

Piltawodlinga, November 16, 1839

Dear, deeply beloved Pastor!

Already in my earlier letters, I made you my confidant, by reporting and complaining to you, as I could and wanted to complain to no one else but your sympathetic heart. This time, however, I can and must provide you with proof that you enjoy my trust to an unlimited extent, as the matter I have to share with you is not only much more delicate than all previous ones, but also, I fear, will raise a shake of the head from you, just as it has already caused me untold grief.

The matter concerns my engagement with Miss Bertha Mathilde Teusler, the stepdaughter of Mr. Fiedler in Klemzig, which I mentioned in my letter to the company. However, in order for you to reach a sound judgment about the case presented to you, I am compelled, despite my reluctance, to recount to you in detail the course of my acquaintance with her from the very beginning. --

I had cherished this lovely person in my heart for quite some time, but having no opportunity to propose to her verbally, and perhaps being too clumsy, I confessed my feelings to her in a letter on August 16th this year. A few days later, I received a not entirely satisfactory but still hopeful response, so I soon sent her a second letter. When there was no immediate reply to this one, I paid her a visit and was asked, "What should I do?" To which she replied: If it were up to her, I should have received a definite answer to my first letter by now. I asked, "Who else then?" and she then told me that a certain Mr. Schlinke had recently proposed to her, but had not received a definite acceptance.

Not suspecting such a revelation in the slightest, I stood there petrified; but she herself came up to me and said that she had no obligation to Mr. Schlinke at all and that she had already considered breaking off with him. Even the father said that there was no need to worry about any claims on Schlinke's part; and based on these statements and Bertha's love, I could not possibly step back for the sake of others. Bertha now behaved towards Schlinke in order to get rid of his visits, writing to him in writing, and the whole week seemed to be in order. But after several weeks, when it became known that Bertha was my fiancée, Schlinke, instigated and informed by Fried. Krummnow, of ill-fame in Germany, lodged a complaint with Pastor Kavel.

Although I was certainly annoyed at having my bride inspected according to the new, unknown Kavel laws and without my presence, I still let it happen so that her innocence could be demonstrated even more clearly. The inspection took place on October 31st, which was also the Reformation Festival, and the following is the

verdict rendered by Pastor Kavel and the church elders of Klemzig:

**Decision
in the lawsuit of Mr. Schlinke
against Mr. August Fiedler
and his daughter, Miss Bertha Teusler.**

Children have no right to get engaged or married without the express consent, or even against the knowledge and will of their parents, guardians, or those who represent their parents. After all, children are supposed to honor their father and mother, according to the fourth commandment.

Parents, guardians, or those acting in their place, must indeed give permission for their children to marry. Without this permission, the children cannot acknowledge an engagement or proceed with a wedding ceremony.

Virgin Bertha's promise, even if she had said 'yes' ten times and given even more as a pledge to confirm her 'Yes', is null and void if the father says 'No'.

Now, the virgin Bertha has only said a conditional yes, namely: Yes, if it is the Lord's will (an answer that every virgin, if she doesn't yet know that it's not the Lord's will, and thus can't yet decide and say no immediately, might have given).

But now that the father is even saying No: this conditional yes from the daughter has even less validity.

Moreover, since the father had even previously only given a conditional Yes, namely: "Yes, if it is the Lord's will", but now he cannot acknowledge it as the Lord's will, his conditional Yes has no binding force.

It would be a different matter if the father had definitely said yes, then he could be held to his word.

However, he did not do that, as Mr. Schlinke himself confirmed in the presence of eight witnesses. Because when the two questions were presented to Mr. Schlinke in the presence of these eight witnesses:

1) Did Mr. Fiedler give you an unconditional verbal assurance that you should have his daughter? He (Mr. Schl.) merely repeated the above conditional response: He (Mr. Fiedler) said, "Yes, if it's God's will."

2) Or can you present witnesses or written evidence that he definitely promised you his daughter for marriage? So he (Mr. Schlinke) said, "No, I can't do that."

Therefore, since Mr. Schlinke has neither oral nor written proof of a clear, unconditional assurance from his father, nor is he able to provide it to the church, the church must reject his claims.

We must reject this lawsuit, and for another reason as well. When Mr. Weimann said during the interrogation in front of the eight witnesses: "Mr. Schlinke is not suing just to get Mr. Fiedler's daughter," I asked Mr. Schlinke in the presence of these witnesses: "Why did you sue?" To which he gave no answer.

However, just as we have to reject Mr. Schlinke with his unspecified claims, we will do the same in usual cases with anyone else, no matter who they are.

Now, to dispel any suspicion that Mr. Schlinke might harbor in his heart that we are biased: we hereby assure him that if Mr. Missionary Preacher Schürmann reports to us, or is reported to us, that he intends to get engaged or married to the virgin Bertha Teusler, we will neither recognize this engagement nor offer our hand for this marriage until we have received a positive response or unconditional consent from the missionary institution in Dresden, from which Mr. Missionary Preacher Schürmann was sent, and which represents the paternal role for him, to our inquiry, in which we will present the entire context of the matter, that he is allowed to marry the aforementioned person.

We consider this consent necessary for the following reasons:

- 1) Because Mr. Missionary Preacher Schürmann from the Dresden Society depends on them, both in his important, namely official and related life steps, and through the support provided by them, like a spiritual son of spiritual fathers. However, marriage is also a spiritual relationship, as stated in Ephesians 5:32.
- 2) Because we recognize this society as belonging to our church, and supported by our persecuted fellow believers through prayer and contributions, we consider it our duty not to do anything in our church procedures that might in any way infringe on the rights of others, especially our brothers, or give our brothers an excuse, or simply cast a bad light on ourselves. "Avoid all appearances of evil," says the Apostle Paul.
- 3) Even if society and its paternal relationship were merely a human order, we would still need to consider the saying of the Apostle Peter: "Be abstinent from all human order for the Lord's sake", 1 Peter 2:13.
- 4) Therefore, apart from the incident between Jungfrau Bertha and Mr. Schlinke, we can only consider it justified, for the reasons mentioned above, to offer our hand to any missionary sent by a society for such an important life step as marriage, without being assured of the society's approval.

5) Even if we believe that the missionary society in Dresden does not want to impose unfair rules on its missionaries regarding the choice of their life partners, we do not believe that it considers it completely superfluous to concern itself with such choices. Rather, it avails itself of that paternal guidance and advice to which it is entitled and obligated due to its supervision of the missionaries and its responsibility to the church.

6) Helping a missionary without obtaining his society's consent for such an important life matter as marriage would be tantamount to abdicating all the society's oversight over the important life matters of its missionaries.

These are the reasons why, in the present case, our recognition of a marital relationship between Mr. Missionary Preacher Schürmann and Miss Bertha Teusler cannot be expected yet, although we do not deny that this relationship may exist in God's plan. However, we must not preempt God or act prematurely until he gives us permission to do so.

Klemzig, November 7, 1839

To
the Reverend
Missionary Preacher Schürmann
in Adelaide.

You see, dear Pastor!, that Pastor Kavel is giving me instructions here, which suggest either that the ones given to me by the society are incomplete, or that I have attempted to violate them. But listen to the course of the story.

The first part of the decision, as to where the conversation turned to me, was only discussed during the interrogation at Reformationstag, and I was hardly or not at all mentioned, so I thought the matter was resolved. But the next Sunday, my bride told me that when she went to confession with Mr. P. Kavel yesterday, he dismissed her because of that incident and advised her to consider our relationship as over until a response from Dresden arrived; which advice had made her so anxious and uncertain that she asked me to take back the ring I had recently received from her. Giving such advice to my bride without my and her father's knowledge, especially during confession, and with such bitter consequences for me: that seemed to me rather priestly and hit me hard.

That same day, I went to him and asked him why he wanted to write to my company. He gave some reasons that weren't clear to me, so I said he should realize that there was no connection between the Schlinkes' matter and the company, otherwise he would be able to explain it to me. He replied that I was innocent in the matter and that it must be unpleasant for me, which was clear, but his conscience wouldn't let him act differently. He said he would send me his reasons in writing. When I didn't receive them for too long, I went to him again, where he gave me the above-mentioned "Decision pp" to read. After reading it, I still didn't see any valid reason for him to write; and I pointed out to him that he had never asked me if I had permission to marry from the company, which would have been reasonable, since it could have been possible that I had written permission. Which he, however, had to admit. When I asked him when he would write to Dresden, he unexpectedly replied that he would only write if I asked him to. Well, then you'll never write, was my reply, because I'll certainly never ask you to make public a matter that would bring shame to my bride and of which even the slightest memory is painful to me.

However, if he wanted to write about the matter to Pastor Wermelskirch, I wouldn't have any objections, but I couldn't urge him to do so for the sake of my bride. To this, he replied that he still wanted to practice his leniency (how quickly he threatened!). I didn't get to see the 'decision pp', because it still needed to be signed by him and an elder.

The next morning, Mr. Fiedler brought me the same document, albeit unsigned, but with the following notice enclosed, which completely contradicted our conversation from yesterday:

Dear brother!

After careful consideration last night, the elders and I have concluded that, in order to remain faithful to the truth and to avoid giving the impression that we prioritize personal interests, which would be detrimental to the community, we cannot change our decision to report the entire matter to the society in Dresden, even through Wermelskirch's hands. We thus honestly and openly place it in the hands of those who, under God's guidance, will surely make the best decision for you.

A. Kavel

In a hurry, Class 8/11 [18]39

Not only to me and Brother Teichelmann, but also to Mr. Fiedler, such a decision by the Klemzig elders seemed to be against all order, and on the same day, I wrote the following to Pastor Kavel.

Piltawodlinga on November 8, 1839

Dear Pastor!

I was in doubt whether I should recognize the letter I received from you this morning through Mr. Fiedler, namely the "Decision in the Complaint Case of Mr. Schlinke", as valid, since it lacked a signature and I cannot know whether it was intentionally or unintentionally omitted. However, anticipating the latter, I feel obliged to make some remarks against it, as to my not insignificant surprise, you have decided to report the most offensive part of it, namely the entire incident between Schlinke and my fiancée in Dresden, which you withdrew yesterday, and today you are reiterating it in the envelope of your letter.

Although I conceded to you yesterday that if you wanted to write about the matter to P. Wermelskirch, who considers himself your friend, I could not and would not prevent you from doing so. However, if you now say that the elders and you surrendered to them, and that you must report the entire matter to my company, even through Wermelskirch's hands: then I must, after having carefully considered the matter with my colleague, assert that, firstly, you and the elders have no reason to do so, secondly, you have neither the right nor the authority to do so, and thirdly, that the motive you believe you have for doing so is unfair and therefore null and void.

1) In the "Decision pp", you assure Mr. Schlinken that if it were reported to you that I wanted to get engaged or married to Miss Bertha Teusler, you would neither recognize this engagement nor offer your hand for this marriage until you had received an unconditional approval from the missionary institution in

Dresden in response to your inquiry. However, to my knowledge, an engagement has never required church recognition; and as for my marriage, I have not yet availed myself of your helpful hand in this matter, thus hardly giving you any reason to seek the approval of my company, assuming that such approval were still necessary.

2) Just as much, I must also dispute your authority or right to make such a request. Although you list six reasons in the "Decision pp" from which you, I believe, want to derive your right, all of them, even if their correctness is otherwise admitted, only prove, as you yourself say, that the society's consent is generally necessary, but not at all that you are entitled to obtain their consent. The latter could only be the case if the society had appointed you, or one of the elders, or the entire community board as supervisors over me and my colleague, since this, to my knowledge, has not happened. Therefore, it is my duty to obtain that consent, as the one who is solely involved in the matter and who is under the sole supervision of the society. An intervention not only into my personal rights, but also a questionable interference in the relationship between me and my society would be if you were to ask the society whether I am allowed to marry Miss Bertha Teusler, as you would thereby arouse suspicion against me, as if I were intending to do something inadmissible or contrary to duty.

The society in Dresden, to which you certainly want to attribute a paternal position towards me, but which itself only claims a fraternal one, has entrusted me with the far more important and difficult task of correctly interpreting the Word of God and judging spiritual matters spiritually. Rather, it has left to me the much lesser natural task of choosing a wife; otherwise, it would have either provided me with one from Germany or completely forbidden me to marry, as it is unable to scrutinize my choice due to the distance. Therefore, I cannot grant you the right to ask my society for its consent to my marriage, without allowing this to be treated with prejudiced disdain towards the office entrusted to me. As willingly as I grant you the power, should I not be able to present such consent, to reject me with marriage proposals and the like.

3) The motive you wish to assert is apparently unfair and invalid, if not even sinful. You assure Mr. Schlinke that you do not intend to marry me without my company's prior consent to your request, in order to remove all suspicion of partiality on his part. However, if you did not dare to decide on the incident between Schlinke and Bertha Teusler without a well-founded suspicion of partiality, it was reckless to bring it before your forum. On the other hand, if the suspicion is unfounded, as it indeed is, it would be unfair to sacrifice the peace of others for his sake. Moreover, my company's consent to marry the virgin Bertha Teusler would be the least likely to dispel Schlinke's suspicion. If he considers you and the elders capable of favoritism, how much more would he suspect my company, especially since you believe she is in a paternal

relationship with me.

I don't know why Mr. Schlinke wanted that insurance, but it's clear that it wasn't because he considered my marriage to Miss Bertha Teusler harmful to me and society. This is evidenced by the fact that he himself courted her. Now, according to your letter, Mr. Schlinke didn't originally accuse Miss Bertha Teusler in order to win her over, nor did he admit why he accused her. Therefore, I conclude with strong reason that it was done out of a malicious, very bad intention, and that he wanted the aforementioned insurance from you for the same reason - revenge. However, if you and the elders offer your help, if you want to write to my company to be Mr. Schlinke's avenger, then I can rightly say that your motive is unfair, even sinful.

Thus, I believe I have now demonstrated that you have neither the occasion, nor the right, nor even a legitimate reason to write to my company asking for their consent to my marriage to B. Teusler, and I hereby formally protest against even inquiring about this with a single member of that company, as such.

Do you consider the incident between Bertha Tensler and Schlinke as reprehensible (which does not seem to be the case from your decision, when you say that she gave an answer that any maiden might have given, as long as she did not know that the marriage offered to her was not Mr. Wille's intention)? And do you want to report it to Dresden? I certainly cannot prevent this, because I'm not the General Postmaster here in this country. However, I consider it a direct violation of the apostolic saying: "Love covers a multitude of sins" [Peter 4: 8 - 11], especially since Maiden B. Tensler has repeatedly confessed her great distress over the incident, and since the mistake belongs to the easily forgivable female weaknesses of a young girl; moreover, it would also hurt me greatly as her groom. But if you, as her former spiritual advisor and my friend, want to give testimony to her as a virtuous, God-fearing maiden in my company, I would greatly appreciate it.

Whether you or the Klemzig elders recognize a marital relationship between me and Miss Bertha Teusler or not, I would be completely indifferent to it, if you did not reveal your confession in the way it happened last Saturday, when you advised or warned her, when she came to confess to you, to consider her relationship with me as terminated or non-existent until a response from Dresden arrived.

Aside from the fact that this is an interference with paternal rights and duties, which I cannot condone, I can only regard this as an unrecognized abuse of the confessional. You did not know, and could not have known, how far Miss Bertha T. and I were involved with each other, or I am convinced that you would not have given that advice. As a pastor, who is supposed to watch over

consciences and correct erroneous ones, you should have guarded against giving such advice at all. But even in circumstances where the conscience would not have been so troubled, that pastoral admonition would have deeply, deeply hurt and offended me, especially since you knew and approved of my relationship with Miss B Teusler from the beginning. You yourself say that the female gender is of fickle mind; you know that duty and profession will soon take me away from Adelaide; and yet, to give such advice - forgive me, Pastor! if I seem sensitive to you - but I cannot understand it. Actually, this incident does not pertain to the matter, but you must have anticipated that I would learn of it, and since I wanted to bring it up anyway, I thought this was the appropriate opportunity.

I view this entire matter, dear Pastor! as a peculiar mistake on your part, which may perhaps bear good fruit in the wonderful ways of the Lord, and which I will be all the more willing to forgive and forget, as I well know from which side all attempts have been made to influence you and the whole matter was first initiated. But I just don't understand how such repeated examples of that poisonous, vainglorious, in the truest sense of the word diabolical tongue, have not long since rendered you deaf to the world full of injustice. (Refers to Krummnow)

Hopefully, this letter will reach you tomorrow; if you wish to reply, I must ask you to do so in the first days of next week, otherwise I will send my letters to Germany, and a copy of the "Decision pp" will be included. Wishing and earnestly praying that everything will ultimately turn out well, I remain

your brother in the Lord.

C.W. Schürmann

The Reverend Kavel
in Hahndorf

Perhaps you will judge, dear Pastor!, that I used too strong or harsh language in the preceding letter, which is not befitting a young man addressing an experienced older pastor. I will admit that the language was somewhat vivid; but if you can put yourself in my position, you will understand that Pastor Kavel's actions in this matter nearly cost me my life, and therefore some sharpness is excusable. He can walk around quietly, surrounded by the aura of great conscientiousness; but at the same time, he can exercise a harshness that forces tears from one's eyes. So far, I have no reason to regret writing the letter, as he has not replied to a single word, even though it has been in his hands for nearly eight days; and unless he stops warning my bride against me and gives up his plan to write to the society, I will never regret it. Pastor Kavel and I have been good friends so far, and I have often defended him when Brother Teichelmann complained about his domineering and arrogance; but this is just too harsh and excessive for me now. --

Without saying a word to me beforehand, he wants to decide about me with his church elders, and now he's only telling me the reasons with a pretentious official air. I can't stand this, and society shouldn't tolerate it either. I can't help but get angry when I think about how he always speaks with a cold heart: "If your bride is destined for you, she will become yours eventually, just be patient, etc." Yes, of course she's destined for me, and even his eloquence won't be able to steal her heart from me. But after months of inner struggles and external obstacles, I've become convinced of this. What do I need to owe him for the possession of my bride? But enough of that. You can check the "decision" for yourself and form your own judgment. What I said in the letter to P. Kavel, namely that something good might come out of this whole affair, is my firm conviction. To some extent, I can already see the good, in that I've finally gotten rid of the slanderous Krumnow, who absolutely wanted to go to Encounter Bay, and the whole incident hasn't been without a beneficial influence on my and Bertha's love. May God, who urges us to cast all our cares on him and promises to care for us in every matter, continue to advise and help us with this matter.

What I said in the letter to the Society, namely that I would not have gotten married without first receiving a response to my engagement announcement, was my firm decision, and it is even more so after these incidents. But precisely for this reason, I also ask you for a prompt and, as P. Kavel demands, an unconditional response. I never doubted for a moment that the Society would give its approval. A modest, domestic German woman, a pious sister in the Lord who has been tested many times, full of modesty and devotion, will certainly be of great benefit to the missionary cause. This is not just my opinion, which you might consider biased, but also that of others and, of course, Brother Teichelmann, who has often advised me to take my Bertha with me to Encounter Bay.

I leave it entirely to your judgment whether and how much of this whole matter should be brought before the committee, trusting that you will spare me and my bride as much as possible. Should Mr. P. Kavel persist in his decision to report this entire story to Dresden, his letter will indeed pass through your hands; however, if the

situation resolves itself as I wish and hope, it can't hurt to have informed you of what has happened.

The native of Jammuruwe from Encounter Bay, whom I teach every day and from whom I am learning his tribe's language, brings me great joy and hope. He seems determined to go with me to Encounter Bay. I would greatly appreciate it if the Society could send me a Malay grammar and other materials, to see if and what kind of relationship there is between these languages and Malay. The Encounter Bay language is not structurally similar to the local language, but it differs greatly in words and constructions; it's a great advantage for me that Jammuruwe understands both languages.

Yesterday, we received a bill of exchange for £100 from Mr. Angas, which would have brought us even greater joy if it had been accompanied by a letter from you; nevertheless, we hope that news from the company will soon arrive with one of the two other bills of exchange, as I have only received one, namely the second one.

Although we've heard so little from all the dear brothers, they are vividly present in my mind; I imagine Cordes and Meyer in Erlangen or on their journey; please give them all my warmest greetings; as well as your neighbors Schulzes, Suschkes, Geisler, Dir. Steglich, and especially your own dear family and the Naumann family. Wishing you the Lord's blessings and peace in your home and in your glorious office, I will remain forever yours.

Your brother in Christ.

C. W. Schürmann