing devotion in the people: that when beholding the external things, they might perceive the spiritual things – through the cross: the crucified – through the lights on the altar: the eternal Light of the World, Christ Jesus, or perhaps be reminded of the Institution of the Last Supper taking place in the evening. Luther did away with many practices, using German rather than Latin for the Words of Institution as we do to this day, and abandoning the invocation of the saints, the elevation of the Host, kissing the altar, going from one corner of the altar to the other, and the like. Processions through the streets with the Monstrance or consecrated Host, kneeling before it, processions in and out of the churches and in fields, blessings of candles, etc. were also done away with by Luther. Had God blessed him with longer life he would have done away with more such things. As he expressly wrote: “Chasubles, altars, candles we shall let remain until we decide otherwise.” (Vol III, p. 471)

§3[ceremonies from pagan and Jewish practices]

§4[building of booths and tabernacles in the OT]

§5[3rd and 4th cent. Building of churches and introduction of Jewish ceremonies into the NT service – especially the 7th cent. The lies of the finding of the True Cross and the bodies of the saints...]

Page 9 – All Christ-like and reasonable men can mark that the more external ceremonies introduced the more the mind is distracted and true devotion from the heart is hindered. Augustine had already complained “since ceremonies have multiplied everywhere, so that the Levitical yoke under the Law among the Jews of former times was much lighter than is

now with us Christians in our public services” (Letter 119 to Januarium). Should Augustine return and see contemporary ceremonies in the Roman Church, he would find much more to complain about. Oh, may God have mercy on poor Christian folk who are fed chaff instead of wheat and heavenly manna!

§6 Our ceremonies come in large part from the Roman Church. The Evangelical Church having parted from Rome, or rather having been thrown out, retained many customs for the sake of the weak. One had the freedom to do away with other unnecessary ceremonies and uses like chasubles, white surplices, wax candles and the like, but, whether from negligence or lack of courage, leaders in the time following Luther failed to do so. They could however work with their rulers, and in cooperation with those in authority, make many improvements.

§7 [The Church has the freedom to keep, add, or take away ceremonies.]

§8 [quotes from Luther’s letter to Nikolaus Hausmann]

§9 [p.12] Public services cannot be done without ceremonies. The Christian congregation must meet at a particular time and place. Specific people must lead or direct: singing, praying, preaching, teaching, reception of communion, baptisms - all require structure and order. An army or a household, not matter how small, requires some organization – it follows that public services need order, and therefore ceremonies. A member of the Church must be familiar with ordinances and procedures, lest there be unrest and disturbance [St. Paul’s quote from Corinthians – ending, “let all things be done decently and in order”]. From this, one sees that certain ceremonies in church services are necessary and must be observed. And since order in all things is good, so to an extent, ceremonies in worship are useful.

§10 We can well ask if ceremonies are necessary for salvation, and if it is a sin to leave something out or make a mistake. In a burial sermon for the late Archbishop/Elector of Cologne, Clement, he was praised for his attention to detail, especially in the Mass. This devout Elector valued ceremonies highly – perhaps too much so. Most of our ceremonies were instituted by men, not God. Therefore they are not necessary for salvation, and one doesn’t sin if a mistake is made. However, it is a sin to put one’s faith in these things and serve them rather than heaven [observing ceremonies in order to please God – St. Paul to the Galatians 3:4-5], [Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article VII, p. 66], [Colossians 2:16-17,20-23]. Externals do not change the heart – faith does. [Long quotation from Augsburg Confession, article XXVI]

§11[p.16] One may ask if it would not be better to have similar order in all churches and congregations. Many are of this mind. When I was called to be a preacher, a faithful and God-fearing man in a well-known city with five churches lamented that ceremonies were not the same in all the churches – a new preacher could easily forget things and cause the people to be distracted. Being young, I agreed. With the passing of time I came to see how dependent the simple folk are on externals – more observant of them than of the Word of God – and thought uniformity of ceremony could be more injurious than helpful. In one village the women forgot the baptismal robe – having come a great distance, the baptism went ahead without the robe. When the parents and other people noticed there was no baptismal robe, they became greatly concerned and questioned whether the baptism was valid. The pastor had to speak both privately and publicly to put their fears to rest. In that place it also happened that the altar candles burned out and there wasn't money enough to replace them, so that two Sundays passed without the candles being lighted at the Communion. Of course, people noticed this – the sensible ones felt it made no difference and no candles needed to be purchased for their sake. The greater number lamented the absence: “The altar looks so sad”, “my devotions have been disturbed”, “it's an old tradition, and the ancients who instituted it weren't fools”, “The Lord Christ didn't sit in darkness the night he instituted the Sacrament”. And to some amazement, a well-traveled and intelligent person threatened to bring an action against the pastor if the candles weren't lighted the next Sunday. For the sake of peace with these unenlightened people, the candles were again lighted. They also had to hear that it was their superstition and high regard for vain things like silly candles on the altar that made one question whether the great world's light, Jesus, really inhabits and enlightens their hearts. When they go to communion, is it the candles they behold? I meant, they have more important things to think about, namely Christ on the cross, and in spirit to see his bloody wounds. And if they have such a great love for externals, it doesn't bode well should a time of persecution come and popish teachers were to hold up the holy Monstrance, cross, banner, blessed candles, etc. for their adoration.

§12 Generally speaking, the simple folk depend on those things that they can see. They regard the husk and discard the kernel. Therefore a faithful Shepherd of Souls takes every opportunity to admonish the people against superstitious esteem of externals and industriously to teach them a right regard of ceremonies. Preachers as well can be found that cling to these things. [He tells of teaching confirmands what is important/unimportant. A person hears this, tells his own pastor, who

writes a letter accusing Gerber of being a Calvinist. Gerber talks to him while in Dresden and is overheard by someone who agrees with Gerber on how impressive the simple services are in Holland.]

§13 [p.19] We must return to the previous question: Would it not be better if ceremonies were alike in all parishes. Point blank – NO – but it is better if they differ. Since the simple, common folk put so much importance on ceremonies, and in part think of them as ordained by God, and even give the impression that God is served thereby – and this when ceremonies are not the same everywhere, what would it be if ceremonies were the same everywhere? Surely the uneducated would be confirmed in their conviction that rituals and ceremonies are from God and pleasing to Him, and an even more gross idolatry would result – which even now can be found. If one takes note, even if it is not so prevalent, there are many, who when before the altar, going either to the confessional or to the sacristy, bend the knee. One can only conclude they are giving honor to a dead, man-made work of stone or wood, an honor that properly belongs only to our highly-praised Savior (Phil 2). It also cannot be denied that many preachers, out of pure custom/habit make a deep bow when before the altar, or, when passing the altar on their way to the sacristy, reverence the altar, removing their cap and baring the head. I'm speaking the truth and am not lying that I've seen this more than once. When the common people see this, is it any wonder that they imitate it?

§14[p.20] [Lengthy quote of Spener about no need for uniformity]

§15 [p.21] There are preachers in many places who are great lovers of ceremonies, and put great store by church decorations. They find opportunity to encourage the wealthy to give paraments for the altar and pulpit, saying “wouldn't it be wonderful to have paraments for the great feast days, say, the Days of Repentance[BussTage], when altar, pulpit and font could have a different set?” With these kinds of requests an impression of merit is given, when it would be better if the poor were clothed. It is not known whether a lover of ceremonies would ask as fervently for clothing for the poor as for church decorations.

§16 [p.23] [Extended quote on uniformity of ceremonies – or not – Apology to the Augsburg Confession – Article VII on the Church]

§17 [Not to make too much or too little of church ceremonies. Man's nature is inclined to external things – what is useful and what is edifying?]Be careful not to introduce too many ceremonies. [Here follow examples of worthy introductions:]A certain count [Graf] arranged that when the Creed was sung in the churches in his domain, at the words “Born of the Virgin Mary” all would stand, the men baring

their heads. This custom continues no doubt to this day. In Borna a prayer service is held 3 times a week at 1:00 pm. Attending this service of the school, I heard the following: after the reading of a chapter from the Bible and the General Prayer, the hymn “Lord, keep us steadfast in your word” was sung. On order from the Bishop, at the words “Grant peace we pray in mercy, Lord” three boys were to go to the altar, and while kneeling with their faces towards the floor, were to intone three times, “Grant peace we pray in mercy, Lord” – the congregation answering “Peace in our time, O send us.” After the singing of this triple supplication, the boys returned to their places from the altar. I must confess this was very moving and devotional as well as strangely and mysteriously pleasing. Whether this practice continues, I don’t know. In the little town of Lengefeld, lying near the Castle Ravenstein, between Freyberg and Annaberg, the Pastor, with the approval of the Lord Council, suggested that when the Benediction was spoken at the Forenoon service, the large bell was to be rung three times, so that those who were at home might take part in the public blessing, and murmur “The Lord bless also us, the Lord lift up his countenance upon us...” This ceremony was introduced in 1694 and may very well continue. In Gossa(1 mile from Leipzig) commonly known as Golden Gossa – after the Good Friday sermon, and during the hymn “O deepest woe, ye tears forth flow” all the bells were rung, which was called “ringing the Lord Jesus to his grave”. The like was also introduced in Pomsen, between Leipzig and Colditz by the then pastor, Mr. M. Tiefftrunck to inspire devotion among the simple folk. And that which was done in the past century at a Good Friday morning service is now, in this century, done at most if not all city and village churches at the Good Friday afternoon service for the burial of Christ, which, to be sure, is praiseworthy and of great value. The only complaint is that, while Christian hearts are in the church on Good Friday at 3 pm as the bells ring, to meditate on the death and burial of Christ and to thank their dear Savior for his tremendous and painful suffering, coarse people in great numbers are not served by this bell signal, but are in the field or at the shop, not willing to neglect their temporal well-being even for the love and honor of their Savior, while neglecting all too much their own souls. [Then a couple of paragraphs about restraining excess individual additions through the beneficial oversight of the Royal and Electoral court and high consistorial Counselor Beyer’s additions to the Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence of Carpzow. For example: a priest making the sign of the cross willy-nilly at the consecration and adding numerous “amens”.]

§18 [p.27 - in conclusion, what two men have said about ceremonies in the Old and New Testaments: Coccejus and the old, highly-renowned Saxon Theologian D Hülfe mannus]

2 ON THE TEMPLE OR HOUSE OF GOD

[p.28]

3 ON THE CONSECRATION OF A CHURCH

[p.46]

[p.51 - The dedication of a church belongs to those “middle things”.]

§6A day is selected, the whole congregation gathers either in front of the pastor’s house or in front of the newly-built church. The pastor processes with his colleagues or, in a village, two or three invited neighboring pastors, along with the schoolmaster and the pupils. The congregation follows two by two, both men and women. Walking once or three times around the building, all sing such hymns as “Jesu wollst uns weisen, deine Werck zu preisen” or “Nun lob mein Seel”, or “Herr Gott dich loben wir” or “Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut”, etc. Finally, all go into the church, where more edifying hymns are sung, such as “O Herre Gott dein Göttlich Wort”, “Ein feste Burg”, “Wir Menschen sind zu dem O Gott”, “O Herr, dein seligmachens Wort”, “Erhalt uns deine Lehre, Herr zu der Letzten Zeit”, “Es woll uns Gott genädig sein”. The Epistle is replaced with a portion of Psalm 84 or 87, or another appropriate psalm. The sermon is based on the Sunday’s Gospel. If held on a week-day, any suitable text can be chosen.

§8[p.53] In this present year[1730] the second Jubilee on June 25 and the two following days[Augsburg Confession] was celebrated. Then on Wednesday, June 28 a new solemnity – a church dedication for the former New-Ostra, now called Friedrichs Stadt after King/Elector Friedrich Augustus...The procession to the new church was led by the singing school youth and Bishop Löscher; Pastor Mehner(Pastor Ordinarius); Mssrs. Müller and Strantze, Deacons of the Church of the Cross[KreuzKirche]. The Bishop carried a Bible, Mehner the chalice with the Paten, Müller the Church Agenda, Strantze the Oblaten Box. A large host of people followed, and all was accompanied by strong music and devotional hymns.

4 CHURCH ANNIVERSARIES

[p.101]

5 ON THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP
[p.110]

6 OUR CELEBRATION OF SUNDAYS, AND MAJOR AND
MINOR FEASTS
[p.117]

[Sabbath – Sunday – Lord’s Day - Jewish/Christian history]

[Three great feasts – Christmas, Easter, Pentecost - Much about the wide-spread miss-use of the holidays]

§11 Let’s return to our Christmas feast and see what further ceremonies we find. The Lüneburg/Braunschweig practice is described by Calvör: “In this night, of which in Christian simplicity, we believe we were visited from on high, we take care to make impressive and glorious with the lighting of many candles, just as we do at the Easter festival.” So they must have gathered very early for Matins[Mette], each carrying a lighted candle – and so devotions were ordered with songs and prayers. This custom must have generally died out here in Upper Saxony, there being a few cities that have this custom. I stayed awhile in Zeitz in 1676, and there one went to the church at 3 am. on Christmas morning for Matins, the altar and chandeliers full of candles, and each person in attendance carrying a candle. A couple of Christmas songs were sung, the Christmas Gospel was read, more singing, and then the Benediction. It was like this in Anneberg also. Many also took incense candles[sticks?] and lighted them, or containers with coals, upon which incense powder was scattered so that the church was filled with a cloud of incense. The common folk rejoiced greatly at the glory of the sight. Whether the joy in their hearts at the birth of Christ was as great – I have my doubts. Dresden, Leipzig, and other fine cities know nothing of this festival of lights. Calvör cites similar Jewish and pagan festivals(Roman Saturnalia). Such things are better rooted out than encouraged.

§12 [a description of unfortunate traditions for the children, who wait longingly for Christ, accompanied by the holy angels, to come through the roof and windows with his great wagon loaded with gifts for pious children.]

§13 The second high festival – Easter – also celebrated for three days...there are not so many ceremonies connected to this festival – most likely a good thing. For what purpose do blessed candles served as are carried at Easter in papistical places? And the heart is in darkness, ignorance, unbelief, carnal desires,etc.

An impressive external ceremony occurs at 4am. in the Residence city Dresden: three loaded cannons are fired from the Kreuz Kirche tower – and the feast is rung in with all the bells. Then beautiful vocal and instrumental music is heard from the tower to lovely effect in the still of the night, which has often stirred me to heartfelt praise and devotion. This practice is not seen everywhere, but is also done in Dresden on the first day of Christmas and Pentecost. The cannon blast is so loud that it can be heard a mile's distance from the city. Moreover, this joyous festival is conducted with festive sermons, praise, thanks and prayers. In cities and in villages there are at least five services, in large cities even more, the people being instructed in the value and comfort of Christ's resurrection to heartfelt joy and thanksgiving, and admonished to rise from sins.

§14[p.138] Sorry to say, just as at Christmas, coarse, evil people pursue all sorts of superstitious practices at Easter. Among the respectable and the common crowd, foolish things are done like getting up before Easter sunrise to fetch water from a stream, exalt it as holy and ascribe great power to it . If one asks from whence its power and efficacy comes, they answer that they don't know; OR they imagine it helps rheumatism and other ailments, even if it isn't true. Rheumatism often leaves the body when one rests a while. A woman with tired and dark eyes was given this Easter Water by her neighbors. After washing with it for some weeks her eyes became clear and light. I say, washing with this Easter Water for some weeks didn't help in the least. If she had done the same with "Hungarian Water" her eyes would have become clean and clear. These superstitious ones say the water stays clean and clear and lasts a whole year. Answer: Get water after Easter or at Pentecost, store it as you would Easter Water and you see that it remains clear and good. Another foolishness and superstition has to do with the horses. Before the sun rises on the first day of Easter, the horses must be ridden into the horse pond. One asks: Why do you do this? The poor people don't know what else to say than that it's good for the horses. [Examples of horse drowning and other miss-haps]

§15[History of Pentecost in Jewish and biblical background]

§16 The Pentecost Festival has no particular external ceremonies in the service. Earlier it was customary to place birch trees [Meyen] in the church and to strew grass, which on the first and second day of Pentecost provided a pleasant odor in the church. I remember many churches where in the Papacy, people with good intention, and perhaps to save their soul from a long time in Purgatory, would provide Meyen from their forests in perpetuity. Others would bequeath a meadow to the

church to provide grass, so that these were known as “God’s meadow”. In Dresden, birch trees were placed in the churches on Ascension Day, replaced on Pentecost and thrown out after Trinity Sunday. Many people, including the preacher, would get headaches from the strong smell of the drying greenery. Windows were often obstructed and the light would dim, making it hard[p.141]to read from a book, especially on cloudy days. Therefore it pleased many when in 1715 a royal command went out that the practice must stop due to a severe shortage of trees. It was a good thing also because the greenery had served as a screen for much rude and boisterous behavior, which the preacher had to reprimand from the pulpit. At the least, young men would break off twigs and toss them from the church balconies onto the young women seated below. So it was a good thing to stop the practice. Many thousand stands of young birch were chopped down annually and giving occasion for guzzling wine and beer. Nothing will change the wine and beer guzzling, but at least the greening can be dispensed with.

§17[the greening comes from Judaism by way of the Roman Church. Special baked goods and Semmel milk in Jewish and Christian communities]

§18 The three principle feasts of our Evangelical Lutheran Church last for three days, or properly speaking, two and a half days – the third day having a morning service with sermon. In the cities, the afternoon of the third day is spent visiting one another or going for a walk. In the villages the remainder is spent dancing in the taverns, where most become drunk. Never-the-less, there are those good hearts in every place who, in summer enjoy a walk, or at Christmas spend the afternoon in Christian conversation. At 3 pm. on all festival days there is a prayer time at which the festival is closed with the singing of the Te Deum laudamus, also Psalm 72 at Christmas, Ps. 118 at Easter and Ps. 68 at Pentecost. Besides the locals, many visitors show up from elsewhere.

In Mark Brandenburg, and perhaps other lands of that sovereign ruler, two feast days are observed – and these things are within the right of each ruler to decide.

§19 There are many other festival days: New Years /or Circumcision of Christ...

§20 New Year’s wishes to the ruler and to all from the pulpit

§21 Epiphany

§22 Not all these miracles could have happened on Jan. 6: Wisemen/Baptism/Cana wedding[Gerber goes to great length to show

the error of former ages in thinking these things happened on the same day – he takes it all VERY literally – also mentioning he had written earlier in the book that Jesus was probably born Sept. 15. Augustine is wrong to suggest including the feeding of the 5,000{p.149} on Jan. 6 because John clearly states it happened just before the events of Holy Week. So does Gerber’s rationalism get him into unbelievable literalist speculations.]

§23Purification of Mary Feb. 2 (Lichtmesse) [idle blessing of candles in the Roman Church is superstition and a spectacle]

§24Annunciation – we can observe this day if we don’t light candles, go in procession, and exalt Mary to the skies. In Saxony, if it falls on Th/Fri/Sat of Holy Week, it is moved to Palm Sunday. Mon/Tues/Wed of Holy Week it is observed. Calvör writes of it being observed on the 3rd Day of Easter one year, which he himself acknowledged as being unusual and exceptional.

§25Forty days after Easter, ten days before Pentecost we have Ascension[p.152] – the whole day is celebrated with services and preaching...Acts Chapter One replaces the Epistle, describes the Ascension far better than Mark 16...

§26 The Sunday after Pentecost - the feast of the Holy Trinity OR three persons in divine essence/substance. Calvör wonders why three days aren’t devoted to this festival. There are enough feast days in the year, and very few spend these days in a holy and seemly manner, but rather desecrate it in idleness and worldly lusts. For the common, coarse crowd it would be much better if there were no feast days. They would serve God better through their vocation [Beruffs Arbeit] and would not commit so many sins...Luther was not satisfied with Dreifaltigkeit, which like the Latin “Trinitas” is not fully worthy, but we use what we have. Some theologians prefer Dreieinigkeit.

§27 St. John the Baptist (5th cent.)...in the past celebrated with open fires, so called John’s Fire, and everywhere superstition and spectacle was promoted, no doubt prompted in those days of ignorance by the word’s of Christ: “John was a burning and a shining light”. God be praised that faithful teachers were given grace through their admonishing that these sinful silly-nesses have come to an end and are forgotten. We celebrate this day with public services and sermons...the vulgar, who are unfortunately in the majority, do not regard this precious pearl, but make of this day a drinking, dancing, gaming day- the lovely weather of mid-summer only contributes to the scandalous atmosphere. From this perspective it would be better if this day were not celebrated. If one

objects that the wonderful Gospel story must be presented to those who come – Answer: that’s true, but for the majority who don’t attend it is in vain. The pious can read the story from Luke at home, along with so many other stories from the Old and New Testaments that are never preached upon. [p.156]

§28 The Visitation – a lovely and edifying story. It could be read on a regular Sunday, and lovers of the divine word can read it themselves – the day being spent in dissipation by most. The origin of the day: Pope Urban VI instituted it at the end of the 14th c. To honor the Virgin Mary as his patron against Clement VII, in order to retain the Papal throne and seat. O miserable idolatry! Besides – the sequence is wrong – it should be three months before St. John’s Day[!].

§29 St. Michael [shameful, idolatrous origins in the Roman Church, based on superstition] Oh! The Lord have mercy on the poor sheep, and give them shepherds after his heart who will guide them on the straight path to Christ that they find true pasture, life and joy. Yes, may he enlighten all teachers in the Roman Church that they reject unspiritual and old dreary fables and not believe Satanic lies and deceptions, but hold to the Word that is certain. The feast is a remnant of the old days – better lessons could be found, instruction on angels given in catechism classes...

7 LESSER FESTIVALS – APOSTLE DAYS

[p.160]

[some have been retained – others dropped over the years:
Presentation/Holy Cross/Corpus Christi/Assumption/Exaltation of the Cross/All Saints/All Souls/Apostles/Birth of Mary]

8 JUBILEE FESTIVALS OF OUR EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

[p.200]

[1717 Reformation 1730 Augsburg Confession
published writings of theologians and professors

p. 211 – an unknown preacher’s song in which all articles of the Augsburg Confession are contained – some stanzas complete – to the tune of “Nun lasst uns Gott den Herren” - A series of hymns]

9 ON THE RINGING OF BELLS AT THE BEGINNING OF SERVICES

[p.234]

10 THE OPENING OF PUBLIC SERVICES

[p.240]

[brief discussion of Genesis worship/house devotions]

§2We're concerned here with the opening of public services. As is known, when the congregation is notified of a service by the ringing of the bells, the service begins with singing. And it would be a fine and praiseworthy thing if the whole congregation were gathered when the service commences with singing. Sorry to say, this doesn't happen, the people coming in continuously during the singing, not only missing a good portion of the service, but disturbing the devotions of their neighbors. Not only are people oblivious, but it has become the custom to enter during the singing of the Creed or even when the preacher is standing in the pulpit. So little is the singing regarded, the praising of God for his goodness to us, or the forgiveness of sins, or the calling upon God for the preservation of his Word and Church, etc.

[241]And what does Gottesdienst, or Gott dienen mean? It means to confess with sacred wonder, to heartily praise and honor God's great wisdom and almighty creation and preservation of all things; his inexpressible love and mercy in the work of redemption; that he gave his beloved into death for the sins of the human race - singing:

O that I had a thousand voices to praise my God with thousand tongues! My heart, which in the Lord rejoices, would then proclaim in grateful songs to all, wherever I might be, what great things God has done for me! (and the whole human race)...Creator, humbly I implore you to listen to my earthly song until that day when I adore you, when I will join the angel throng and raise to you with joyful cry ten thousand hallelujahs high! [ELW#833]

Therefore David made so many psalms of praise, and because he found his own praise to be so weak, called upon the holy angels, that these holy and perfect beings should praise God with him:

Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones that do his bidding (Ps.103). Our prayers and other works of piety do not end, for as was said of the old prophetess Hanna: She served God with fasting and praying day and night. [Quote of Luther – the maid doing her work serves God better than the nun with her Hours and Latin singing] But oh! How few there are who serve God in this way. To merely enter the Church and put your body in a pew, sing a few songs with wandering and unfocused thoughts, and mindlessly follow the public prayers, to

sleep a bit during the sermon – this is how all too many attend the service – it is all for naught: If you will serve God – be serious about it.

§3 Even if few use the service rightly or well, yet the form of the service we use is good, edifying and praiseworthy. As we said, the service begins with singing, doubtless so that our hearts and spirits are summoned to sacred devotion, and in that devotion made receptive to the sermon and less receptive to the drowsiness that so easily invades. Even so, we depend not solely on our powers, but implore grace from above. It is indeed the general custom that when entering the church one holds a hand or hat before the face and prays an Our Father. It is very doubtful that everyone who prays thus is awake in spirit – but will have said the whole prayer by rote. Luther himself complained that other thoughts constantly crowd the mind [quote from Luther follows]. We also suggested a remedy in *Historia der Wiedergeb. P.III* §15.p.68 as to how to pray the Lord's Prayer without losing focus. It would be better if all Christians were to draw upon the anointing received in Holy Baptism and pray in such words as are in their hearts, as place, time and ability provide. One finds prayer formulas in many prayer books for use when one enters the church, when the Kyrie is sung, when the Epistle and Gospel are to be read, prayers before and after the sermon, and after the Benediction. The prayers in these books are often dry and powerless: and if they are well-written, there is little time to pray them in a devout manner. And would someone tell me to what purpose these prayers are to be made? Saying a prayer upon entering the church is a good thing; but what about the other prayers? When the Kyrie is sung – we should also sing and not do private prayers. True – in the cities the Kyrie is often sung [p.243] in musical settings with instruments. I remember from my boyhood years in Borna the school master sought to have the Kyrie sung every Sunday in a polyphonic setting with violins, 2 trombones and a Zink. The Zink was longer than an "ell" with keys like a flute or oboe, somewhat bent, difficult to blow, rough and crass. The townpiper was a strong man who always played the Zink since his colleagues would not. He would become very red in the face as he played away. The trombones also played – also not so pleasingly. With all this din the singers were heard little, if at all, and many in the congregation would pick up their prayer books. But what kind of devotions can one have when the ear is full of such noise from instruments and voices? And what's the point of the music, if no one wants to listen? And when the choral music, or a German song is finished, the Epistle is read, as is the Gospel after a hymn. So where's the time to read prayers from a book? When the sermon is done, the confession and common prayers are read, which all should speak. So

where's the time to use the Prayer Book after the sermon? Will one read a prayer during the intercession for the sick, pregnant and those traveling? That's not right! Rather, I should listen, the better to hear of the condition and situation of those prayed for, take them to heart and in compassion pray fervently to our loving God for his mercy on them that he grant them counsel, comfort and help. If I do this, I also will have faithful Christians praying for me when I'm in trouble. If I don't hear the petitions, but rather do private prayers, [244]when the preacher comes to the end of the petitions and closes the prayers with the Our Father, my prayer for the sick will not be so impassioned or compassionate because I have not given attention to their condition. And this condition is often of such a sort that we should say with our Savior:[Greek word] I am distressed for this poor fellow member to the very core of my being.

I don't see how prayers before the Kyrie, Epistle, Gospel, before/after the sermon can't help but make one miss something necessary and helpful. A devotional and earnest prayer upon entering the church is certainly a good thing – most saying the Our Father. How it goes for each person is known only to God. One often sees a man with his hat, a woman with veil or hand – held before the face for a very short time – the dear Lord's Prayer sent off by “express mail”. It would be better if they prayed a short prayer according to their own abilities and prayed something like the following: Most holy God, dearest Father in heaven, I come to this place where your glory dwells: oh, give me and all those here gathered, the spirit of grace and of prayer, that we may praise you with joyful lips for all your goodness to us, worship you in spirit and in truth, hear your holy word with devotion and awe, order our lives according to it, believe on your Son with all our heart and through him come to everlasting life. Grant our teacher such a mouth of wisdom, that with the conviction of the Spirit and the power of your Holy Word he may wisely and edifyingly speak. Increase in him your gifts of grace for our good and crown his work with much blessing, for the sake [245] of Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. Amen

In no way do I prescribe this prayer as a formula for everyone, but rather as an introduction to how one might pray when entering the church. For if one always used this formula, inevitably it would end up being spoken by the tongue while the thoughts are elsewhere, as sadly happen to our sacred Lord's Prayer. Therefore one should always vary the words and learn to pray from the heart.

§4 It has seemed necessary to me to provide a reminder of how the service properly begins. The singing begins generally with a morning

hymn, after this the German Kyrie “Kyrie, God Father in heaven above”. Then “All glory be to God on high”. Then further songs according to the Gospel or season. We are certainly blessed at this time with a rich store of lovely hymns. Were Luther to return he would rejoice at this glorious treasury of hymnody. The beloved hymns of Luther rightfully maintain pride of place, being full of spirit and power. Schamelius, Senior Pastor at St. Wenzel’s in Naumburg, wrote in his annotated Hymnal (which to my knowledge has no equal), about the hymn “Our Father, God in heaven above”: A papist said to old Spangenberg – “Luther can’t be thanked enough by the whole world for this hymn”. Other hymns of Luther are also lovely and rich in Spirit. “Dear Christians, one and all”, “All glory be to God on high”[sic], “May God bestow on us his grace”, and many others. This pious papist must not have known these other hymns. This man knew of Luther’s good work and wonderful gifts saying, “more comforting theology is found in this hymn than in all the books of the scholastics and papist scribes”; it is a wonder that he remained in the Roman Church so long and only took up Evangelical teaching in old age. Besides Luther’s songs, we have many other lovely songs, such as those by Speratus, Spengler, Ringwald and others. The newer songs are even more numerous and frequently sung in public worship. Among them are the hymns of blessed Paul Gerhardt, which shine like diamonds and rubies. More than 50 years ago there was great superstition and reluctance to admit new songs to the service, and a crime(piaculum) was made of it. Now that the newer songs are sung, one asks if it was really such a big deal. The old songs continue to be sung – the newer are sung from the book, the thoughts thereby remain closer to the singing. When one sings from memory and not from the book, the eyes wander here and there and devotion is distracted.

§5 As lovely and edifying as our Church songs are – most people have a poor understanding of them. I will not say how corrupted and poorly understood many hymns are in their singing, but will give some examples: In the creed hymn many sing “Leib und Seel alles wohl bewahren”. Luther wrote “auch bewahren”/ “Nun lob mein Seel den Herren”, the phrase “Mit reichen Troste Beschüttet” people almost everywhere sing “beyschüttet”. [many other examples are given – what people learned from memory and also what they many once have read and then have altered through time]

[p.249]

§6 Just as the mistakes made by many when singing without a book, those who can’t read all the more easily turn the words around. Yet even more do people misunderstand the meaning of hymn texts. Take a

hymn , any one you wish, and ask, not the unlettered and simple, but naturally smart and discriminating people, what “der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt, Gott solch’ Geburt ihm bestellt” [Nun komm der Heiden Heiland]. You’ll get quite amazing explanations – which I have heard in catechism examinations with even older people. [further, “Allein Gott”/”Es ist das Heil”]

§7 It would be beneficial if the hymns were explained in public services. I must say I began such a method in 1709, exploring hymns verse by verse, briefly pointing out the meaning of words and figures of speech – which resulted in Harmoniam hymno-evangelicam”, how the explained hymn agrees with the Gospel :I Informatione II Adhortatione III Consolatione – Teaching and instruction for admonition and for comforting. The series was repeated in 1718-1719 .

§8 [Long discussion of a hymn on the word “Büße” – the text, having been based on a reference to an Augustinian quote, made for faulty interpretations amongst the laity.)

§9 There are hymns that do need revision. For example in the old hymn “Puer natus in Bethlehem”, “A child is born in Bethlehem” – where it says the ox and the ass confess God to be the Lord. This comes across as altogether too crude and nonsensical, that the ox and ass should have acknowledged the Savior of the world. It is certainly possible that an ox would recognize his master, and an ass, the crib of his master, seeing these every day. But that at the birth of Christ the ox and ass recognize the Lord their God, this is just too much, explain away or excuse as one will [a woman came to Gerber wondering how Jesus’ fear and trembling in the garden were recorded if he was along – Gerber finds references to explain this, plus the promise of the Spirit to bring to mind all Jesus said and did]

11 ON OTHER SONGS SUNG IN THE SERVICE, LIKE THE CREED

[p.256]

When the service has been begun with a hymn, then further hymns are sung according to the season, but principally as it relates to the Gospel reading. In the present time there are hymns to choose from in abundance. I remember from my childhood and youth a rotation of hymns that I heard: Vater unser/O Herre Gott, dein Göttlich Wort/Ach, Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein/Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält/Es spricht der unweisen Mund wol/Ich ruf’ zu dir/Von Gott will ich nicht lassen/Erhalt uns Herr.

At the three principal feasts the songs for those feasts, as many as available, were sung. All these hymns are good and edifying, particularly those by Luther. But when these are sung today, usually without a book, many sing them with less apparent devotion. And it is well-known, that 40-50[p.256] years ago a hymnal was seldom carried by a member [zuhörer: listener – audience!], and I have heard and experienced that when someone brought a hymnal, the ignorant accused the person of being sanctimonious. An upstanding royal minister told me not long ago that a farmer outside of Merseburg once took his grain to Halle. While there, he visited the church and saw many with hymnals. He liked the idea so much that he bought a hymnal while there. At home he took his hymnal to church. The old pastor saw, and after service asked him where he'd gotten such a thing. The farmer told him his story, thought it was useful and edifying, and felt he would now sing without mistakes. This old Pastor earnestly bid him not introduce innovations. The schoolmaster must sing from a book, but not the farmer or anyone else. The farmer thought the request unreasonable and didn't stop bringing the book, and then was brought before the judge. One sees here how many simple and ignorant teachers and shepherds there are. So it can be said of many – the shepherds have become fools (Jeremiah CX). It's easy to imagine the examples such teachers are for their congregations.

§2 Yet now has merciful God let a great light shine. Not only do most carry hymnals, but besides the old hymns, many rich and edifying hymns are introduced and used. Who had heard 30-40 years ago of : O Jesu Christ mein Lebens Licht, der du in meiner Seelen/Kommt und lasst euch Jesum lehren/Du sagst ich bin ein Christ/ and many others that harmonize well with the Gospels. We can not be thankful enough to our loving God for the abundance of this spiritual treasure. Whoever will not industriously gather in during this harvest time will be, like the lazy servant, poorly rewarded.

§3 With hymns of the season before and after the Epistle, then short hymns are sung from the pulpit before the reading of the Gospel. These Kanzel/pulpit hymns implore the Holy Spirit for grace, enlightenment and blessing in the reading and hearing of the divine word and to arouse in the listeners devotion and attentiveness, which for many doesn't help much, but sleep soon closes their eyes and ears. The hymn sung from the pulpit is commonly: "Lord Jesus Christ, be present now", this hymn being sung throughout most of Saxony each Sunday before the Our Father. Also, in many places: Dearest Jesus, we are here. These hymns work well. During Lent, this hymn "O Lamb of God, most holy" often

replaces these two. In earlier times it was sung through three times, and only at the last was the phrase “your peace be with us, O Jesus” sung. Since, a pious man has appended two new lines “Von Herzen wir dir danken” and “Stärk in uns das Vertrauen”, and these changes are included in the Dresden Hymn Book, and generally sung now in this version.

[p.258] [more history of pulpit hymns, and a long story about beggars singing “O Lamm Gottes” at the top of their lungs]

§4 So also, on the great feasts particular pulpit hymns are sung: Christmas – commonly “Ein kindelein so löbelich” – this hymn is, after the old manner, poorly rhymed, and certain words need explanation (Säuberlich). The word “löbelich” is unusable, and continues to be used only because it rhymes – “lobwürdig” might be better? Though Luther translated this hymn from the “Dies est laetitiae”, the last phrase “Behüt uns für der Höllen pein und führ uns in das Reiche dein” was not written by him, that is for sure. It is best that the author of this phrase is anonymous, otherwise his name would not be easily forgotten!

The Easter Festival has “Christ ist erstanden”, or “Jesus Christus unser Heiland, der den Tod”. Pentecost – “Nun bitten wir”. In my youth one could often hear “Komm Heiliger Geist, erfülle die Herzen deiner Gläubigen, etc.”

§5 [Briefly about the myth of the 12 apostles each contributing an article of the Creed]

[p.261] Luther set the creed in rhyme, and a composer made a melody for it. The tempo at which it’s sung sounds very devotional as the words are sung slowly and occasionally repeat. Without doubt Luther wanted the melody to go slowly so that the singing might be more devotional and attention paid to each word, as should be the case with all hymns. A prominent Count introduced the custom of standing at the words: born of Mary, virgin mother by the power of the Spirit, word made flesh our elder brother [p.261], the men baring their heads. I asked this man if this was an old custom – he answered that he had introduced it from the Evangelical Church in Austria – he thought it a reverent thing for acknowledging the incarnation. 50-60 years ago the creed was sung at cemeteries as part of the burial rites, which was, without doubt, of great antiquity and from the early Church. I have not seen it done of late in those places where it was done in my youth; it would be good to keep this old ceremony. One knows that in the beginning of the Reformation and for some years following, the creed was sung after and not before the sermon. I don’t know the reason for the present practice of singing it

before the sermon, but it would seem better to use the earlier custom and sing it after the sermon, for then all present could sing it, since so many arrive during the concluding words, yes, even during the pulpit hymn “Lord Jesus Christ, be present now”.

§6 Concerning the time for public worship – it varies. According to the Church Order:

- 7 am Cities and summer in the country
- 8 am Winter in the country

It is always at 7 in the cities because there are often many communicants and the midday sermon is at noon. Weekday services in many cities, for example, Dresden, start with singing at 6:30, the sermon at 7 until 8. The Saxon Church Order states that this one hour of preaching time should include no more than 15 minutes of singing – so that with singing and preaching it last no more than one hour. There are numerous complaints from city and court officials about the length of sermons. A 30-45 maximum would be preferable. The many prayers of intercession and thanksgiving [p.262] must be included. Because of this length there are many who cannot attend. [more on rural conditions and service times – travel time to church, etc.]

12 ON THE LITANY

§1 [Various psalms have names]

§2 In our services we have a song that also has a name – a Greek name – Litany. When it is sung with alternating choirs and assembly – some boys go to the altar and intone Kyrie, the other pupils and congregation respond eleison. [p.271] In cities the Litany is sung every Friday after the sermon. The pews in many places are quite empty and in some houses no one comes to the weekday sermon and litany. The reason may very well be that the sermon is an hour long. Let the sermon length not keep the people from attending and then going to their work. If work keeps people from attending, then a member of the household should be appointed to conduct the General Prayer of the Church. Let the schoolmaster and first choir not sing too high or too low, so that the congregation can participate in the Litany. [lengthy examples of papist litanies]

13 ON ORGANS AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

[p.278] There are few churches without an organ, be it ever so humble and small. The cities have large and expensive organs – some costing thousands of Thalers, and if one organ isn't [p.278] enough, some

churches have two organs, so that one may rightfully say ' Wherefore this waste?' I know full well that this will be met with ingratitude, but I will remind lovers of large and costly organs, and those who can't imagine church services without organs and instrumental music, that these things are not an essential part of the service, which consists of prayer, praise, singing, and listening to or meditating on the Word of God. The early Church got along without such things for two to three hundred years.

§2 For almost everything in the world there is a right use and a miss-use – and so it is for instrumental music. Organs, to a certain degree are very useful, for they serve to pitch the singing correctly, and maintain the singing at pitch to the end. For it easily happens that the precentor, cantor, or schoolmaster let's the pitch drop and the hymn can hardly be finished. Or the precentor keeps pitch and the congregation drags the pitch down. The first time I entered a pulpit to preach, the schoolmaster began the hymn "Aus meines Herzen's grunde", but started so low that he couldn't continue. A second attempt pitched it too high. The parish Sponsor (Collator), a man of the aristocracy, called from his balcony, "Now, what is it with you?!" Then the hymn started a third time. Had there been an organ in the church, the good schoolmaster would have gotten his pitch and none such miss-hap(Faute) need happen. The assembled person took it in stride for they were accustomed to the schoolmaster [p.280] making mistakes. I however, was anxious, for it seemed an ill omen for the beginning of my pastorate. But it all went well and I could hold my head up as I left the pulpit. I also know of a fine, impressive place where the schoolmaster is also a trained musician ad performs vocal/instrumental music in the church from time to time. His own sense of pitch tends to go flat if the organ is not played. Therefore he plays the organ when he sings the Litany, often using the so-called Gedackt to fine effect, and all goes well. But when large, expensive organs are played so loudly that the singing is little heard, if at all, then it should be understood that a miss-use of the instrument has been made. Many organists cultivate the playing of long preludes, the better to show off their art. These long preludes can be vexatious to listen to, but also time consuming, lengthening the service. These organists are stubborn and obstinate, doing their own thing, refusing to heed any admonishments. If the Pastor is a peace-loving man he must let the organist have his way, and bear the vexation with patience. Occasionally it comes to a row, or complaints are made to the pastor about the long preludes, which is an irritation and it would be better if the obstinate fellow had no organ to play.

§3As pertains to vocal/instrumental music, when it is used well it is a gift of God and heightens the praise of God and awakens devotion.

Numerous complaints however from city and church governing bodies would indicate many abuses. If there are guide lines for length of music and the conduct of musicians involved, these guidelines are often ignored. Beer fiddlers play in church and the Cantor /Schoolmaster does as he pleases. Pastors have guidelines to follow – if they wish to use a different method of preaching, the Superintendent must be notified in writing, and the request approved or denied. There are certainly reasonable and discriminating people involved in musical leadership, but judging by the number of complaints, they are few.

§4[Dannhauer- words must predominate over instruments. Bedell, Bishop in Killmor, Ireland, enemy of ceremonies and ostentatious living. King of Denmark got rid of church music and replaced with hymns.]

§5Whether a moderate music can remain in the church, as Dannhauer says, “an ornament of the service”, is not supported by all theologians. It often sounds worldly and merry, better suited to the dance floor or opera than to the service. To faithful hearts the music all too little speaks of passion. 50 and more years ago it was customary that the organ didn’t play in Holy Week, beginning on Palm Sunday, and there was no concerted music. Since then the Passion History, which formerly was so restrained and devotional, is performed with many instruments with high art – an occasional passion hymn interspersed to be sung by the congregation. Then the swarm of instruments [p.283] goes at it again. When, in a prominent city, this passion music was performed for the first time with the accompaniment of twelve violins, many oboes, bassoons and other instruments, many people were shocked and didn’t know what to make of it. A number of high-ranking government ministers and ladies, seated in one of the church balcony boxes, devoutly sang the first hymn from their hymnals. Then, as the theatrical music began, the people looked at each other in astonishment, saying, “What is this going to be?” An old aristocratic widow exclaimed, “God preserve us, my children, it’s as if we were at the opera”. They were all offended and expressed righteous indignation to those in charge. There were certainly others who found such frivolous bustling to their liking, particularly those with a temperament inclined to pleasure. They defended this large Church Music with all their might, and considered those opposed as cranks and melancholics, as if they alone had the Wisdom of Solomon, and others were without understanding. Oh! If only the church had the simplicity of the early Church in preaching, praying and singing. We have come to a sorry state far removed from those early days. If a

Christian from the first centuries were to visit our assemblies, and the organ and instruments were to begin their blustering, I don't believe we would be recognized as successors of those early Christians. I'm well aware that these words will receive many judgmental responses, but then I'm used to it, and haven't died from it yet. It's enough that many thinking people share my convictions. I also know that some Cantors consider this loud, frivolous music to be unedifying and irritating.

§6[Grossgebauer – quotes from Aquinas about instruments in church – none] [The congregations sits while the music drones on]

§7 [p.286] [Chytraeus - Zepperus – Korthold – Pfaffe –In agreement with Grossegebauer]

§8 It would be wished that Cantors and Directors of Music would listen to these Christian teachers and moderate their music. For many Christians lament that they must listen to such lengthy and loud music, seldom understanding a word or comprehending its meaning, let alone getting any value or edification from it. Meanwhile, it's difficult to hope that any change or moderation can result at this time. Good souls must bear it with patience, nor have disgust with the service and leave it for small private gatherings and thereby throwing already troubled parishes into further disorder and unrest. But rather, to find consolation in the hope that a time will come when overseers of the churches, after the mind of Luther, will provide better order in the musical life of the churches. [Luther quote] We see from this quote that the congregation should sing along. It is not possible when the words are not audible because of the instruments, or the music is not familiar. But when a familiar song is sung and the instruments play along, God is praised... Earlier there were many lovely motets sung in the service, at weddings, or on the streets, by the choir (Choro Musico). For example, Ps. 84; or Ps. 90:10 "Our years are 70...this lovely motet concluded with the words "and we fly away" repeated a few times and then the voices quickly stopped, giving a vivid depiction of the transitory nature of our life. There were many more motets on biblical texts, such as P. 42 "Why art thou troubled oh my soul?" [p.291] by which many troubled souls were put right and found renewal. These motets, rich in spirit, have been completely forgotten and are no longer heard, sad to say.

14 ON LATIN SONGS

[p.291]

Luther lamented the lack of German poets to provide vernacular hymns, and so the Latin hymns continued to be sung, partly because of this lack

of German hymnody. God be praised for the number of fine text writers to fill this need: Joh. Franckens, Rist, Sacers, Hermann, Gerhard. Luther provided many spirited and powerful hymns. Even Vater unser and Wir glauben would have earned him praise enough if he had written no others. The Latin hymns did not serve the common man well. [Luther did not wish to do away with Latin – long quote about Latin Greek, Hebrew alternating by Sunday] Pentecost reveals a different picture of language, each hearing in the native tongue – not everyone first learning Hebrew. I prefer to follow this example. The pupils in the school must learn these languages, but the congregation shouldn't have to sit and hear what they don't have the opportunity to learn. Missionaries may know Greek, Latin and Hebrew, but they must also learn the language of the country to which they go. Therefore we can let go of Latin in the services.

§3[Long quote from Spener – Latin used now and then, not always, the singers must understand what they sing,[p.294] and there should be some present that understand Latin]

§4In present day services most songs are in German. Here and there, especially in large cities, Latin singing remains to some extent – such as the prefaces for High Feasts:

Christmas/Easter/Pentecost/Epiphany/Ascension/Trinity – where the preacher intones at the altar: “Dominus vobiscum” and the choir responds “et cum spiritu tuo” – Priest:”sursum corda” , choir: “Habemus ad Dominum, Priest: Vere dignum et justum est, aequus et salutare, etc”. These prefaces are printed in the Dresden Heckelischen Hymnal, and therefore can be assumed to be used. And the large cities have educated people that understand. It would be vain to do these in the villages, though there are pastors who like to use the Latin prefaces in the villages. The School Master must then teach the boys to sing the responses, which they do like blackbirds, piping back the responses but not understanding them.

Christmas in many places includes “Puer natus in Bethlehem”

Easter – “Surrexit Christus hodie

Pentecost – “Spiritus sancti gratias” and others

Because the German verses are sung in alternation with the Latin, the congregation can sing and also understand what the Latin means. The uneducated can remain silent when the Latin is sung, and let the ones that understand sing along. But they don't like to remain silent, and frequently sing along, mangling the language and moving others to laughter.

§5[p.295] After the Kyrie (the Communion being celebrated), the “Gloria in excelsis” is intoned from the altar – the congregation responds “All glory be to God” which is a translation of the Gloria – so that the simple understand and can pray along. When I was asked why the preacher intones “Gloria in excelsis Deo” from the altar, I could give no other reason than that it is an ancient custom left over from the Papacy, and doing no damage has remained to this day...

§6[p.296] We have further Latin hymns – of Prudentius, Sedulius, Hilarius, Ambrosius, and more. Also Melanchthon’s fine hymn “Dicimus grates, Tibi summe rerum” or in German “Herr Gott dich loben alle wir, und sollen billig danken dir”. Those that are for feast days are for the most part in the Dresden Hymnal – not for public services, but for the schools to use for devotional exercises. Without doubt many also use these texts in their personal devotions: “Veni Creator Spiritus”, “Dicimus grates tibi”, “Aufer immensam” – all powerful and spirit-filled. It is well that for the sake of the common folk the Latin hymns are used sparingly in our services [long story about Latin in the Roman Church and ignorance of the people]

15 SINGING THE “AMEN”

[p.300]

A known practice among us is the singing of “Amen” by the whole congregation. When the Servant of the Church intones the so-called Collect in front of the altar, the choir and congregation respond “Amen”. Many hymns include an Amen: “In dich hab’ ich gehoffet, Herr – durch Jesum Christum. Amen”. “Vater unser” has a double Amen. [history from Judaism, etc.]

§2[p.301][Short history of Amen at reception of communion] This was a very fine and devotional practice of the early church and I wish it had not been discontinued.

§3[Jewish practice]

§4[should not be said thoughtlessly]

16 CANDIDACY PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE PASTORS

[p.305]

17 ON ORDINATION/CONSECRATION TO THE PREACHING OFFICE

[p.320]

[p.325] Few have seen an ordination, no wonder there, as it takes place in only three cities – Dresden, Leipzig and Wittenberg. It would be nice to ordain in the parish.

[p.326]Order of Service of Ordination

[p.329] laying on of hands – first Superintendent with words “Sis maneatque consecratus Deo!” (Be and remain consecrated in your service to God.) Then the remaining clergy participate in the laying on of hands- one after another. Then a prayer by the Superintendent; he leaves the altar and a preacher, clothed in a chasuble, goes to the altar, intones the Vater Unser and the Words of Institution, consecrating Bread and Wine, and offers both to the new “Shepherd of Souls”[SeelSorger], who is kneeling. Then a hymn of praise is sung and the rite ends with the Church Blessing [Benediction]. All return to the sacristy where the newly ordained are congratulated in Latin, and in part admonished to not tear down with evil living what their teaching is building up.

18 INVESTITURE/CONSECRATION IN THE OFFICE [INSTALLATION]

[p.336]

19 ON THE COLLECTS

[p.346]

§ 4[Begins with the use of the Lord’s Prayer on entering and leaving the church – then the usual fear of mechanical prayer and need to pray from the heart]

[p.349] [The Collect – usually sung – a gathering of thoughts – usually addressed to God the Father]

§5[p.350]Assigned not only to Feast Days, but Week and Workdays, a couple both to morning and evening.. They are all scriptural and devotional. [a series of examples]

20 PRAYER SERVICES AND THE GENERAL PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

[p.355]

§7[p.364]So that we don’t pass by the ceremonies in our prayers services: a devotional hymn is sung – then a preacher reads a chapter from the Bible – two Collects – the preacher speaks aloud the Our Father – the congregation speaking along while kneeling – another hymn is

sung – a Collect read – closes with the Benediction. It is lamentable that so few attend, and those that do seem to see it as an outward/good work (opus operatum). It is the way of the Church, and the turning of the times to such vanities...

§8[General Church Prayer – from the pulpit – following the general confession of sins and absolution]

21 ON THE LORD'S PRAYER OR OUR FATHER

[p.373]

The prayer of our Lord Jesus, which he gave to his disciples upon their request, is spoken often. Most pray it upon entering and leaving the church, though it would better if each prayed in his own words. After the Benediction and a short hymn such as “God be praised, it is accomplished”, the whole congregation prays the Our Father silently. The quality of this brief prayer time is surely indicated by the short time it takes the people to be done, to bolt for the door, vying for first place in the exit line, many, as soon as the Benediction is said, not waiting for the brief hymn to be sung. One is barely through half of the Our Father, if prayed with all due devotion, when the crowd is bustling out of their seats and heading for the doors. Surely the majority must chatter their way through this holy prayer. It had been better not prayed at all, or some brief heart's sigh had been uttered, such as [three examples]. The preacher might well remind the people of proper ways to pray this prayer – though even with a reminder they fall back into their casual ways. A more effective method would be for the faithful pastor to remain at the altar and pray the Our Father out loud so that the people are forced to pray along. Whether this change in the rite could be done without approval from the Consistory, I don't know.

§2...Before the reading of the Gospel text from the pulpit, an Our Father is silently said, the preacher kneeling in the pulpit and the people bow their heads. I don't know anything about the origin of this custom, but it is meaningful. If, because of illness or affliction, the pastor would wish to sit, there is no law against it. The same could be done for the preaching, though young pastors prefer the freedom for gestures that comes with standing.

§3[p.375] The intercessory prayers following the sermon are closed with the Our Father. Here also many are quick to accomplish this...I also resolved to remedy this by speaking the prayer out loud.

§4The Our Father is the chief prayer at Holy Baptism, and is also chanted by the pastor before the chanting of the Words of Institution. The chanting, without doubt, is to underscore the solemnity of the words in the presence of the communicants and all present.

As in all acts of the Church, the Our Father is prayed over the marriage couple...

§5[those who are baptized may call God “Father” – Chrysostom and other early Church Fathers]

§6Finally – the Our Father is spoken from memory and not read from the book. Occasionally a preacher can go astray and get the phrases out of order, becoming an object of derision, and even seen as an evil omen. Therefore it’s perhaps best when the prayer is made silently before the sermon – especially for insecure, nervous young preachers...

22 ON THE CUSTOMARY EPISTLES AND GOSPELS [p.379]

23 ON FREQUENT STANDING DURING THE SERVICE [p.392]

[First part on lengthy/or not announcements asking the congregation to stand and hear the Gospel]

§2[p.393] [Standing up – kneeling and prostration in Judaism and the Temple]

§3If the Jews were standing during their services, all the more should we Christians show reverence in our praying, and not be so lazy and sleepy by sitting and lying. Present day Greeks, who are mostly under the rule of the Turkish Emperor, stand for their services. [Korthold describes standing for sermons of Augustine, Eusebius] Nowadays young, healthy women cannot stand even through the reading of a text, let alone a sermon...

§4[p.395] The oft-quoted Calvör in his book on church ceremonies [first in Latin, then translated into German by Gerber]: In our churches men and women are to stand when the Gospel, Epistle or other biblical text is read, the same at the consecration. In many congregations everyone stands for the whole time communion distribution. The men are to stand for the Prayers of the Church. Now it has started to happen that many don’t stand even for the Easter Gospel, or the prayers or the consecration. Thus far Calvör.

§5[some stand through much of the service - many sit for everything – men doff their hats before their superiors, they don't do the same in church, even in warm weather]

§6[standing is to honor God – some are too arrogant to think it applies to them]

24 ON THE PUBLIC PREACHING

[p.397]

We have, God be praised, many preachers, but they are little respected by many, and indifferently sought out. Many go out as they came in, and cannot say what they have learned or retained. As the saying goes: “What one has every day, one becomes bored with”[familiarity breeds contempt]. Such ingratitude can not be good. Where are the congregations planted by the disciples in Asia, Greece and Africa? Who preaches the Gospel of Christ in Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosae, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia or Crete? No one. Sorry to say, Mohammed preaches now. But all this is as nothing to today's world. The bishops of those places admonished their listeners and warned them of ingratitude. It did not help, and therefore God let the light of his Gospel go out in these countries and cities. SAME SINS, SAME PUNISHMENT!

§2 A short description of preaching among us:

There are many different sermons. On high festivals and all Sundays, morning and afternoon sermons are held. In large cities, especially, 3-5 sermons can be heard. For example, here is the schedule in Dresden:

Kreuz Kirche – 5-6 am. early sermon with communion of 400-600

8 am. preaching office

Garnison Kirche – 9-10 am. preaching office

Schloss Kirche – 10-11 am. preaching office (Whether the court attends this service or the Catholic court service, the court is to be thanked for graciously continuing the full evangelical service in the Castle Church, administered by three court preachers.)

Besides these sermons, the Sophie Church has two morning sermons and an afternoon Vesper sermon. If the great and expensive construction of the Frauen Church is, with God's help, completed, the 8-9 am. preaching office[p.398] by the specially designated City Preacher will be reinstated, followed by the noon mid-day sermon with its concluding Catechism

examination. This mid-day service with catechetical instruction is presently held in the Orphanage Church by the Pirna Gate. [description of Leipzig, mention of other cities and rural services] [weekday services] [history of the preaching of sermons]

25 PUBLIC PRAYERS/INTERCESSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
[p.409]

26 ON THE METHOD BY WHICH MANY PREACHERS CAN
EXPOUND THE SUNDAY AND FESTIVAL GOSPELS
[p.417]

27 ON COMMUNION CEREMONIES
[p.448]

It is not difficult to speak of the essential parts of the Holy Supper, for even our children, God be praised and thanked, know that in the Holy Supper we truly receive the true body and the true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if we cannot with our reason grasp this mystery, so we trust and believe our dear Savior's words when he says, "Take and eat, this is my body: Drink ye all of it, this is my blood." He who with a little bread wonderfully fed many thousands; who walked on the sea; who raised the dead, even such as already stank; he can accomplish in the Supper what he has promised. We Evangelicals can never be thankful enough to our Savior, that he has helped us, through Luther, to return to a full and free use of his precious Sacraments, with unimpeded access as often as we wish, to the comfort of our souls. [p.449] It is only to be lamented that so many among us neither acknowledge or observe this great blessedness.

§2When we think of the circumstances and ceremonies that we must observe regarding communion: To meet with the pastor for examination and absolution some days before...

§3Having met with the pastor, the pastor then prays on the following Sunday for a worthy and fruitful communion by those prepared.

§4After the concluded sermon/prayers/announcements, a hymn is sung in preparation for communion, that heart, soul and mind may be awakened to contemplate the benefits of eating and drinking the body and blood of Jesus Christ. In the Dresden area, and printed in the Hekelischen Hymnal, the following songs are sung alternately: "Tretet her zum Tisch des Herrn", "Ich komm eingeladen", "Jesu, meines Herzens Freud,

süsser Jesu". I certainly do not praise the stubborn teacher who will not allow new or unfamiliar songs to be introduced...

§5 During the singing of this hymn the communicants gather before the altar and kneel there, as many as there is room, the rest take seats. This kneeling is a fine old ceremony with roots in the Old Testament (Solomon, Daniel, David).

§6 When the hymn is ended, the preacher says, "Let us pray". Then he chants the Our Father, the Amen being sung by the congregation. He then chants the Words of Institution. In some places the unhealthy practice has developed of the congregation singing along. These words are to be proclaimed by the [p.453]ordained minister and received as proclamation by the congregation. The pastor should use another tone (there are three in the Agenda) or speak them. If this doesn't break the habit, then a local church authority should speak to the congregation.

The question comes, why the Our Father and Words of Institution are chanted in our churches, and not in the Roman Church. I don't know the reason, but can imagine it is for the sake of proclamation.

§7 [p.454] With the chanting of the Words of Institution there is a ceremony that is not of so much significance, but to which the common people pay close attention and attach great significance. Namely, when the words are said, "this is my body" – the sign of the cross is made over the Host; and with the words, "this cup is the new testament in my blood" – again, the cross is signed – without a doubt as a reminder of the crucifixion and death of our Savior, thereby we also worthily remain united with him in his death, not as a mere physical, outward sign, but as a mighty, inner reminder of his death on the cross. If a preacher, in the course of the consecration should forget to make the sign of the cross, you can be sure some simple soul, of which there are many in every congregation, will have scruples about the efficacy of the Sacrament...the signing of the cross is neither from our Lord nor the apostles, but was introduced much later by well-intentioned people. The Sacrament is no less and no more efficacious with or without such signing...

§8 At the Consecration a small bell is rung somewhat loudly, first at the blessing of the bread, then at the blessing of the wine. This ringing has surely been retained from the Papacy.[p.455]As to its purpose, that I don't know. [His Leipzig experience and first hearing of the bell ringing] As it has little or no practical value, it could be done away with. There are many things retained in our services that could be done away with if

people would make their objections known to the authorities and state their case...

§9 A particular ceremony widespread in performing the consecration at the Supper is the wearing of a chasuble over a surplice. I have also seen in many places that the preacher puts on the white surplice and the chasuble just before the service starts. Then when he has read the Gospel before the altar, he lifts the chasuble up over his head and spreads it over the altar. Then, during the singing of the Creed, enters the pulpit in the white surplice. Following the sermon he again goes to the altar and puts the chasuble on. For anyone seeing it for the first time, it is quite a curious thing, and for those of a skeptical disposition, even laughable. I could name places where this is still the practice. In most places, the preacher, after leaving the pulpit, goes to the sacristy and puts on the chasuble that has been laid out for that day, and then goes to the altar for the Communion liturgy - which is certainly the best practice.

As to the origins of the chasuble, it comes from the Papacy and is a relic hold-over. [some discussion of Jewish temple vestments]

Since the Reformation such things were not done away with for the sake of the simple and un-learned, those who cling to such visuals until such time as they can be weaned from their dependence on them. Yes, in our day there are people everywhere who lay great store by chasubles, and think it a good work to commission an expensive chasuble and pulpit/altar paraments and hold them in honor in the church. There are churches with 4-10 chasubles; one may well say, “wherefore this waste”? Would it not be better to clothe the children of the poor, or the old, who cannot buy clothes? It would please God more, as he has commanded us to clothe the naked. Christ and his apostles did not command us to wear chasubles and use altar decorations. More to wonder are the number of preachers among us who care much about these things and complain that the parish has an old, tawdry or not very beautiful chasuble. They should be happy if none are available. Many parishioners [Zuhörer] don’t care about chasubles and are content if the pastor[Seelsorger] does not wear them. I know preachers who have never worn them. I myself wore them for six years at the beginning of my ministry on account of the parish patron, but have not worn them since. And the congregation would think it strange to see one used now. [Luther quote]

§10 [p.459] Lights (or wax candles) are used at the communion. [history given and then the “practical” suggestion that they aren’t needed]

§11 [the kind of bread used and its history]

§12 Now we come to the distribution of the blessed bread and cup. We have somewhat altered the words, which are spoken as follows: “Take and eat, the true body of Jesus Christ given into death for all your sins, strengthen[p.463] and preserve your soul and body in true faith unto eternal life. Amen”; and similarly so with the consecrated wine. In offering the true Body the sign of the cross is made. For practical reasons the Cup cannot be extended and a hand kept free to make the sign of the cross – which is not necessary anyway. [A paragraph on addressing aristocrats and royalty – he considers it best to speak as one ordinarily does when addressing the aristocracy – he would think it odd to address them differently in church than in the palace]

§13 When a communicant has consumed the true Body and Blood, and will then leave the altar, there is a custom in many places that I particularly like: they kneel again at the altar and make a prayer of thanksgiving. When the next person draws near, the first person stands and departs. When once this ritual is instituted, no one will wish to see it stopped.

§14 Further, it is a good custom in many places for the communicant to be congratulated by others on having taken such food for the soul...much like people say to one another after meals in the home.

§15 To be remembered – it is not mandated how often one communes – which is the freedom of each member. It is a privilege to belong to a parish that offers weekly. There are Evangelicals living in Roman territory that hunger and thirst to commune, and must travel far. We can rejoice that there are people communing each week. In the Roman Church, many are content to go to confession and not so often to communion.

§16 [a paragraph on Georg Cassander along with an example of his writing -1577]

§17 [further about Cassander]

§18 [p.470] [he can't understand the practice of sending non-communicants away in the Early Church – wouldn't it be better for these young people to stay and observe, as is done in Gerber's day]

§19 [conduct of the Pastor – approach the altar with heartfelt prayer and a devout heart.

Be present in mind when distributing the Sacrament, don't look around absent-mindedly while communing people]

§20 It is known, especially in large cities, that many leave during the distribution. Many leave because they are pregnant, nursing, or old and infirm. Upon the request of many, there are places that have a Benediction after the sermon for those who (must) leave early. Large city churches have two pastors distributing – it can be accomplished in 30 minutes[!]. It would be good if country parishes could have an Elder assist in order to shorten the time of distribution...

§21 The distribution of communion includes another ceremony. Two school boys stand on either side of the altar and hold a communicants cloth, lest through an oversight of the preacher a Host should fall to the floor, or drops of wine spill...

§22[p.476] When the communion is concluded, the preacher intones “Thank the Lord, for he is good, Hallelujah”, and the choir answers: “For his mercy endures forever, Hallelujah”. The preacher continues: “Let us thank the Lord and pray. We give you thanks...” whereupon the choir and whole congregation sing “Amen”. Then the Benediction is pronounced. Some read it, others speak from memory, which comes across better.

And that is what is to be said about communion ceremonies.

§23-28 [various Luther quotes and discussion]

28 PRIVATE COMMUNION OF THE SICK [p.483]

29 CEREMONIES FOR CONFESSION [p.499]

Confession means to repent of past sins from the heart, confessing to God or man, seeking or imploring grace and forgiveness. Such confession is commanded by God (Jer. 3:12,13). [Biblical background and history follows] [p.502] Since 1713, everyone that plans to go to Confession and then to Communion must contact the pastor a week ahead (also in Mecklenburg 1708), so that the pastor has time to examine, instruct and teach, as well as punish and admonish according to his knowledge of the penitent [Beicht-Kind]. Previously those seeking Confession [confitenten] showed up unannounced. No time was possible for examination or extended talks. At first the 1713 ordinance was seen as strange and a bit Romish by the people – but they saw the value and do not oppose it. True, in the big cities there are too many for much detailed pastoral care; it’s more successful in the villages. Locally, the

Sunday before, when the others have left the church following Vespers, they gather at certain chairs, where the pastor, or in his absence, the School Master, questions them concerning the Catechism. If there are aspects of the persons understanding that need to be addressed, that can be [p.503]done in private throughout the week. [Various situations and direct address to fellow pastors about his recommended method]

§5 On Saturdays the Father Confessor takes his place in the church. For good reason, the Saxon Church Order does not allow confessions to be heard in the parsonage. In large cities confessions begin in the morning (in Dresden 5 or 6 am.); in smaller places – noon or 1 pm. Here, and elsewhere, a prayer service is held – a hymn of repentance, a penitential psalm and Vesper prayers, the Our Father with the preceding Versicle “Lord, hear my word, etc.” and following the Our Father, “Lord, God Father in heaven, have mercy upon us, etc”; then a short hymn, Collect before the altar, Benediction, and then a confession /penitential sermon. In Dresden the sermon is not held because the penitents are so many that they can’t all come at the same time or they would wait all day for Absolution. But in Dresden the Friday service includes an admonition to penitence read from the pulpit at the end of the sermon...[printed out in a suggested form]

§6 [p.508] In other places...there are lazy pastors who don’t give these sermons...[a sample penitential sermon]

§7 Here is the formal Confession/Absolution: the penitent [Beicht Kind], sitting, standing or kneeling, lays his confession of sins before the preacher/servant of God. Among the common folk they use the common Sunday confession language as a rule – others have formulas from the catechism or communion books. Many use these without understanding the sense, or they use the form [p.515]they learned as schoolchildren, even into old age. Those who can use their own words, which gives the clearest insight. The absolution in private confession can be according to the mind of the pastor...[various examples of conversation between pastor and penitent]

§8 In closing with the absolution, the Servant of God lays his hand on the head of the penitent, indeed three times, with the naming of each Divine Person, and then, with the parting words: “Go in peace and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you “, the sign of the cross is made...[discussion of laying on of hands]

§9 [For the benefit of foreigners Gerber provides the text of the Sunday General Confession formula, along with other examples]

§10 [p.521] [More examples of available texts with short explanations]

§24 [p.545] The Penitent, when wishing to commune at a scheduled service, lays his confession before the Servant of God at a particular chair built for this purpose. These chairs are commonly placed near the altar, and provided with a grill or glass windows, so that the confession taking place is not so easily observed by others waiting to make their own confession. In Leipzig, I believe the men meet at tables in the sacristy to make their confession – the women however go to a confessional booth near the altar wherein there are seats. I will not attempt to describe how a confessional is to be designed, there being many fantastical constructions. Simply said, it should not be so open that the confessor and penitent can't feel free to speak their minds. For very weighty matters it is better to meet in the parsonage for extended talks...[p.546] One may well say that the confessional shouldn't be too dark, as they are in Rostock and other cities of that region, where the doors are made of wood and there are green curtains. As soon as one enters and the door closes it is pitch-dark, which can give occasion for undesirable suspicions.

It would be better if less was spent on extravagant confessionals, for example those in the Pomeranian city of Anclam (the pious donations of rich merchants), which look like fair and lovely towers. O where is true Christian humility and lowliness! Does it not also apply to confessionals?

§25 [the Beichtpfennig – or Confession Penny – given to the priest – often used for charitable work in the parish]

§26 [Beichtvater/Father Confessor – a pre-reformation name that continues in use]

30 DAYS OF PUBLIC PENANCE AND CHARITY

[p.559]

31 MARRIAGE

[p.577]

32 CEREMONIES AT BAPTISMS

[p.599]

[p.603 – Baptisms in the presence of the congregation are encouraged]

33 EVANGELICAL CONFIRMATION[FIRMUNG]
[p.622]

34 CATECHESIS
[p.643]

35 VISITATION OF THE SICK
[p.658]

36 BLESSING OF THE DYING
[p.673]

37 FUNERAL SERMONS AND EULOGIES
[p. 679]

38 PUBLIC BURIALS
[p. 704]

§6[p.710] In Saxony funeral processions continue to be preceded by a processional cross, a custom recently discarded in Halberstadt(1729) and not known in Mecklenburg and other states bordering the Baltic.

39 EULOGIES
[p.728]

40 EPITAPHS AND STONE GRAVE MARKERS, ALSO
IMAGES IN THE CHURCHES
[p.738]

41 TRADITIONAL MOURNING OF THE DEAD
[p.747]

42 ON THE AGREEMENT IN CEREMONIES BETWEEN THE
ANCIENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND OUR CHURCHES
[p.752]

Now we shall present a summary of the agreement between ancient and contemporary Church ceremonies. We also begin with prayer in our services, using the form of the Lord's Prayer, which is prized as the most holy of prayers. We have temples or Houses of God, in which we give,

with all reverence, the worship due our great God. And all of these Houses of God are oriented to the east, as the ancients believed that Christ our Lord, as the Sun of Righteousness, would, like the sun, come from the east in judgment. And, if evidence is taken from many places, it is not forbidden to build with a southern or western orientation. By rights, if we take our cue from God's command to orient the Temple of Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant to the west, we then distinguish ourselves from the heathen who oriented themselves to the east and worshipped the rising sun. Our churches consist of three parts: entry way/narthex, nave – where the listeners sit and stand, and the choir – where the altar stands. Services are held morning, mid-day, and Vesper time, in which we sing spiritual hymns, the Holy Scriptures are read aloud, and at certain times explained in sermons. Then follow prayers for the well-being of the Church and general concerns for all Christendom. Finally, the Benediction [Kirchen Segen] is pronounced and the service closed with a hymn. [Catechetical work – some places have a designated instructor whose only calling is to teach the catechism]

§2 As to the ceremonies that concern preaching in our churches, the art of preaching is much the same as in the ancient church, and there are outstanding speakers among us, gifted with splendid Divine wisdom in their speaking and writing... We have pulpits and altars from which those who are called and whose teaching and manner of life have been examined, expound the divine Word to the people. In rural areas where there might be the lack of a preacher, the Schoolmaster reads the Scriptures or a postil to the people. Nothing in our Baptism ceremonies is lacking of the efficacy and completeness granted by our precious Savior in Baptism. We perform the same according to the institution of Christ, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, indeed after the manner of the early church with the three-fold sprinkling of the candidate. [Sponsors and their duties] The child is given a name, and a white baptismal gown is put on the child as a sign that the child has put on the innocence of Christ and is henceforth reckoned righteous in Christ and a partaker of the [p.754] mercy of God. At the baptism of adults, be they Jews, Turks or Socinians, all the ceremonies are observed that the Christian Church has ordained for those entering the church.

§3 Confirmation of the Youth – confessing their faith before the whole congregation, admonished to remember the covenant made by God in their baptism and continue in the way of salvation, and to remain constant in faith. Before we approach the Holy Supper we first make our confession in the confessional, and after absolution we go to the Holy Table of our gracious Savior. This most revered Supper, founded by our

Lord Christ as a memorial of his suffering and death, is celebrated by us with the greatest devotion and worship after the command and institution of our Lord. The Servant of God takes the greatest care that nothing of the blessed bread or wine should fall to the ground during the distribution. In the early Church the priest spoke to the communicants with these words; Sursum Corda! (Lift your hearts to the Lord!) This formula is used to this day in various places. Then follows the Lord's Prayer (in many places with an explanation) and the Words of Institution are read or sung. When this is done, the communicants go one by one in orderly fashion and with devout sighs to receive the sacred Body of Christ under the blessed bread which we call a Host (or Oblaten) and the sacred Blood of Jesus under the blessed wine. During the distribution the congregation sings devotional hymns and songs of praise to the glory and praise of the Lord our God. In most places wax candles are lighted and the priests who distribute the Sacrament[hochwürdige] are clothed in white surplices and beautiful mass vestments [meßgewandten].

§4 [p.755] Of ceremonies concerning Fallen Sinners and their doing penance, only a shadow of the practice of the early church remains; most of its power and authority has been taken from the pastoral office. All that remains is: one who has caused public offence to the congregation must kneel in full view of the Assembly, by the altar, pulpit, or some other visible location whenever the congregation gathers until such time as the preacher announces from the pulpit that said person has repented and intends to amend his life. The congregation is then admonished to receive this person back into fellowship as a member in good standing of the Christian congregation, participating in the communion of saints in the confessional and the Holy Supper; and to take heed from this example to not fall from grace.

§5 Ordination of priests by the laying on of hands. Ringing of bells. High festivals and other festivals are celebrated in praise of the Triune God and to the praise of our Savior and Mediator Jesus Christ. On appointed days we hold in blessed memory the holy apostles and martyrs. In all these services the people are instructed and led into the living knowledge of the immeasurable goodness, wisdom and glory of God, the atoning merit of Jesus Christ, following in the footsteps of the apostles and martyrs in the practice of virtue.

An especial ornament of our services is the vocal/instrumental church music, which when done to the glory of God and [p.756] in good order, serves admirably to awaken fear of God and a devote spirit, whereby organs, trumpets, timpani, oboes, and violins give a pleasing harmony.

Finally, we do not cease to bow and bend at the naming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, now raised to the Divine Majesty.

§6 Also, we maintain and practice the signing of the cross received from the early Christians, in blessed memory of our Savior's suffering and of the instrument whereon our redemption was accomplished.

All manner of images and painted stories from Scripture are retained in our church buildings. The likeness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; the Virgin Mary holding Jesus, her child, in arm; the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and renowned Doctors of the Church – these we gladly allow in our churches, not as objects for worship, but for the conserving and passing along of their memory. [according to Scriptural use] we have appointed days of repentance, prayer and fasting [alms giving – Klingel beute – gathered at Sunday services – also the Beicht Pfennig goes to charity]

§7 weddings

§8 funerals – and church blessings/benedictions

43 ON THE USEFULNESS/VALUE OF THE CEREMONIES IN OUR CHURCHES

[p.759]

All is done to the praise and worship of high and mighty God

§2 ...our services are done to the glory of God...

§3...these services require order for the well-being of the community...

§4...certainly one cannot express enough how useful and salutary the ceremonies of the Christians are, which also serve like a glorious picture to instruct the ignorant in the Christian way...for so the ceremonies function. For example: Baptism with the signing of the cross at various times, kneeling for prayers, kneeling for the holy Supper and the repeated use of the signing of the cross, the preceding confession and absolution, weddings – well wishes, singing and prayers for those beginning married life – actions that accord with the divine Word, and even more occasions where those present as actors or watchers are raised to a more heart-felt devotion. Their hearts are truly lifted up to the Lord, to a blissful remembrance of Christ's crucifixion and a trust in the same. To a fitting abasement and humility before God, a child-like fear and holy awe in his presence. For the sake of the ignorant such ceremonies

are intended – for the respect and worthy reverence due the most holy Sacraments and the precious Word of God, and for an ardent praise of God. For it is certain, where such ceremonies are dropped, these characteristics of true worship,[p.761]already less than satisfactory among many, would fall away completely. None would hold the Holy Supper in regard, and many more would go forward as pigs to the trough. The baptism of children, even of adults, would be viewed by many as pure child’s play. When adorned with many ceremonies, people are more likely led to view this holy display as something to be believed. Enlightened Christians understand the thing better and don’t need such ceremonies, but knowing the need for these ceremonies by the rough crowd they take the occasion to increase their own refreshment and awakening, the holy and interior joy provided by these wise, lovely, and pleasing ordinances of the House and People of God. What joy dear David found in the ceremonies of the services of his time (Ps.27:4) If he spoke only of the essential elements of the service, what need would he have had to think of the House/Temple of God? One has no need of a temple, but can raise holy hands to God in every place and worship in spirit and in truth, as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman (John 4:21-23) But since David expressly mentioned the temple, we can imagine what joy he must have found in the lovely ordinances of temple worship. His joy was awakened through these ceremonies – and it was a holy and God-pleasing joy. Who would say that the services of the New Testament should not have the same effect on pious souls? [p.762] Such is the glorious profit of these sacred ceremonies and practices which God and the Church have instituted and prescribed in The Service.

CONCLUSION

[a long prayer]

The Last Earthly Days of the Author – described by his Son: M. C. G. Gerber