

Fake pearl: Chants of Paul Gerhardt in Russian translation

[Anton Vladimirovich Tihomirov](#), Doctor in theology, Theological seminary of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church (derevnya Novosaratovka, 140, Leningrad region, Russia, 193149) tikhomirov@live.com

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The article is a cut Russian translation of the report, read 05. 27. 2016 in Lübeck at the conference «Paul Gerhard in the Baltic area». The text examines the translations of the Gerhardt's hymns exclusively within the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Paul Gerhard (1607–1676) was the greatest poet in the history of Lutheranism, who wrote a variety of traditional Lutheran hymns, which latterly inspired work of J. S. Bach. Many Paul Gerhard's chants sound today on worship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia both in the original language and in the Russian translation. This publication analyzes the texts of Russian translations of hymns, which were included in the official collection of hymns of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Despite their quantity, translations of chorales don't correspond much with the German original. This is partly because of poor language knowledge (especially in 1990s, when within the period of revival of the Lutheran liturgical life translations were prepared in a hurry) and partly because of the lack of theologically educated compilers. Trying to give more «spiritual depth», translators actually changed specific terms or even whole lines that distorted texts and vulgarized their meaning. The author notes, that the intentional desire to replace complicated poetics by banal pious rhythms, is an attempt to make chants more understandable and simple for broad audience. The author comes to the conclusion that, although without hymns of Paul Gerhardt it is impossible to imagine the Lutheran service in Russia, translations do not correspond to the original texts. The great German poet and spiritual Church leader still awaits his translator.



Key words: [hymns](#), [psalms](#), [German](#), [theology](#), [vulgarization](#), [spirituality](#)

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