

**THIRD LECTURE: Religious Bodies That Deny the Trinity and Primary Fundamental Doctrines of the Bible are Not Christian Churches But Anti-Christian organizations.**  
(continued from Morsels From The Saviour June-July 2013)

**Those who Deny the Trinity and Primary Fundamental Doctrines of the Bible are Not Christian Churches**



Why are Unitarian religious bodies to be considered as existing outside the Christian Church? The answer to this reads as follows: because in these religious bodies there are **no Gospel and no Sacraments**, and also consequently **no person can come to faith in Christ as their Saviour**. However where there are no believers, then there is also no Church. Where do I find wheat<sup>23</sup>? There, where it has been SOWN. So also **I can only find the Church there where the Church has been sown and is being sown**. By what means is the Church being sown or what is the seed of the Church? The **Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners**, as it exists in the public preaching of

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<sup>20</sup> Its power to prevent decay and to preserve flavour in food.

<sup>21</sup> Kretzmann says that it “was spread out in a court of the Temple to prevent slipping in wet weather, so the Christians that have ceased to apply themselves to their business of acting as a moral power in the world, will partake of the judgment of the world.” (NT, I, 25).

<sup>22</sup> Dr. F. Pieper (1852- 1931) delivered these lectures to the entire student body of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in the so-called “Lutherstunden” or **Luther Hours**. He followed a tradition started by Dr. Walther. On September 4, 1885 Dr. Walther stated: “We call these Friday evening lectures, which form, as it were, the conclusion of the week’s instruction, ‘Luther Hours,’ chiefly because in these lectures I let our beloved father Luther, the God-appointed Reformer and the common teacher of our church, speak to you.” (Walther, “Law and Gospel,” p. 344). In these lectures Dr. Pieper deals with significant points found in Walther’s outstanding book, “The Evangelical Lutheran



the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. Therefore where this Gospel no longer exists, then I also cannot find the Church and **such religious bodies which have no Gospel are outside the Christian Church.**

In addition to this, the Unitarians have no Christian Baptism as Calov<sup>24</sup> writes:

“We know from Epiphanius<sup>25</sup> that because of their abominable teachings the *Samosatines*<sup>26</sup> were regarded and condemned by the ancient church as murderers of God and of Christ and as atheists; *for they rejected the divine nature of Christ* and therefore, as far as they were concerned, they denied and murdered God. They were not at all regarded as Christians, but the 21st canon of the Council of Nicaea rather determined that [when repenting] they SHOULD BE BAPTISED in the Christian Church.... The verdict of Tertullian in his book on Baptism is rightly also applied to the Socinian sect: ‘Since we and they do not have the same GOD and the same CHRIST, namely, one and the same, therefore we also do not have the same BAPTISM.’ Here we may also quote the saying of Cyprian concerning the heretics who were to be baptized: ‘We and the heretics cannot have the same Baptism, since the church does not have in common with them either God the Father or God the Son or God the Holy Ghost or faith itself.’ Hilary, a deacon of the Roman church, according to the testimony of Jerome (in opposition to the Luciferians) admitted to Baptism those who had been baptized by the Arians.

“The late Aegidius Hunnius<sup>27</sup> writes in the 41st Disputation: ‘WE SAY THAT A BAPTISM ADMINISTERED BY AN ANTI-TRINITARIAN (WHO DENIES THE TRINITY) OR BY AN ARIAN IS NOT VALID IN CASE THE MINISTER AND THE CONGREGATION (IN WHOSE NAME THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM IS ADMINISTERED) DO NOT BELIEVE THE ARTICLE OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.’ How and why the ancient church judged that the Arians should be classed as HEATHEN rather than as Christians has been shown above (namely, because they worshipped a fictitious Christ, of whom they said that He was not God essentially). Athanasius<sup>28</sup> thus writes to Epictetus: ‘How can those be called Christians who say that the Word came into the man Jesus as into a [human] prophet, denying that He Himself became incarnate in the Virgin Mary?’ Fulgentius writes in his book on the true faith, addressed to Donatus: ‘Dare they [the Arians] say that they are Christians, whereas a Christian is named after Christ, and no one can be a Christian who does not confess that Christ the Lord is his God?’ Since the case of the Socinians is precisely the same, we must pronounce upon them the same verdict.’ (SOCINISMUS PROFLIGATUS [1668], 4, pp.33f.) [Translation from Walther **True Visible Church**, p.33-34].

Pay attention to the above where Calov distinguishes between a Unitarian pastor and a Unitarian congregation. The fact that a pastor may himself in his heart be an anti-Trinitarian is not yet sufficient enough to make a congregation an anti-Trinitarian organisation. It can indeed occur that the unbelieving preacher either keeps his unbelief entirely to himself or certainly does not express the same clearly and yet the congregation which such a person serves still holds fast to the doctrine of the Triune God and the deity of Christ. In this case the viewpoint of the congregation is to be judged according to the position of the congregation itself, not according to the position of the preacher. If, for example, the congregation still had a catechism in which the Trinity and the deity of Christ are being taught, then one would recognize a Baptism carried out inside this congregation as a Christian Baptism.

This would not be the case, however, if it occurs that a congregation tolerates a preacher who *openly confesses* as a preacher his unbelief and possibly even has accepted an anti-Trinitarian catechism, as it is the case, for example, with the St. Louis congregation of the "Free Protestants". In this case one must say: Here

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<sup>24</sup> A faithful Lutheran teacher who lived from 1612 till 1686.

<sup>25</sup> He lived from 315 till 403 and while he supported the Council at Nicaea against those who attacked the Godhead of Christ, yet sadly he supported monasticism.

<sup>26</sup> They denied the Trinity.



the rejection of all the essential parts of the Christian doctrine has also already occurred within the congregation, therefore the congregation is also outside the Christian Church and those inside this congregation who have been baptized must first be baptized when they come into the Christian Church.

**An Orthodox Lutheran Church Teaches God's Word in its Truth and purity and Administers the Sacraments according to Christ's Institution.**

Let us now hear a definition of a true visible or orthodox church:

“While ecclesiastical writers at times call those communions **true** or **real** churches that retain God's Word essentially, in contradistinction to those that are not churches, nevertheless, **a true visible church in the real strict sense of the term**, in opposition to heterodox churches or sects, is only that in which God's Word is proclaimed in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.” (Thesis VIII) [Translation from Walther **True Visible Church**, p. 35].

Then follows the Scripture proof:

‘Christ says: **“If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:31,32). Again, **the sheep hear the shepherd's voice and follow Him, and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from Him** (John 10:3-5). Now, since the church is the sum total of Christ's disciples, or the flock of His sheep, the true Church, in the strict sense of the term, that is, the Church as it should be, is only that **which continues in His Word, hears His voice, follows only Him, and avoids a stranger who propounds another doctrine.**

‘St. Paul voices this admonition: **“Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all”** (Eph.4:3-6). A true church, therefore, as it should be, is *only that in which there is a unity of the Spirit in faith and life, in Word and sacrament.*

‘Again, the apostle writes: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”** (1 Cor.1:10). A Church, as it should be, therefore, is only that which in the matter of the revealed doctrine does not only *speak the same thing*, but also does this *in the same mind* and in the same judgment.’ [Translation from Walther **True Visible Church**, p.35].

Therefore we steadfastly maintain that that Church alone deserves to be called *the true visible Church* which not merely continues in some, but in *all* articles of the revealed Word. When and in so far as a church body proclaims its own and not Christ's teaching, it does not have the form ordained by Christ, it is not a *true visible Church* in an unlimited sense.

According to God's Word, as it has already previously been drawn to our attention, only *one* direction in the church has been authorised, not two or three or more, namely, that direction alone has been authorised which continues in all points of the revealed truth. All directions which in one or more points depart from the revealed truth are not ordained by God, but they are only permitted by Him, *in so far as* they depart from God's Word they do not have any right of existence. According to His Word God wants to have only an orthodox church. The orthodoxy of the church is the external form of the church which is ordained by God.

**Our Lutheran Confessions Teach the Same**

That is also what our church confesses in the seventh article of the *Augsburg Confession* when it states:



‘It is also taught among us that one holy Christian Church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers *among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.* (Art. 7, 1, p.32.) [Translation from Walther **True Visible Church**, p.36.]

Exactly on the grounds of the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession our opponents have made the accusation against us that according to Lutheran doctrine the Church is to be found only inside the Lutheran Church, or that the Lutheran Church declares itself to be the only saving Church, the Church outside of which there are no believers, for here the Church is being defined as the “assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached in its *purity* and the sacraments are administered [*correctly*] *according to the gospel.*” They claim that according to our teaching that in the sects the Gospel is not purely taught and the Sacraments are not being rightly administered according to Christ’s institution, then there could no longer be any Christians there in consequence of this Article.

However it is to be pointed out: Our Lutheran Confessions here describe the Church *as it should be constituted and as it should appear* — also in opposition to false papistical descriptions of the Church. God certainly desires that His Word be preached in its purity and the Sacraments correctly administered; for this purpose then He has given His Word that it be correctly taught; also for this purpose He has instituted His Sacraments that they be correctly administered according to His institution. That is what our church here confesses.

Therefore our Confessions define the Church exactly the same as Christ Himself when He says in John 10:3-5: “The sheep hear His voice.... follow Him....a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him.” It is also the same in the area of earthly life that a thing is described according to its marks<sup>29</sup> which belong to its **true** nature. If I am asked to describe a man, I describe him as not only existing of body and soul, but also say further about him, for example, that he has two arms and two legs according to his body. By this however I do not deny that those are also still men who merely have *one* arm and *one* leg; but these are not men as they should be or men according to their true nature. Therefore I do not also include a missing leg and a missing arm in describing a man and perhaps say: “A man is a being, a part of which is two arms, a part of which is one arm” and so on.

Thus also the **Augsburg Confession** in describing the Church or in the case of Christians does not specify that there are Christians who are led astray by false teachers, who do not listen to some parts of Christ’s Word. With this also agrees the description which the **Formula of Concord** gives of the correct form of the Church:

“In line with the above, the churches will not condemn each other because of a difference in ceremonies, when in Christian liberty one uses fewer or more of them, **as long as they are otherwise agreed in doctrine and in ALL its articles and are also agreed concerning the right use of the holy Sacraments.**” [(Art.X,30,6,p.616) Quoted from Walther **True Visible Church**, p. 36].

Here the positive is stated as well as the negative in which the correct form of the Church of God on earth consists: In the first place, not in this that the Church everywhere has the same ceremonies. There can be different ceremonies in the Missouri Synod than in the Wisconsin Synod and in the Minnesota Synod and in these three synods they are different again than in the Saxon Free Church; in this way the correct external form ordained by God is not being removed from these church bodies, for church ceremonies are neither commanded nor forbidden in God’s Word. However in what must all church bodies be in agreement who make the claim that they are *orthodox* church bodies, such church bodies as God wants to have? They must be in agreement “in doctrine and *ALL* its articles,” not only in one or more articles. Here they have in our Confessions a definition as to what an orthodox church body is.

(Delivered on 15 November 1889. Headings added. Translated BLW. Proofed KKM. )

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