

Dear Mrs Powers,

Herewith I am replying to your letter of 4th inst. and supplying a resume of the article in German enclosed in your letter.

The enclosed German article is a brief account of the coming to South Australia of the first ("alten"= old or first) Lutherans. The account includes the reason(s) for their coming. It mentions also the leading persons connected with that first little band of faithful Lutheran immigrants.

I do not know the source(s) from which the author of the article obtained his information. The fact is that there is a very similar account in the first two chapters of the book "The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia", published in 1938. In complying with your wishes, namely, to give "a general detail" of the German article, I am herewith supplying you with excerpts from the book mentioned above.

1). The German article deals with the immigration of "Altlutheraner" (first Lutherans) in the years 1835-1854. In those years 5788 persons immigrated: 4369 to America, 1419 to South Australia. Of the total number 1241 were from Silesia, others were from Brandenburg, Posen, Saxony, Pommerania.

2) The reason (s) for these Lutheran people to immigrate to South Australia. The first German Lutherans, under the leadership of their faithful pastor, August Ludwig Kavel, emigrated to Australia in 1838 because of severe religious persecution in Prussia (Klemzig, near Zuellichau). This persecution of Lutherans was the outcome of the Union of the Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church brought about by the Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm III.

When the King of Prussia brought about this Union it appeared, at first, as if the Lutherans would meekly yield to it. In fairness to King Friedrich Wilhelm III it must be said that he was a very pious Christian and that it was his conviction that the union between the two Protestant Churches would be a very powerful factor in the promotion of the spiritual revival which was beginning to blossom in Germany after the Napoleonic wars. The King was determined to bring about the Union at all costs.

A new Church Book (Altsr Service Book) was compiled by the King and his spiritual advisers; it sought to effect a compromise between the two Churches. This book led to open, though passive, resistance. It was decreed that on June 25, 1830, in all churches of the land Holy Communion be celebrated according to the order provided in the new Church Book. Almost universally the decree was obeyed, but not quite. God had prepared His champion, Johann Gottfried Scheibel, Professor of Theology at the University of Breslau, to contend for the Faith of the Fathers. Dr. Scheibel was well equipped for the attack upon the Union, the dangers of which he clearly discerned. The fight cost him all his honours, income, and offices, even that of the ministry, and brought him nothing but exile in return. But his fight to rescue the Lutheran Church in Prussia continued. He earnestly and incessantly petitioned the King (a) for permission to celebrate Holy Communion once in a while with his congregation according to the old Wittenberg Order; (b) for an independent Lutheran Church in Prussia -- but all of no avail. It is interesting to note that Professor Scheibel's writings were responsible for Pastor Kavel leaving the Union; and that the second Lutheran Pastor to come to South Australia, Pastor Fritzsche, when a student, sat at the feet of Prof. Scheibel.

Prof. Scheibel's steadfastness made others steadfast. Among them were Professor Steffens, the Philosopher, Professor Huschke, the lawyer, and many others.

Places, where confessors stood boldly for the Lutheran cause, attracted streams of faithful Lutherans from far and near, who sought spiritual ministrations according to the pure Word and Sacraments. Increasing tyranny exercised in deposing pastors and depriving the faithful of their churches and parsonages, left no alternative but to assemble for worship in homes, cellars, barns, forests and quarries. The fidelity of their convictions was severely tested.

As the persecution continued, thoughts of emigration entered the minds of the victims. However, in considering the pros and cons of such a course ~~were-weighed-~~, even by the early secret synods of 1835, the faithful adhered to the saying: "Who believeth fleeth not". But in the course of time one group of 1000 did emigrate to America.

What about Australia? Who would have thought of it? Those who later did come to Australia acclaimed it a wonderful dispensation of God to have conducted them to these distant shores.

It was Pastor August Ludwig Kavel who played a very important part in the emigration of the first Lutherans to South Australia. He was ordained as pastor in 1826. He was inducted as pastor in the Klemzig Church. (Note: pictures of the church in Klemzig more than 150 years ago and those taken quite recently, show that outwardly the church building has changed very little). At the induction of Pastor Kavel the notorious Union Church Book was used. Unless they accepted it, candidates of theology could not hope to gain office.

In the early years of his ministry at Klemzig, Pastor Kavel read the writings of Prof. Scheibel. In January, 1835, he tendered his letter of resignation from the Union Church. The chief reasons he gave were that the Union bred and fostered indifference to important articles of faith, and that pastors were not pledged in any doctrinal basis. On Easter Monday he preached his farewell sermon. Pastor Kavel obtained membership and also ordination in the Lutheran Church in Posen. From here he still ministered to his faithful flock in Klemzig. His Lutheran Church at Klemzig had in the mean time been taken forcefully by the Union Church. For conducting services in cottages and forests in and near Klemzig he and members of his faithful small flock were punished. Now the decision to emigrate matured and Pastor Kavel fully approved of it.

Preparations to emigrate:

In October, 1835, Kavel informed the King that he and his flock had resolved to leave the fatherland in 1836. "We feel constrained to emigrate rather than deny our faith." Permission to leave the fatherland was refused.

Enquires were now made to ascertain the prospects of settling in Southern Russia.

Early in 1836 Kavel was sent to Hamburg with a view to arrange an emigration to America. Unsuccessful. In Hamburg his attention was directed to a wealthy Philanthropist in England, Mr George Fife Angas. Kavel journeyed to London. Angas proved to be God's agent for the deliverance of Kavel and his faithful flock. Angas pointed and paved the way to liberty of conscience. The meeting of Angas and Kavel was the beginning of a lasting friendship fraught with blessing. With Flaxman, his secretary, acting as interpreter, Angas had time to listen to Kavel's pleading. Little pleading is required. Forging of plans commenced forthwith.

In Klemzig preparations began. Properties were sold, cases packed, Bible, Catechism, books of devotion, the unwieldy old Breslau Hymn Book naturally were included. A contract was made with the boatmen plying their trade on the River Oder. Their huge barges were to provide the transport to Hamburg. June 8 was the day fixed for the departure. On three large barges hundreds of Lutheran emigrants were to set sail on their long journey to the opposite side of the globe. Emotional atmosphere was intense. Mr Angas had

despatched the sailing vessel "Sarah" to Hamburg in good time. Pastor Kavel intended to join his flock in England. Everything seemed to be perfectly organized and religious liberty assured at last. But alas! God's hour had not yet come. A further testing time of two years to the very day was in store.

Obstacles. The Prussian Government refused to grant passes. "No emigration and no toleration"

Petitions, many in number, were made in writing and by specially selected deputations. All in vain.

Finally, when the Lutherans had decided against accepting an offer from the Czar of Russia of available land for them to settle, the German Government made the issuing of passports dependent on a pastor of their faith to accompany them. This Kavel was only too willing to do. Now they had to produce documentary evidence proving that they would be received and given an opportunity of making a living in Australia. Through Mr Angas this was supplied. Finally, at the end of 1837, all obstacles seemed definitely to have been removed. But now a new difficulty cropped up in England. In the meantime the finances of the South Australia Company deteriorated, and Angas therefore could not induce his company to finance the Lutheran emigration. Only as passengers would they convey them. The generosity of Mr Angas would not and did not fail them. His diary contains the record of a mental conflict: "The matter (namely, helping the Lutherans) weighed heavily upon me. I was unable to see my way clearly. In my mind a battle raged between duty and the fear of loss. I cast myself upon the Lord and retired to rest." Next morning, within two hours, he had dictated to Flaxman the finished plan for the transport of the Lutheran to Australia. The path to the promised land was open.

The two-year period of waiting was not devoid of blessing. For the Lutherans it was a time of contemplation, humiliation, probation, and religious deepening. Kavel used the time well to acquire a thorough knowledge of the English language. This was of real benefit to his people in Australia.

The Prussian Government regarded the whole emigration movement as the work of wicked deceivers and cross-grained extremists.

On July 6 the travellers embarked. On July 8 a steamer towed the "Prince George" out of the harbour. The steamer was towing a second ship, the freighter "Bengalia", but the cable parted and it was left behind. Thirteen of the Klemzig folk were quartered aboard the "Bengalia". On the 12th day of their departure the "Prince George" anchored off Plymouth. Here they were joined by their spiritual father, Pastor Kavel. Great was the joy of reunion. The voyage to Australia was, on the whole, fairly comfortable. On Oct. 31 they sighted the Western Australia coast for the first time. On Nov. 18 they sailed along Kangaroo Island. And on Sunday, Nov. 20th they anchored off Port Adelaide. The freighter "Bengalia" had arrived two days previously.

24 Oct
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