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## Justification, Santification, and Stewardship in Their Aims and Relation to Each Other

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## Justification, Sanctification, and Stewardship in Their Aims and Relation to Each Other

Essay read before the Pastoral Conference of the Western District  
of the Missouri Synod, October, 1935

### XVI

Now we come to the consideration of *stewardship*. Stewardship consists in our being entrusted with certain resources concerning the use of which we have received instructions from the Owner and have to render an account. The *Standard Dictionary* says: "A steward is a person entrusted with the management of estates or affairs not his own." You cannot be a steward without being in charge of something. At the same time, our being a steward implies that we are not the owners of that which is placed in our care. Factors to be considered are the owner, the property in question, the steward, his administration, and the account that must be rendered.

### XVII

The word *stewardship* is not used in the Bible in inculcating those lessons which we have been considering. It is found in the Scriptures, but with reference to secular affairs. Cf. Luke 16, 2 (*oikonomia*). The noun *stewards* is found in the New Testament a few times in the sense in which we employ it here, but chiefly in speaking of pastors. 1 Cor. 4, 1 Paul speaks of the called servants of the Lord as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Titus 1, 7: "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." Of a different nature is 1 Pet. 4, 10, where spiritual gifts are pointed to which are bestowed both on pastors and hearers: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." The Greek word in all these instances is *oikonomos*, a person entrusted with the management of a house. That pastors have this appellation given to them very particularly should fill them with a sense of their responsibility in the same degree as it should make them mindful of having become recipients of a high honor.

### XVIII

The relation between sanctification and stewardship is that the former is the wider term, including the latter. The dividing-line is hard to draw, and we need not quarrel with those who identify sanctification and stewardship. The distinction between the two concepts is that stewardship, as we employ the word, pertains to the use we make of what God has endowed us with,



while sanctification, besides pertaining to such use, refers to the state we are in. Stewardship looks to what we do; sanctification embraces in addition our receiving and enjoying the gifts of God. It will be difficult to find a place in the concept of stewardship for such ideas as the fear of God, trust in the Savior, the hope of heaven, and still these undeniably belong to what we term sanctification. Looking at the matter from another point of view, let us think of Bible-reading. Is it an act of stewardship when I read the Holy Scriptures? Primarily not. I am there receiving what God is offering me. Regarded differently, it might be called stewardship, because there is involved here the use which I make of the time placed at my disposal, and no one will deny that, when I am reading the Holy Scriptures, I am making good use of my time. What is important is not so much a precise classification of stewardship as the practise of it.

### XIX

The Owner, or Master, we have in mind when we speak of Christian stewardship is God, our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. This is a very self-evident truth; we dwell on it for a minute, however, to remind ourselves that the Scriptures contain many references to it. In the parables of the Pounds and of the Talents it is Jesus who entrusts goods to His servants and afterwards makes them render an account. How mightily the words of Ps. 24, 1 ring out: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein"! When David and his people made offerings for the Temple to be built, he said, 1 Chron. 29, 14: "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." St. Paul levels all haughty, conceited, self-exalting notions to the ground, saying, 1 Cor. 4, 7: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" The view that we ourselves are owners of the things mentioned is one of the sad delusions of our own sinful nature, which must be counteracted, opposed, and suppressed.

What tremendous, infinite claims God has upon us is brought out in the titles given Him by all Christians, calling Him Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, Sanctifier, to mention but a few fundamental ones furnished by consideration of the Apostles' Creed. The list could be easily extended. If we are dilatory, self-seeking, indolent stewards, it is because we do not vividly realize the majesty and goodness of our Master.



## XX

The stewards are the Christians, all of them, without exception, not merely the ministers; for the words of St. Peter "Ye are a chosen generation . . . that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" are spoken to all Christians; not merely to the wealthy, for the readers of the apostle just referred to numbered many penniless slaves in their midst; not merely to the prominent and influential, for the Christians in Corinth who were exhorted to make the proper use of their possessions in the great chapters on giving, 2 Cor. 8 and 9, are said by the apostle to belong chiefly to the lowly and despised. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," 1 Cor. 1, 26. Is the child going to school, the mother tied down by numberless household duties, the tottering grandfather, a steward? If they are Christians, then we should not hesitate to give them that title; for it is certain that some means and opportunities for service have been given to them. The universality of this status we should preach with joyous power.

## XXI

The property in question is equally comprehensive. It consists of all the material, physical, mental, and spiritual endowments and the opportunities for service God has given to us. We must here not think merely of the wheat and corn of the farmer, the pay envelope of the mechanic, and the monthly check of the professional man, but also of the eloquence of the political speaker and legal pleader, the poetic abilities of the literary artist, the pictures of the painter, the acute reasoning of the logical thinker, the knowledge and skill of the physician, the Biblical understanding of teachers and pupils in Christian day-schools and Sunday-schools. All these possessions or endowments are included here as well as the diamond necklaces of our society dames and the lovely flowers gracing their rock gardens. How easy it is to utter these words! And how quickly one can construct logical, flawless arguments to prove them true; but how difficult to make them live and powerful, moving the hearts! That every time an opportunity for doing a good work and making a statement of our faith offers itself our position as Christian stewards is pressing its claims upon us, that every hour marked by the striking of our faithful clock is put into the great ledger of the Master as one of the assets of the estate for which the steward will be held responsible,—how much we ministers preach these truths, but how little we succeed in regulating our own lives and those of our parishioners according to them!



## XXII

The comprehensiveness of stewardship is not sufficiently realized. It is usually held to refer to our money. What a sad error not to see that it refers to all other resources as well. The limitation mentioned has an unfavorable reaction even in the sphere of Mammon. We Christians are stewards, *wir sind Haushalter*, is a statement most of our congregation-members have heard repeatedly from their pastors. What does it mean to them? We cannot read *their* hearts, but we can read our own, and the usual meaning attached to these words is that we ought to make the right use of our money. That is chiefly the reaction which is produced. There is a quick mental check-up on the cash in the family till and on the amount still left in the bank, some rapid calculation maneuvers in which division and substraction figure prominently, and the subject is dismissed. The person who does not see that *all* his resources and he himself belong to the Lord takes a low view of stewardship. As a result, even in that sphere in which he acknowledges himself to be a steward his efforts will be half-hearted and his attacks on Mammon lacking in earnestness and vigor. Think of what a mighty army our Synod would be if all its members were fully aware of their status as stewards and willing to put all their resources, physical, mental, spiritual, into the service of their heavenly King. Imperfect beings as we are, we can never reach such a blessed stage of understanding and resolve for God-pleasing, united activity here on earth, but we should strive for improvement in this respect. That all our gifts here have to be thought of is clear from 1 Pet. 4, 10 ("as good stewards of the *manifold, poikiles*, grace of God").

## XXIII

Special attention should be called to our possession, as individuals and as a church-body, of the unadulterated Word and Sacraments. What an indescribably rich treasure and resource they constitute! Among all the things entrusted to us Christians as stewards the means of grace are the chief ones. If we were not so accustomed to having them, we should find it most amazing that we poor mortals hold in our hands such heavenly, divinely powerful, life-bestowing gifts. Our personal equipment one might liken to the poles and wires and switchboards of an electric system, and we cannot help thinking of it that besides the conductive material, alas! many self-installed insulators are found. But the dynamo which sends the heavenly current to its destination is not a human quality or accomplishment or instrument, but the Word and the Sacraments. Every now and then the wires are down; the conductors are not functioning; we are bad stewards. If



a church-body which has very hazy and erroneous views on the nature of the Word and the Sacraments is not much concerned in utilizing these treasures, if it, for instance, regards the Word merely as informing us on the great acts of God in our behalf and the Sacraments as symbolical of divine blessings, and does not believe that they convey to, and confer upon, us the Holy Spirit with all His gifts and benefits, it is not surprising that such a church-body is not intensely interested in bringing people in touch with these means, but relies chiefly on an appeal to reason and to the emotions, on exciting meetings and so-called revivals. But how Lutherans, holding in all sincerity the exalted doctrines about the Word and the Sacraments which our Church has always taught, believing them to be the hand of the heavenly Physician with which He touches the dead heart and makes it beat in true faith,—how Lutherans can be remiss and slow in placing these means at the disposal of their fellow-men, is from a purely logical point of view quite incomprehensible.

Another aspect of this matter should not be overlooked. Recognizing the importance of the means of grace, our Church has very properly always insisted on purity of doctrine and the administration of the Sacraments according to the institution of Christ. One cannot escape the conclusion that this insistence must be matched by an equally intense realization of the import of the saying of Jesus "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more," Luke 12, 48. If we are satisfied with the mere possession of these treasures and do not acknowledge the stewardship involved, we are indeed in the toils of dead orthodoxy. It is incumbent on every one of us to examine himself whether he, either consciously or unconsciously, is a victim of this disease.

#### XXIV

If Christian ministers and laymen suffer from an inferiority complex, it is largely due to this, that they lose sight of their high standing and endowments as stewards of God.—That frequently in Christian circles the inferiority complex is in evidence cannot be denied. It was characteristic of the attitude of the disciples of Jesus when they hid behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. It manifests itself in cases where our religion is attacked and a defense should be made; but the critic is not answered because of a feeling of littleness, of insignificance, which paralyzes our courage and ties our tongue. The German Lutheran poet Benjamin Schmolck probably did not know the term under discussion, but he knew that which it signifies, as is clear from these well-known lines of his: —



Ist mein Fleisch und Blut verzagt,  
 Will die Welt die Zunge binden,  
 Werd' ich hin und her gejagt  
 Wie ein leichtes Rohr von Winden,  
 Wenn Verfolgung auf mich stoest,  
 Ach, so mache mich getrost! (Hymn 267, 4.)

When such a feeling governs our course of action, we simply fail to bear in mind the true nature of what we are and what we have. We are putting too low an estimate on our Master's goods. That one Christian standing up for Jesus constitutes a majority regardless of how large the meeting or assembly is which he attends; that, "if God be for us," no one can successfully be against us; that we offer the world not cheap tinsel, but the pearl of great price, to own which every human being should be willing to sell everything he possesses; that as Christians we are priests and kings and have a higher dignity than any which this world can offer,—all this we must not permit ourselves to forget in order to be faithful in our position as stewards.

#### XXV

The empty treasuries of the Church are silent, but eloquent witnesses that the question of stewardship is not fully understood. There was one time in the history of the Church when the treasuries were not empty. Alas, one has the feeling that it was the only time that this much-desired situation obtained. I am thinking of the situation immediately after the founding of the Church. "Neither was there any among them that lacked," says the Sacred Record, Acts 4, 34, and it continues: "For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold." As a rule, however, the treasuries of the Church have suffered from anemia, and now our church officials hardly know what a healthy-looking exchequer might resemble. The diagnosis is simple and does not require specialists. The conviction that we are the stewards of our Lord's goods is not sufficiently potent. The treasuries of the Church certainly are clinical thermometers, showing by their figures what attitude is taken by us toward the obligations we have as Christian stewards. It is true, no physician would be guided in his study of a case exclusively by the readings of the thermometer; so we do not wish to be understood as saying that the condition of the Church's treasuries alone is an adequate gage of the view our people are taking of their position as Christian stewards. But it is one great factor to be considered. Since it is possible for many of our church-members to purchase one new car after the other, to take expensive pleasure trips hither and thither, to keep fairly well abreast of the procession bringing out new radios, to furnish their



homes in a style that would have made their grandfathers and grandmothers think of royalty, and since at the same time the treasuries of the Church are terrifyingly emaciated and the physicians frantically prescribe blood transfusions, known in the technical, cold, unpoetical language of the experts as financial drives, it cannot be denied that there is something wrong with the understanding of the question of stewardship obtaining in our circles. Just where the fault lies we shall discuss a little later. Now I merely wish to say that a high standard of living on the part of the stewards, on the one hand, and the languishing of their Master's work, on the other, are two incompatible ideas, constituting a flat, absolute contradiction, which unmistakably points to unfaithfulness on their part.

## XXVI

The so-called "idle-candidate situation" is universally lamented. That these unemployed brethren constitute a grand opportunity for our Church, a valuable resource, an asset, and not a liability, is largely overlooked.—It is not necessary to furnish proof that the lamentations referred to are not fictitious. Undoubtedly there are but few of us who have not given utterance to them or listened sympathetically when others indulged in such strains. I am not at all planning to belittle the feelings of disappointment, anxiety, and worry besetting the hearts of those involved. But as a Church we should not forget that we have now finally reached the stage of development which we were desirous of attaining, where instead of a dearth of candidates we have a generous supply and can really start an intelligent, well-articulated, and well-balanced forward movement, not being compelled to fear that as the attack is launched there will be no reserves to draw into gaps which may unexpectedly arise. It is a happy situation, generally speaking. Why groan? There is something wrong, of course. There is a lack of something vital. What is lacking is the conviction in us as church-members that we are stewards of this resource and should make good, profitable use of it. Imagine that you are the steward or superintendent of a large farm where a most bountiful crop has grown on the fields, to harvest which your available help is entirely inadequate. Then suddenly the owner of the farm sends you a dozen able-bodied workers to supply your need. Will you frown upon their arrival and wish they had not come? "Ah, Mr. Essayist," you may say, "there is a phase which you have forgotten to include in your illustration, but which must not be omitted if the parable is to hold. You have failed to mention that the new workers have to be fed and that the supply of ham and eggs and apple-butter is entirely insufficient for the increased force. What have you to say?"



"Well," I reply, "on the face of it it is not likely that the owner will order a dozen hands out to his farm without knowing what the kitchen and pantry can afford. And, furthermore, he in all probability knows of some secret supplies which the steward is keeping for his own benefit and which he, the owner, expects to be produced now." That we, living as we do, in comparative ease and comfort, are unable to employ the candidates at our disposal and to give them food and raiment, is something which we ought not try to make ourselves believe because it simply is not true. There is not a lack of the necessary means, but of the willingness to place what we have in our Master's service which needs bemoaning.

## XXVII

The ineffectiveness of our ministry often results from a wrong view on our part touching the stewardship of our congregation-members.—What I have in mind here is that the pastor is not sufficiently aware of the stewardship status which belongs to every one of his congregation-members and that he works and hurries, puffs and pants, as if he were the only one whom the Head of the Church has meant to be a steward in that group of Christians. It is to be feared that at times we overlook the truly grand resources which our congregations possess in the various gifts and talents of their members and which the consecration and devotion of the latter gladly place in the Master's service if an opportunity offers. Must really the fence of sick Mr. Jones periodically be repaired just by the pastor? Is he the only one in the congregation that can place the stamps on the four hundred envelopes containing the monthly or the quarterly letter addressed to the members? Let no one think that I mean to say that the pastor should consistently refuse to milk invalid Mr. Smith's cow or to help take the coal of a poor woman from the sidewalk into the basement. Such things may become imperative, and no minister should consider himself too important a personage for the performance of such menial tasks. But let him bear in mind that his church-members are stewards, too. If he succeeds in making his church a church of workers, what great significance will not that have for the advancement of the cause! It must be borne in mind, too, that, if certain members of the body are never given a chance to function, they become atrophied and finally lose all usefulness. If St. Paul were in our midst, he would probably ask us to open our New Testaments at 1 Cor. 12 and read what he through inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote many years ago, v. 14 ff.: "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" etc. And v. 20: "But now are they many members, but one body."



## XXVIII

Hindrances to a full life of stewardship are many, among them selfishness, fear of men, and worldliness. It will help us if we realize that the difficulties have their origin not so much in the head as in the heart. — That in our stewardship endeavors we all, pastors as well as parishioners, fall short of the ideal, requires no demonstration, because it is simply a part of the general state of imperfection to which we quite unreservedly, and perhaps more glibly than sorrowfully, acknowledge to be subject. But it is worth anybody's time, in fact, he owes it to his God, his Church, and himself, to determine what factors are most potent in keeping him from reaching the goal in order that he may counteract their harmful influence. Diagnosis is a highly important process when we are dealing with ailments, be they bodily, mental, or spiritual. In letting the destructive legions pass before us in review, we notice there are a few centurions or sergeants that look taller and more formidable than others: selfishness, fear of men, and worldliness. When we see the members of our Church who, generally speaking, like other Americans, are enterprising, clever, resourceful, establish homes for themselves, advance in business, capture their share of the slowly returning prosperity, and still contribute on an average not even five cents a week for the work of the Church apart from the requirements of the local congregation, we cannot but raise the charge of selfishness. We here in the United States are enjoying a remarkably high standard of living, a standard which is the envy of European nations. But that is all that can be said; we are enjoying it, and there the matter ends. — The fear of men is likewise given a special mention here. Popularity rather than loyalty to the master's interests is the thing the thought of which fills the soul; to remain on good terms with friends and neighbors whom a frank profession of one's religious convictions might offend and alienate is in the opinion of many more important than to see to it that the estate entrusted to their superintendence grows and flourishes. Very similar to these sinister forces is worldliness, saying, and at times shouting, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Of its all too successful ravages among the stewards of our Lord, its sly, often unobtrusive, insidious methods, deceiving its victims into believing that they can serve two masters, the unblushing audacity it frequently manifests when it enters the house of the Lord, and by means of bazaars and lotteries and raffles tries to spread its antistewardship poison, it is not necessary here to say much; he that runneth may read if he is not blind.

We ought to see that what is ailing the Church is not so much lack of information on the proper technique of proving ourselves stewards of Jesus Christ as hesitancy and refusal to follow the



light we have. Instruction, giving information on the work of the Church, its mission-fields and schools, its charities and its machinery, are indeed indispensable. Moreover, the guidance furnished us in the Scriptures for leading a life of true service must often be brought before our people. But one cannot escape the conclusion, when studying the affairs in our Church, that more than the head the heart is at fault. What we must overcome chiefly are the inertia and opposition of the will. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Instruction on the best methods of testifying and the most approved systems of giving is useful and even necessary, but it is what the road map is to the auto tourist. What he needs more than maps and charts and hints about roads is the gasoline with its constant explosions—holy determination created by the fire of the Spirit of God. Let our prayer be that God may make our words sledge-hammers, breaking the opposition of the will of the Old Adam in our parishioners when the call to faithful stewardship goes forth. If the hearts are aflame with the desire to follow and serve Christ, the introduction of proper methods will not cause much difficulty.

#### XXIX

Our teaching on stewardship has been blessed. If the blessings have not been so visible and impressive as we expected them to be, we ought to examine ourselves whether we probably fell into legalism when discussing the subject, whether we neglected to give it the proper emphasis, whether we lacked in courage in portraying the needs of the Savior's work, and especially whether we entered upon this phase of our teaching in a spirit of bravado, with reliance on our own powers and with motives of self-glorification or with a prayerful heart, in due humility, seeking nothing but the glory of our Redeemer and the Salvation of souls.—In speaking to each other about the teaching on the subject of stewardship, which is ever our task as Christian ministers, we should not give way to pessimism and chant nothing but dirges and lamentations. It is evident that past efforts in our church-body have not been in vain. Whether you think of what was accomplished by the fathers or of experiences in our more recent history, for instance, the great success which attended our endeavors in 1924, we have been furnished evidence that instruction on stewardship does not represent wasted efforts. But it is true, we have not, generally speaking, reached the heights which we wished to scale and which probably in our early ministry we thought would be reached, in the prodigious efforts with which we intended to amaze the world. There have been failures; and as I mentally check all the renowned and unrenowned divines that I have ever known, I cannot find



a single one that has made a perfect score in this respect. Undoubtedly it will be wholesome for every one of us to conduct a private investigation of how he performed his duties as a teacher of Christian stewardship. Was he legalistic in his methods? Did he think the Law would make the hearts generous and loving? Did his hearers get the impression that he was pleading for selfish reasons instead of perceiving that the love of Christ was constraining him? Then he should ask himself whether he probably did not fail to do justice to the subject on account of an ill-founded belief that a brief reference to the topic now and then was all that was needed. It may be, too, that he brought this matter before the Church in a very apologetic fashion, with much diffidence, excusing himself for being so ungentlemanly and rude as to speak to enlightened folks on a subject so threadbare, on the one hand, and so personal and intimate, on the other. Or, again, he may have come upon the congregation with this topic like a whirlwind, dashing, terrifying, with much self-confidence and little evidence of humility, a sort of blustering Goliath, evincing the *Veni-vidi-vici* attitude of a certain dictator, appearing on the scene like a conqueror, visualizing in advance the laurel wreaths which, he expected, would soon adorn his temples and departing, alas! conquered, disappointed, and crestfallen. For much as we may admire his courage and pluck, it is eternally true that "the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong," Eccl. 9, 11, and: "The Lord delighteth not in the strength of the horse; He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy," Ps. 147, 10, 11. It is along lines of this nature that our self-examination may proceed, and perhaps it will aid us in avoiding mistakes which we unwittingly made in the past.

### XXX

The aims of Christian stewardship are the same as those of sanctification. We seek, next to the glory of God, the spreading of the kingdom of Christ. See the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer. The Christian steward must realize that the social gospel is no Gospel. — When we ponder our position as Christian stewards, quite naturally its objectives, its aims and purposes, will be thought about. What do we strive for as Christian stewards? What are our ultimate aims? Since stewardship is merely a part of sanctification, the aims of the former are necessarily included in the aims of the latter. If the steward in charge of a farm is of the right sort, he will not primarily seek to achieve a grand reputation for himself and lie awake at night thinking of how he may further his own advantages, but his main endeavor will be to administer



the farm in as profitable a way as possible for his master. When the golden grain is beginning to fill the granaries to the very top and the potatoes the cellar, the monthly cream check reaches figures which would have looked respectable even in Egypt during the seven fat years, and the yield of the orchard is eagerly bid for by St. Louis and Kansas City commission merchants, and the local paper proudly announces what the whole countryside knows that Mr. Miller's farm is a choice estate, flowing both literally and figuratively with milk and honey, and that the haughty metropolitan press, in spite of its snobbishness, has been compelled to make favorable mention of it, then the steward's heart rejoices, and he feels that his time has been well spent. So the Christian steward works faithfully for the honor of his heavenly Master; and when the sheaves are brought in, the Church grows, the Christian influence spreads, he prays: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake," Ps. 115, 1. "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised," Ps. 113, 2, 3. As he works for the glory of Christ, he will assist in the spreading of His kingdom; and again, when seeking to spread the Kingdom, he will enhance His Master's glory. These two things are inextricably bound up with each other. There is hardly a more beautiful summary of what should be our aims in our stewardship endeavors than the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven": the glory of God, the extension of the holy Christian Church, the performance of God's will by us and our fellow-Christians as we are leading sanctified lives. This grant us, dear Father in heaven.

In view of the present emphasis in Protestant churches on the social gospel, it is important for us to see that this so-called gospel is no Gospel. At best it is the proclamation of the second table of the Law. If we as Christian stewards should think it sufficient that we spread and serve this gospel, we should be making the mistake which Jesus warns us against when He says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

### XXXI

A steward has to render an account when his stewardship is ended. The Scriptures repeatedly emphasize the seriousness of the situation which results when the duties of stewardship are flouted. Thou wicked and slothful servant!—Stewardship, as we have seen, means not possession, but superintendence, management,



supervision, being in charge of something. It denotes a relation which will sooner or later be terminated. As steward it is conceivable that you are the plenipotentiary in a certain sphere, with *carte blanche* as to the decisions to be made; but nevertheless your freedom of action is limited with respect to space and time. Let your activities be ever so vigorous and successful, the day will come when your associates will say, "He *was* a good steward; too bad that such as he cannot go on forever." In other words, the scrutiny of our acts as stewards, the opening of the books, and a comprehensive audit are inevitable. How we need reminding our hearers and ourselves that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. 5, 10. The parable of the Talents and the similar one of the Pounds are too well known to require a long discussion. Let us merely remind ourselves that in them the Lord shows in words that pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow that His teaching on stewardship is not just a pleasant, entertaining diversion, but that it represents a page in the books of which we read, Rev. 20, 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." If our parishioners and we ourselves are not to be addressed as wicked and slothful servants, then let us take this chapter on stewardship very seriously.

## XXXII

What we need is repentance with regard to remissness in the past, the Holy Spirit, and His gifts for the present and the future, so that we all, ministers and laymen, may prove more faithful stewards. "God giveth grace to the humble." "My strength is made perfect in weakness." One cannot deny that, generally speaking, we have been rather neglectful of our obligations as stewards, that some sectarian organizations have been far more zealous than we in doing religious work, that we again and again have had to join in the complaint of the Savior that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. If only throughout our whole Church the conviction would become live and compelling that we must repent, humble ourselves before God, and implore His forgiveness! "Repentance!" should be the shout from one end of our Synod to the other. God is anxious to forgive sins for the sake of His dear Son. If we truly repent, He will grant His Holy Spirit, and there will be a forward movement that will be more in keeping with our high responsi-



bilities. Let us not forget that not the proud and haughty, who believe that they have fully done the Lord's will and rely on their own powers to accomplish it in the future, but the humble, who feel their insignificance, are the recipients of His grace. To the apostle who, tormented by the thorn in the flesh and almost overcome by pain, cried for relief came the reassuring word, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. 12, 9. It is a law of the Kingdom that God accomplishes His work through those who are "poor and of a contrite spirit and who tremble at His Word," Is. 66, 2. Prostrated by a sense of our delinquencies and our unworthiness, but raised up by the Gospel-promises, let us perform our several functions as Christian stewards, working while it is day, before the night cometh when no man can work.

W. ARNDT

## Die Lehren des Novatianismus und des Donatismus

Eigentlich könnten wir sogar auf den Montanismus zurückgehen, denn gewisse Begleitererscheinungen dieser frühen häretischen Bewegung haben dieselben Merkmale wie die späteren Schismen, die so viel Anheil in der Kirche anrichteten. Aber bei dem Montanismus muß doch konstatiert werden, daß Montanus mit seinen beiden Anhängerinnen Prisca und Maximilla in seiner Schwärmerei von vornherein gewisse Fundamentallehren leugnete und daß die Fragen des moralischen Rigorismus erst später hinzukamen, während bei den späteren Bewegungen ein etwaiger Unterschied in der Lehre nicht der ursprüngliche Anlaß des Schismas war, sondern erst in den späteren Auswüchsen zutage trat.

Der Novatianismus hatte seinen Ursprung in einer praktischen Frage, und zwar „nicht in einer sachlichen, sondern in einer persönlichen Differenz“. Anlaß zu dem ganzen Schisma war nämlich die Behandlung der lapsi, deren Zahl in der decianischen Verfolgung ziemlich groß war. Obgleich der Montanismus mit seiner rigorosen Disziplin es so weit gebracht hatte, daß in der Kirche ziemlich allgemein Abgötterei, Ehebruch und Hurerei sowie Mord als Sünden angesehen wurden, die in diesem Leben nicht abgehülft werden könnten, sondern der Barmherzigkeit Gottes im zukünftigen Leben anheimzugeben seien, so war die Praxis in bezug auf „Gefallene“ noch nicht einheitlich. Die Zahl letzterer wurde während der Verfolgung unter Decius so groß, daß man fürchtete, die strengere Ansicht, nach der auch den lapsi die Rückkehr in die Gemeinde gänzlich abgeschnitten wurde, möchte die Existenz mancher Gemeinden gefährden. Aus diesem Grunde war die laxere Partei in vielen Teilen der Kirche stark genug, ein gelinderes Verfahren gegen die „Gefallenen“ zu befürworten. Cyprian war der Vertreter dieser Ansicht, während Novatian einer größeren Strenge das Wort redete.