

## Synod Speech.

In Christ JESu beloved brothers in office and faith!

At the beginning of our meetings this year, during which, among other things, a new election of officers will take place, I do not think it inappropriate to take a brief look back at the last sixteen years of our synodal district. According to the synodal report, something similar happened at this year's meetings of the Minnesota and Dakota and Michigan Districts.

When the blessed and unforgettable Pastor Büniger retired from office in 1875, the Western District had a considerable area, because it included the states of Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, California and Oregon. However, it was already recognized at that time that it was necessary and more beneficial for the advancement of the Kingdom of God to gradually establish state synods wherever possible. And so, with the approval of the General Synod, the following were branched off and organized as special districts: Iowa in 1879; Nebraska in 1882; Louisiana, Texas and Alabama as the Southern District in the same year; California with Oregon, as well as Kansas with Colorado in 1888, so that now only Missouri, Arkansas and Tennessee form the Western District.

Although the territory of the Western District has been significantly reduced, the number of congregations, pastors and teachers has not been diminished at all. The number of pastors has gradually increased again to about the same level; on the other hand, the number of teachers has risen from 46 to 67, the number of congregations which have joined the synod has risen from 54 to 96, and the number of standing members (pastors and teachers) has risen from 182 to about 200.

The situation is similar with the existence of the inner mission. Although the new synodal districts have eliminated the more extensive mission areas, the mission in the Western District is still not insignificant; indeed, it has experienced a new, gratifying upswing in the last few years, so that we will be forced to put three or four new missionaries into the field next year, one in West Tennessee, two or three in Missouri, about which the report of the respective commission will provide more details.

In particular, however, it cannot be overlooked what blessings we have been able to experience from our doctrinal discussions in the past years. Important doctrines of our church have been discussed in detail. For example, on the subject "that only through the teachings of the Lutheran Church alone God can save all the people.

The doctrine of the justification of the sinner by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ without the need of works; the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration, of sanctification, and of good works; of the means of grace, their foundation, validity, power, and immutability; of conversion; of the election of grace in three successive annual assemblies. The discussion of these doctrines has been the cause of a great movement throughout the Lutheran Church on this side and the other side of the ocean, and has certainly helped many among us to more accurate insight and firmer certainty. In addition, there are the teachings on the invocation and worship of God, on obedience to men in matters of faith and conscience, on the return of Christ, and on the signs of the last days. Thanks be to God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us by grace! - The doctrine of vocation will be the subject of our doctrinal discussions this time, - a doctrine, admittedly, not unknown, but often difficult in its application, as will become apparent from the presentation of Prof. Pieper.

Mention should also be made of the Progymnasium at Concordia, a new institution established eight years ago in connection with the Kansas District, the main purpose of which is to help the church train workers, of whom we have such great need. It was begun in 1883 with 7 pupils; last school year the number of scholars increased to 80, and in the present it is somewhat less. From there have gone on to other synodical institutions 51, namely, 12 to Addison, 9 to Springfield, 8 to Milwaukee, 22 to Fort Wayne. Of the latter, 8 are already in St. Louis, and 4 will complete their training for the preaching ministry in the present school year. From Addison, 3 have already entered the school board as teachers. - A more about this institution will be presented to the Synod in the report of the Board of Supervisors.

Yes, great is the grace of God and rich are the blessings we have received from His hand over a long period of time. He has confessed our work in his service and encouraged the work of our hands. To him be thanks and glory for this! May he make us realize his grace more and more vividly and make us more and more skillful, willing and eager to serve him in his kingdom as his instruments with all that we are and have, for his glory and the salvation of many souls!

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Honorable Synod for the patience and forbearance I have experienced from many sides.

F. J. Biltz.

# Doctrinal Proceedings.

A person can come to faith in Christ and be saved just by reading the Holy Scriptures. We reject the false doctrine, which has been brought up again in recent times, that faith is only worked through the preached Word of God. This erroneously makes the ministry a means of grace apart from the Word of God. No, God's Word is and remains the powerful, saving Word of God, whether it is read or preached in public. Many people know this from experience. Many people have been converted at all times by reading the Word. A person living in a desert who has a Bible with him has in it the light of all spiritual knowledge, even heaven and bliss. The salvation of all men has been perfectly brought about through Christ and laid down for distribution in the word of the gospel. Every evangelical saying therefore offers forgiveness of sins, life and blessedness to every person who reads it. Whoever, without being able to have the ministry of public preaching, departs from this life believing in a gospel saying, dies blessed.

However, we praise God's grace that God has not only given us his word, but has also established a personal preaching office, whose task it is to present the word to us people and to use it, according to need, for teaching, for punishment, for correction, for chastisement in righteousness and for comfort. We can see from the foundation of the public preaching ministry how serious God is about the blessedness of mankind. The properly appointed public preaching ministry is the greatest blessing that God can shower on a country. We ask God to preserve and increase this blessing also for us and our country. "If the office of preaching remains," says Luther, "there will also be some among the multitude who are well disposed to it, or who are yet to come. But where it also comes from the preaching chair, it will be of little help, although some or quite a few can read the Scriptures for themselves alone." (St. L. ed. XII, 927.) Therefore, the most delicious work is done by those who promote the preaching ministry. A more delicious work cannot be done on earth. These are highly pardoned people who spend their energies in the service of the preaching ministry, as well as all those who help with their prayers and gifts so that the preaching ministry may be properly appointed.

So how does the preaching ministry come about in concreto? that is, how do people become preachers? - The answer is: through the divine calling to the preaching ministry. - But through whom does this calling come? With regard to this question, even in the Lutheran Church in this country one has not

always led to the same doctrine. Our fathers, when they came to this country, had to fight a hard battle over this. They did not shy away from it, but fought through it in the knowledge that it was a most important doctrine. And indeed, this teaching is of the utmost importance.

What, then, is the right doctrine of the profession? The subject is a broad one. But the whole doctrine of calling can also be summed up in one sentence: "God calls into the preaching office through the congregation as the holder of all church authority." In this sentence the right doctrine of calling is expressed in such a way that all false doctrines which have been established in the past and may be established in the future are thereby rejected. Now, in order to consider more closely the points which it has been desired to discuss, we shall emphasize the following main ideas from that sentence:

## **The right doctrine of calling to the holy preaching ministry in its importance for pastors and congregations.**

### **I.**

The administration of the ministry of preaching involves a divine calling. Recognizing this divine calling is of utmost importance both for the pastor to rightly direct the office and for the congregation to rightly use the office.

### **II.**

God now calls to the preaching ministry through the Christian congregation as the holder of all church authority. From this follows for the pastor, among other things, that he also regards himself as a servant of the congregation and treats it with all reverence; from this follows for the congregation that it is to be concerned with the appointment of the preaching office with the greatest diligence.

### **III.**

Although God calls through the Christian congregation, that is, through human beings, the calling remains entirely God's business. Therefore, congregations and pastors, as well as all those who are active in the calling process, should be most careful to avoid "humanities.

## **Thesis I.**

The administration of the ministry of preaching involves a divine calling. Recognizing this divine calling is of utmost importance both for the pastor to rightly direct the office and for the congregation to rightly use the office.

The Word of God clearly teaches that a proper profession is necessary for the administration of the ministry.

A Christian should not do anything without a divine calling. The whole Christian life should go along in obedience to God's word, that is, in the divine calling. He who does something without a divine calling makes himself autonomous, detached from God; he disposes of himself, while he should let God dispose of him; he tells himself what he should do, while a Christian should let God tell him what he should do. He who does something without a profession makes himself his own god. Therefore, works done without profession, no matter how good their outward appearance, are bad works. Works done in the divine profession, on the other hand, are delicious works, no matter how small they may outwardly appear. The divine calling ennobles all works. Luther has again so emphatically inculcated this from the Word of God. That is why he so often says that a maid does much more delicious works than a nun. Why? The maidservant has a divine calling for her works, while a nun goes along according to her own choice and devotion. Luther says briefly and firmly: "To a good work belongs a certain divine calling, and not one's own devotion, which is called one's own suggestions." (Walch XVI, 2061.) We must not tire of inculcating this delicious truth. It transfigures, so to speak, the everyday life of a Christian. Whoever is imbued with the truth that he walks in his earthly profession according to God's will, walks in the works of his earthly profession as in a paradise. This knowledge makes a happy heart. It causes the Christian housewife in the house, the Christian farmer behind the plow, in short, every Christian worker to sing joyful songs to God in the work of his earthly profession. The Christian workman, the Christian farmer, the Christian housewife, always remembering, "I am in a divine occupation, and what I do in it is delightful in the sight of God," is also an incentive to the conscientious practice of daily occupations. On the other hand, he who lives in unbelief with regard to his profession has no true delight in the works which it entails.

In particular, however, the divine calling is necessary for the direction of the ministry of preaching. This is a clear teaching of Scripture. According to the Holy Scriptures, the divine calling is a prerequisite for being a preacher. It is said in Romans 10:15: "But how shall they preach, if they are not sent?" According to Scripture, one characteristic of false prophets is that they come without a calling. Jer. 23, 21. God speaks of the false prophets: "I did not send the prophets, nor did they run." According to Scripture, in regard to the administration of the ministry of preaching, the rule is to be applied which is expressed in Heb. 5:4: "No man taketh glory to himself, but he also that is called of God, even as Aaron." The Holy Scripture warns against preaching without a calling.

especially because preaching entails such great responsibility; Jac. 3:1: "Dear brethren, let not every man forbear to be a teacher, knowing that we shall receive the more judgment.

The Lutheran Church has remained on the right track in this matter as well. In its fight against the papacy, it has avoided the extreme of the zealots. Although it has reclaimed from the papacy the rights stolen from Christians and teaches that the office of preaching, like all spiritual goods and rights, belongs not only to some privileged persons, but actually and originally to all Christians, it has nevertheless steadfastly maintained to the zealots that a special divine calling is necessary for the administration of the office of preaching among Christians. Our church confesses in the Augsburg Confession, Art. 14: "that no one should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacrament in the church without a proper profession. And Luther writes, at the same time taking into account the objection that all Christians are priests, so that a Christian does not need a special profession to exercise the public office of preaching: "It is true that all Christians are priests, but they are not all pastors. For beyond being a Christian and a priest, he must also have an office and a commanded ministry. The profession and command makes pastors and preachers." (On Ps. 82, 4. V, 1061.) Yes, Luther states: the spiritual priesthood of all Christians makes the special calling to the pastorate so little superfluous that the necessity of the calling rather follows from the circumstance that all Christians actually and originally have the office of preaching. He writes: "Refrain from this right and put it also to custom, provided that there is no other who has also received such a right. This, however, requires the right of the community, that one or as many as the community like, be chosen and accepted, who instead of and in the name of all those who have just the same right, publicly hold these offices." (X, 1857.) Luther was so imbued with the necessity of the calling, as to all works, so especially to the work of preaching, that he exclaims: "And if thou couldst save the whole world with one sermon, and hast not the command, let it stand; for thou shalt break the right Sabbath, and shall not please God." (On Ex. 20:8-11. III, 1629.) Such language sounds strange and alien to contemporary Christianity. Under the influence of unbelieving theology, it lacks the right conscience. One does not live in the truth that the faith and conduct of a Christian must be determined by God's word and will. Nowadays, people want to believe and live more according to a vague "Christian worldview", according to vague, general "Christian principles", instead of letting themselves be determined by God's explicit word at every turn. Just as it has been lost to our time that for every doctrine and every

If we believe that every part of a doctrine must be based on an explicit word of Scripture, we cannot understand Luther's constant emphasis on his profession. Luther was a thoroughly biblical Christian and theologian. Just as he admonishes with regard to doctrine that one should only abandon everything for which one has no word of God, so he also calls a Christian to abandon every work for which he does not have a certain divine calling. He writes, as stated earlier: "To a good work belongs a certain divine calling, and not one's own devotion, which is called one's own suggestions." Further: "If you now notice a work in you which God does not work in you, trample it underfoot, and ask God that he also disgrace in you everything which he does not work himself." Then follow the words, "And if thou couldst save the whole world with one sermon, and hast not the command, let it stand, for thou shalt break the Sabbath, and shalt not please God." Let us consider: What is our rest or work in itself before God? By our resting nothing goes away from God, by our working nothing comes to Him. But if we rest or work at his command, in obedience to him, as his dear children who let themselves be completely determined by his will, then our resting is delicious and our working is worship. In the same way, the preaching ministry is such a delicious work for the individual persons, because God has commanded it to these individual persons, that is, because they have a divine calling for it.

In the second thesis, we deal with how God gives his calling to individual persons. Here we now add how important it is for pastors and congregations to recognize the divine calling.

If the preacher recognizes that God has called him and placed him in the ministry, then he also seeks in the ministry not his own, but that which is God's. He does not seek his own glory, but God's. He seeks God's glory. He does not seek his own glory, but God's. For example, he does not seek high and beautiful words in order to shine as a preacher before men, but he always strives to speak in clear, simple words in order to reveal the blessed mystery of God. He does not feed Christ's flock for the sake of shameful gain, but in order to achieve the final purpose that God wants to achieve through the ministry of preaching - the blessedness of the listeners. He does not involve himself in the business of food, but does his work and leaves the care of food to the one in whose service he stands and who has promised to provide for him.

A preacher who is certain of his divine calling retains the right joy in carrying out his ministry. The ministry of preaching has much repugnance. It arouses the enmity of the world. The world, in its blindness, does not recognize the ministry of preaching as the greatest of all.

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It is not a blessing, but something superfluous, even the greatest harm in the world. The flesh of the Christians also causes trouble. Christians, in so far as they have the flesh about them, also do not appreciate the ministry of preaching. They hesitate with obedience to the preached word of God. They sometimes speak of priestly rule, when all that is required is obedience to God's Word. The preacher also not infrequently reaps ingratitude from the Christians. Perhaps he is even offered only a meager bodily sustenance. There the flesh of the preacher stirs. He is inclined to withdraw his hand from the plow and leave the thankless work. But then he thinks of his divine calling and regains the right joy. He thinks to himself: I wait for my office for the sake of God, and not in order to gain recognition from the world or from people in general.

If the preacher is aware of his divine calling, he remains strong and courageous in the face of all dangers that seem to threaten his person or the church. He is sure of divine government and protection in all these dangers. A preacher comes before other people also in danger of his life. We need only remember that he is officially obliged to visit the sick even in times of plague and contagious diseases. From a human point of view, the danger is not small. Infectious diseases often kill a larger part of the population than combatants during the war. But even if all would flee, the pastor must not flee and leave those entrusted to his pastoral care without the encouragement of the Word of God. Under such circumstances, a pastor should not wait in mute resignation of his office, but in true spiritual courage. How does this come to him? When he takes up his divine calling in faith. If he believes that he is God's servant, he also knows that God can and will protect him. He then speaks with Luther: "I will go in God's name and calling on the lions and vipers and trample the young lion and dragon underfoot." (XVI, 2061.) Already the messenger of a mighty earthly king is confident and courageous, though the arm of even the mightiest earthly king is shortened. How should not a preacher be confident and courageous as the messenger of him who holds everything in heaven and on earth in his hand, without whose permission neither devils nor men can stir, without whose will not a hair falls from our head! And if it should be God's will that a preacher should die in the direction of his ministry, he who is sure of his calling praises God's grace even in death, which has made him worthy to die such a delicious death. - Such a preacher also remains confident in the face of all the dangers that seem to threaten the Church. Even if the preacher teaches God's word with all patience and gentleness, with all due consideration for the weak, it sometimes looks as if in the



Community everything wanted to go over and under. That wants to make him frightened. But if he is sure of his calling, then he knows that God will build and maintain the church under these storms, indeed, precisely through them.

The preacher who knows himself in the divine calling is thereby also diligent and faithful in his ministry. Even a preacher is challenged by diligence. For the flesh that still clings to him has no desire for God's business. But the sluggishness disappears when the preacher in faith remembers his divine calling. He says to himself: what God has commanded me to do, in this I must be diligent. Diligence would be ill-advised here. No, in this service I will consume my strength. In the divine calling it is not a matter of celebrating, but of working. I only want to rest in order to gather new strength for work. This is especially true of the preparation for preaching. Even if the preacher has been preaching for many years, he must not become lax in preparing for it, neither in content nor in form. Every sentence and part of a sentence should contain only God's word, and everything should be preached in the most proper form of expression and delivery. - The recognition of the divine calling also works faithfulness in that the preacher does not slacken anything of God's word. He knows that he is not the master of the word, but only a servant of it. He cannot say: I will preach a part of the word, but not the whole word. Rather, he does not slacken anything of God's word, but testifies to the truth revealed in it and rejects the error that contradicts it.

5 A pastor who is aware that God has placed him in office is also quite careful. Of course, he does not let anything of God's word pass, for that would conflict with his calling. But he also recognizes it as contrary to his divine calling if he wants to demand more than is commanded in God's word. As one called by God, he never wants to enforce his own will in his congregation, but only God's will. Thus, the knowledge of the divine calling kills self-will and arbitrariness.

6 A pastor is of himself unfit for the administration of the ministry. The holy apostle Paul exclaims: "Who is capable of this? The longer a pastor waits for his ministry, the more vividly his natural ineptitude appears before his eyes. This often makes him despondent. But if he takes up his profession in faith, he knows where his ability will come from. He can ask God with confidence for the granting, preservation and increase of the necessary gifts. And he knows that this request will be heard.

That is how important it is for a pastor to recognize his divine calling!

But also for the whole congregation it is of utmost importance to recognize that their pastor stands in a divine calling. The congregation then believes that their pastor is the man given to them by God. This will then determine their behavior towards the preaching ministry in their midst.

1. The church members will then diligently hear their pastor. They will attend the public services diligently. If there is often a lack of diligent attendance at the public services among us, this is also due to the fact that the members of the congregation forget that they have a messenger of God in their midst in their pastor. How full our churches would be, not only in the mornings, but also in the afternoons, if it were always vivid in the minds of all Christians: God has given us our pastor; God speaks to us through our pastor! One would stay away from the public services only when God Himself commands it, that is, when someone is kept at home by the profession of love.

And how all separatist desires disappear when the divine calling is recognized! Then no one will say: I can also read God's word at home, or even: I can read a better sermon at home than our pastor can preach. Rather, everyone will say: I must listen to the man whom God has appointed as my preacher, through whom God wants to speak to me.

In the knowledge of the divine profession of their preacher, the Christians accept the word of their preacher, which he presents to them from the holy scriptures, as God's word. When the pastor punishes their sins from God's word, they do not think: Our pastor takes it too precisely, but rather: God shows us our transgressions. When the pastor proclaims the comfort of the gospel, they do not think: The pastor comforts me, but who knows what God will say about it; God may condemn me; but they hear God's word from the pastor's mouth and are certain: God himself speaks forgiveness of sins to me. Luther writes: "Therefore it is most necessary for people to be certain of our calling, so that they actually know that our teaching is God's own word" - that is, sent and addressed to them by God. (On Gal. 1, 1. VIII, 1582.)

Christians who believe their pastor's divine calling consider their preacher to be the best preacher for them. Even if they notice that their preacher has lesser gifts in this or that respect than other preachers, they still like to hear their pastor the most. Because they believe that God has given them their pastor, they also believe that God will give them everything they need in spiritual food just through this man. They will not run to this preacher or that one because they will hear a better sermon there.

They will believe and hope to receive a special blessing through certain gifts by which they have been specially addressed. They will not rely on the fact that this other preacher is also called by God. Never in the Scriptures, where called preachers are spoken of, is it spoken of a calling in general, but always of the calling of a certain person to a certain congregation. It is therefore not the same from whom one hears God's word, if it is only a called and ordained preacher. God does not allow his order to be overturned. Whoever thinks that he will have more blessing from a foreign pastor's sermon for the sake of his own personal gifts is under a serious self-deception. It is up to God to give the blessing. Paul says, "I planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the flourishing." This is what God does where one keeps His order. God can also convert someone through angle preachers; but therefore we should not despise the orderly preaching ministry. - However, a preacher himself can be guilty of losing much of the blessing that his congregation should have from his preaching, if he is careless in the administration of his office and negligent in the preparation or delivery of his sermons, or if he allows himself to be represented by others without a proper reason. The substitution must be given by God Himself. This is the case, for example, where overburdening with work or the commandment to train capable preachers (in student sermons) or the commandment to prove unity in the spirit also outwardly (at mission festivals and other occasions) require it.

If a congregation considers its preacher to be the best preacher from whom to hear the Word of God, this is in no way inconsistent with the duty of all Christians to test doctrine. But of course, criticism and arrogant judging will cease where the pastor is considered to be the messenger of God.

A congregation that recognizes the divine calling of its pastor also treats him as a messenger of God. It honors him as a servant of Christ. Its members meet him with reverence in words and gestures; they also do their best to keep him well in the flesh. No one can say: I honor the preaching ministry, but not the person of the preacher. That would be just as foolish as if someone wanted to say: I will honor the authorities, but not the persons in authority. The authorities are honored in the persons in authority, so is the ministry of preaching honored in those who administer it. A congregation must not suffer individuals in the congregational meeting to rudely accost the preacher, to treat him in an unseemly manner in general. God's word says in 1 Tim. 5:17: "The elders who preside well are to be held in double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in doctrine." - Also the physical care of the preachers is based on

divine commandment, is not merely ecclesiastical order. Gal. 6, 6: "But he that is taught by the word, let him impart all good things to him that teacheth him. 1 Cor. 9:14: "So also the Lord commanded that they which preach the gospel should feed on the gospel." Immediately following the commandment concerning the bodily sustenance of preachers are the words, Gal. 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Here a warning is well in place for our congregations as well. Luther reminds us that the devil tries to accuse Christians who have preachers who teach and preach righteously of keeping these preachers badly. He says in the Large Catechism in the explanation of the fourth commandment: "Because they (the preachers) are fathers, honor is due to them, even for all others. But there it goes least of all, because the world must honor them in such a way that they are chased out of the country and not given a piece of bread. . . . But it is necessary to drive this into the people, so that those who want to be called Christians owe it to God to keep those who are waiting for their souls worth twofold honors, so that they may do them good and provide for them; God also wants to give enough and leave no lack. But everyone is reluctant and wary, they are all worried that their bellies will go flat, and they cannot feed a righteous preacher now, since they have previously" (namely, under the papacy) "cut down ten fattened bellies. So that we also deserve that God should rob us of his word and blessing, and again raise up false preachers, who lead us to the devil, and suck out our sweat and blood.

(5) Where a congregation is aware of the divine calling of its preacher, it does not want to hinder the work that God wants to do through the preacher. It does not demand of him that he become a servant of men. She does not expect him to conceal parts of God's word, to be "liberal" beyond God's word. It also does not take the liberty of wanting to "denounce" him, but is certain: God wants to do his work among us through him until he himself transfers him.

So it is also of utmost importance for the congregation to realize that their preacher is appointed by God. Only then will it have the whole and full blessing of the preaching ministry. When the sects want to bring about a spiritual revival, as they call it, they prescribe famous preachers; these also bring about a great excitement, but there is usually nothing to be felt of a spiritual gain. They do not follow God's will and order; there is neither commandment nor promise of God. We hold fast to the orderly preaching ministry which God has established in the church and through which He wants to work in it.

## Thesis II.

God now calls to the preaching ministry through the Christian congregation as the holder of all church authority. From this follows for the pastor, among other things, that he also regards himself as a servant of the congregation and treats it with all reverence; from this follows for the congregation that it is to be concerned with the appointment of the preaching office with the greatest diligence.

We have seen how important it is to recognize the divine calling. How does such a divine calling come about? We are not talking here about the direct calling that the apostles had, for example, and that St. Paul describes with the words: "not of men, nor through men," but about the indirect calling that happens through men. The question is: Through which people does God call to the preaching ministry? Which people are actually and originally charged with the calling of preachers, so that whoever is called by them can be sure: I am called by God?

This is not the pope, as the Romans teach; not the bishops, as the Episcopalians think; not the so-called preachers, as the Romanizing Lutherans pretend; not the sovereign, not the consistory, not the church patrons, as is usually practiced in Germany, but the **Christian community, the community of believers**. Whoever is called by the congregation of believers, directly or indirectly, has a divine calling, he is a preacher; whoever is not called by the congregation of believers does not have the office.

This is clear teaching of the Scriptures. Several series of scriptures can be cited to prove this.

First. The office of preaching is the office of public proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. But who is actually and originally charged with the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments? The Lord Christ says Matth. 28, 19. 20.: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Now, lest anyone think that only the apostles are here addressed for their persons, the Lord immediately adds, "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." The apostles did not live until the end of the world, but the congregation of believers remains until the end of the world. It therefore receives commission here. The congregation of believers is the body that is to set the Word of God in course, to bring the Gospel among the nations. Thus, it is up to the believers to educate people.

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who, in their name and on behalf of the faithful, shall preach the sermon. Individuals in the church have the right and duty to this office only insofar as they are appointed to it by the original commissioners.

We therefore confess in the Schmalkaldic Articles: "Where the church is, there is always the command to preach the gospel. Therefore the churches must retain the power to demand, elect and ordain church ministers. And such authority is a gift that is actually given to the churches by God and cannot be taken away by any human authority of the churches (as little as the sonship of God itself), "as St. Paul testifies in Eph. 4, when he says: 'He ascended on high, and gave gifts unto men.' And among such gifts, which are proper to the churches, he counts pastors and teachers, and hangs on the fact that such are given for the edification of the body of Christ. From this it follows, where there is a true church, that there is also the power to elect and ordain church ministers." (Müller p. 341.)

Blessed Dr. Walther summarizes this as follows: "Our church teaches according to God's word, God has commanded the whole true holy Christian church to preach and make known his dear gospel. Therefore, where there is a small group of believing Christians or a true church, this church also has the command to preach the gospel; but if it has this command, it also has the power, indeed the duty, to order preachers of the gospel." (Church and Ministry p. 33.)

Yes, even of the apostles, who were called directly by Christ, the Holy Scripture speaks in such a way that we recognize how the Christians are the people on earth to whom the ministry of the word actually and originally belongs. St. Paul calls out to all believers, "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos, whether Cephas or the world . . . all is yours." (1 Cor. 3:21, 22.) So also the word and the office which the high apostles, directly called by Christ, had, belonged peculiarly to the believers, or "were only goods from the treasury of the believing Christians," as the blessed Dr. Walther expresses it. (Church and Ministry, p. 31.) This is also evident in the fact that, for example, the church at Antioch received orders from the Holy Spirit to send Barnabas and Saul on missionary journeys (Acts 13:2, 3), and that they reported to the church when they returned from their journey. (Apost. 14, 27.)

A second set of scriptures. We ask: to whom on earth are the keys of the kingdom of heaven entrusted by Christ? Who originally received the commission from Christ to forgive sins and retain sins? He who has this commission also has the commission to appoint the preaching ministry, ministers of the Word of God. For the forgiveness of sins and the keeping of sins is not done in any other way than through

Handling the Word of God. This ministry is given to the congregation of believers. Thus, all scriptural passages in which the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power to forgive sin and to retain sin, are ascribed to all believers prove that believers are to appoint the preaching ministry through which the keys are publicly administered.

The following scriptures prove that the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the ministry of forgiving and retaining sin, are not given to individual persons in the church, but to all believers. Christ Matth. 16, 19. says to Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But already in this passage it is evident from the context that Peter is not here considered an apostle, but a believing person. For under what circumstances is the power of the keys attributed to him? When he confessed his faith in response to the question about the faith of the disciples with the words: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God", the Lord of the Kingdom of Heaven grants him the keys. He who believes, like Peter, has the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the person of Peter, all believers receive the keys. This question is put beyond doubt by Matth. 18, 18. where the Lord explicitly grants all believers the authority that He granted to the believing Peter in ch. 16, 19. It says here: "Truly I say to you, whatever you"-you believers, you members of the church-"bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Our Small Catechism therefore answers the question, "What is the office of the keys?" - "The office of the keys is the peculiar ecclesiastical power which Christ has given to His Church on earth, to forgive sin to penitent sinners, but to retain sin in the unrepentant as long as they do not repent." - The Apology says: "About this it must be confessed that the keys do not belong to one man alone, but are given to the whole church, as then this can be sufficiently proved with light and certain causes. For as the promise of the gospel belongs certainly and without means (*principaliter et immediate*) to the whole church, so the keys belong without means to the whole church, since the keys are nothing else but the ministry by which such promise is communicated to everyone who desires it, as is evident in the work that the church has power to ordain ministers. And Christ speaks at these words: What ye shall bind', and signifies to whom he hath given the keys, even to the church: 'Where two or three are gathered together in

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my name? Item, Christ gives the highest and final judgment of the churches, saying: 'Say it to the churches?' "(Müller p. 333.)

At the same time, these scriptural passages teach that every local congregation has all spiritual power and thus also the right of appointment, i.e. not just the whole Christian church, or just the church of a whole country; but every local congregation, i.e. the believers in a certain place, even if they are only two or three, have the power and right to appoint a preacher. For a church possesses all spiritual power not inasmuch as it is large or small, but inasmuch as it is composed of believers. When Christ says, "Tell the congregation! . . . Where two of you become one, why it is that they will ask . . . Where two or three are gathered together in my name," he thus describes an association of Christians in a certain place, who come together outwardly, unite in prayer to the Father in heaven, carry out the last stage of church discipline on the public and impenitent sinner punished in vain before two or three witnesses, in a word, a local church. And to this he gives the keys; for to it he says: "Verily I say unto you: What ye shall bind on earth," etc.

A third series of scriptures. The chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the people of ownership are given the commission to preach the virtues of Christ, i.e. to preach the gospel, in 1 Pet. 2:9. Who is the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the people of ownership? Are they popes, cardinals and bishops? Are they consistorial councils, church patrons or a so-called preaching class? No, it is the Christians, the believers. They are those who are called from darkness to light, who are transferred by conversion from the kingdom of the devil into the kingdom of Christ. In the whole context, the believers are spoken of as spiritual stones that build themselves up to the spiritual house, because they are founded by faith on the chosen and precious cornerstone. The believers are here entrusted with the preaching of the gospel. Therefore, they also have the right and duty to appoint preachers to carry out the duties of the spiritual priesthood in the public church. In the New Testament, only Christians, not pastors, are called priests.

In general, it must be stated on the basis of Scripture: Believers have all spiritual goods and thus also the ministry of the Word, unbelievers nothing. These have, insofar and as long as they are such, no part in Christ, may they be kings, bishops or pastors according to their outer position. Those who are not yet believers are still in the devil's kingdom, and have not spiritual goods, but death and damnation. Between Christ and the unbelievers, also the unbelieving church servants, there is no spiritual connection at all. Only to the believers St. Paul calls out:



"All is yours," not merely the enjoyment of spiritual goods, but these themselves. Those who concede spiritual rights and powers to others than the believers basically pervert the whole Christian religion.

That the office of the word belongs to the church is also evident from the fact that the church is called "mother" Gal. 4:36, "mother of us all" - that is, of the believers. How can she be called that? Only because that by which people become believers, gospel, sacraments, preachers belong to the church. The preachers are in their office servants of the church, the congregation of the faithful, as they also expressly bear this name in several places of the holy scripture.

It is said in the Schmalkaldic Articles (Appendix, p. 341 f.): "Herein belong the sayings of Christ, which testify that the keys are given to the whole church, and not to some but to persons, as the text says: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Lastly, this is also confirmed by the saying of Peter, when he says: 'You are the royal priesthood. These words actually concern the true church, which, because it alone has the priesthood, must also have power to elect and ordain ministers.'"

Chemnitz writes: "What means will God use to call and send preachers in the proper way? He will not do this through angels, but through his church and congregation, which is the royal priesthood. 1 Pet. 2. for to the same, as to his dear bride, he has commanded the keys, Matth. 18. and Word and Sacrament he has entrusted to her, Rom. 3, 2. and Summa: the ministry together with the servants is everything of the church, 1 Cor. 3. Eph. 4." (Thesaur. Dedek., vol. 1, part 2, p. 418.)

Our confession not only proves from a number of scriptural passages that the Christian congregation has the right and power to appoint the office of preacher, but it also refers to the custom of the church. In the Schmalkaldic Articles (Müller, p. 342) we read: "The common custom of the church also bears witness to this. For in ancient times the people" (namely, the Christian people) "appointed pastors and bishops. In fact, this was already the custom in apostolic times. Even the very first election, which was held after the ascension of Christ (Apost. 1, 15-26.), was a congregational election. The apostle Matthias was not elected by the eleven apostles, but by the congregation of Jerusalem from two of their candidates and assigned to the elves. - Likewise, the second election, of which the Acts of the Apostles tells us in detail, is a congregational election. When it was time to appoint almoners, "the twelve called together the multitude of the disciples," and they, the congregation, elected seven almoners. - Furthermore we read Apost. 14, 23: "They" (Paul and Barnabas) "appointed elders to and fro in the

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Communities." For "arrange" here in Greek stands the word (xxxxxxxxxx), which actually means "to stretch out the hands, to choose by vote". This word indicates the participation of the churches. The meaning of the passage is: Paul and Barnabas caused the churches to elect presbyters, preachers. The word (xxxxxxxxxx) appears only one more time.

The following passage occurs once in the New Testament, 2 Cor. 8, 19: "He (Titus) is ordained (xxxxxxxxxx) by the common people to our companion." According to this also Tit. 1, 5. is to be understood: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should fully establish, as I have left it, and fill the cities back and forth with elders."

The pope had taken away the right of the church to call preachers. Through his creatures, the bishops, he appointed preachers to the Christians according to his liking. He justified this by saying that he alone had been given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and thus also the right to call preachers. Luther exposed this robbery and demanded back for the congregation of believers the rights given to it by Christ. "The keys," he wrote, "are not of the pope, as he leuget, but of the church, that is, of the people of Christ, the people of God, or the holy Christian people, so far as the whole world is, or where Christians are. Just as baptism, sacrament, God's word are not of the pope but of the people of Christ, and is also called *claves ecclesiae*, keys of the church, "not *claves papae*, keys of the pope." (Of Conciliis and Churches. XVI, 2791.) In another place: "It is not true that the pope has the keys, but the church alone, and he not; but she alone binds and absolves, wherein he serves her and all the priests." (XIX, 1054.) "The Christian Church alone has the keys, no one else; although the bishop and pope can use them as those who are commanded by the congregation." (XI, 3070.) "The" (Christian Church, the congregation of believers) "alone has these keys, you should not doubt. And whoever appropriates the keys to it is a real sacrilegious robber, be it the pope or anyone else." (XIX, 1052.) Luther wants to paint something other than the keys on the Pabst's coat of arms. He writes: "Where are Pabst's keys now? I think that they must fall away from him here without his thanks, and it must be known that he alone carries them in his shield with all iniquity, as it is clearly stated here: he does not have the keys, because he has the Holy Spirit. That is why the pope should be painted in his shield (I know what) and the keys should be torn out. The coat of arms is of another man than the pope is." (op. cit.)

What God has given back to the church through Luther's ministry, and what has been newly won here, we want to preserve with all diligence by God's grace. A Christian congregation should not give away the right to call preachers. Although a valid calling comes

This is the case when individuals or a college of individuals call on behalf of the congregation. But if this kind of appointment were to become the custom, then it would eventually be forgotten that the right of appointment actually and originally belongs to the Christian congregation. Papist, national church or Methodist conditions would like to break in with us, where papist, consistories, church patrons, conferences of their liking appoint preachers to the congregations of God. The appointment of a preacher concerns the whole congregation and each individual member of it very closely. So the congregation itself, through its natural representatives, namely the voting members of the congregation, should carry out the appointment. The congregation should accept good counsel, much good counsel, in the appointment, but carry it out itself.

What does this mean for the pastor? Because the pastor is put into office by the congregation as the holder of all church authority, he should consider himself a servant of the congregation. This is how pastors are explicitly called in Scripture. 2 Cor. 4, 5. Paul declares: "We", apostles and preachers, "your servants for JEsu's sake." The expression *minister ecclesiae*, servants of the church, is a scriptural designation of the preachers.

Of course, the pastor is also and first of all Christ's servant. St. Paul writes in the name of all preachers: "Let everyone take us for this, that is, for Christ's servants." Through them Christ approaches people, as the same apostle testifies: "We are therefore ambassadors in Christ's stead, for God admonishes through us." They must give an account to Christ as to whether they have rightly directed their service to souls. Heb. 13:17: "Obey your teachers, and follow them: for they watch over your souls, as they that should give an account of them; that they may do it with joy, and not with sighing: for that is not good for you." Christ's word and only Christ's word they have to preach. It is also their duty to see to it and to insist that Christ's word be valid in the congregation. The pastor must not, for the sake of men, nor for the sake of the congregation, if it should make such a demand, desist from Christ's word. By doing so, he would cease to be Christ's servant and would become a servant of men. But he should know: The spiritual power which he exercises he has not directly from Christ, but through the Christian congregation. The congregation has all authority directly; the pastor has all that his office entails indirectly through the congregation. The believers are kings and priests, the pastors "servants and ministers of the general priesthood," as Luther expresses himself. (XVIII, 1577.)

This is not a disgraceful position at all. It is not considered a disgrace to serve earthly kings; much less is it a disgrace to serve spiritual kings and priests. In Germany, where these

If we have almost completely lost this knowledge, it evokes either indignation or a pitying smile that we want to be regarded as servants of the congregations. We certainly do not need to be ashamed of the German pastors. They too are servants. But while we are servants of Christian congregations, of people who bow under God's Word, they are the servants of un-Christians, even pagans, Jews and Turks, and it is made tangible enough to them that they are only servants.

Knowing that God has placed them in office through the congregation as the holders of all church authority, the preachers will also treat the congregations with all reverence. - The congregation sins, as we have seen, if it does not meet its pastor reverently. They then act against God's express word, which commands: "The elders who preside well are to be held in double honor; especially those who labor in the word and in doctrine," 1 Tim. 5:17. But the pastor also sins grievously if he treats the congregation with contempt. The Christian congregation is a nation of spiritual kings and priests. It is the most illustrious tribunal that exists on earth. Emperors, kings and the highest earthly tribunals do not have such high dignity. For these are clothed by God only with temporal power, but the Christian congregation with all spiritual power, with the power that opens heaven and closes hell and vice versa. If one already behaves respectfully toward earthly emperors, kings and courts, how much more respect is in order toward the Christian community. Observe how gently, indeed, to use this expression, how politely, for example, an apostle Paul treats the congregations. He severely punishes every deviation from God's word in doctrine and life; and yet, where God's word has not expressly commanded, he says: "I do not say that I command anything, but because others are so diligent, I also try your love to see if it is right. (2 Cor. 8:8.) Thus the apostles call the churches "churches of God," "chosen and beloved," "brethren in Christ." The pastor must remain aware of the fact that he is dealing with people whom God Himself has assembled into His church. For from this will flow the right pastoral deed in the intercourse with church members. Then the pastor will not make a bad distinction between city and country congregations, namely he will think he has to treat the latter with greater respect, because in them people of greater influence in the world or of higher worldly education are to be found. All believers are clothed with all authority, whether they be kings or poor laborers.

It should also be pointed out here that the designation of pastors as "clergymen," which is otherwise customary and

is also heard here and there among us, is quite wrong. Christians are the true clergy. There is no spiritual state apart from the Christian state. No pastor is a clergyman for the sake of his office, but only in so far as he is a Christian.

But what results for all Christians from the truth that God calls the preachers through the Christian congregation as the holder of all key authority? If the Christians are instructed to appoint the preaching ministry by profession, they must now also do what is their duty. It is not up to them to appoint the preaching ministry or not. They are required by divine command to establish the public preaching ministry 1. among themselves. If several Christians live in one place, they are to come together, hear God's word in public preaching and use the sacraments in public assembly, thus establishing the public preaching ministry among themselves. They are to see to it that the word also dwells among them abundantly through the public preaching ministry. If the congregation becomes so large that it can no longer be sufficiently supplied by one pastor, the congregation must either appoint a second pastor or seek to divide the congregation. A congregation may not, for reasons of economy or other considerations, neglect the preaching ministry among itself.

2 Christians, by virtue of their position as the original holders of the ministry of preaching, are bound to put the Word of God on the lampstand through public preaching in as many places as possible. Indeed, their goal must remain to make the preaching of the gospel resound in all places where it is not yet heard. They must aim to set up preaching booths in the cities and in the countryside wherever it is possible. It is not valid to say: If people only want to, they can come to the already existing churches. That is a completely wrong view of the situation. The commission that the church has received from Christ is not: Wait until the people come to you, but: Go and preach the gospel to all creatures. The example of Christ and the apostles also teaches us otherwise. The Lord Christ did not say, "I will stay here in Nazareth; everyone knows where I live, and whoever wants to can hear me here. Of course, one should not favor the formation of congregations that are too small and too close to each other, which do not provide sufficient work for a pastor; that would be a waste of the teaching staff. The church should also be economical with its teachers, especially since, if this did not happen, there would be a lack of teachers in other places. But it is even more provided for in the fact that we are not diligent enough to preach the gospel where there is room for it. Oh, how much room there is in this country! And how much room still in the heathen countries! Hundreds of millions hear

do not have the gospel at present, and sit in darkness and the shadow of death. This must touch our hearts. For we, the Christians, have been entrusted by Christ with the ministry of preaching.

So you might ask, where are we going to get the preachers? We have few preachers. This brings us to another point to be discussed in more detail. All Christians, as entrusted with the appointment of the preaching ministry, have 3. the duty to provide for the education of preachers and teachers. The Lord Christ did not promise that he would drop from heaven the preachers whom the church needs to carry out its ministry, but it is his order that the church itself provide and train these preachers from among its own people. It is of the utmost importance that we constantly remind ourselves of this and try to spread this knowledge in all our congregations, that the training of preachers and teachers also belongs to the appointment of the preaching ministry. If the congregation supports impecunious students, it is not actually supporting other people's children, but fulfilling a duty that it is commanded to do with the preaching ministry. It must not let it depend on the fact that the necessary forces are available to it by chance, so to speak, but it has to raise and train these forces itself. This truth must become even more alive in our congregations.

Pastors must always hold this duty up to the congregations. We pastors may not always do our full duty in this regard. We think it is quite proper that we always remind our congregations of their duty to care for the physically poor. With regard to this point, we admonish twelve times a year and more. But we think we have done enough for the matter if we only once a year, for instance on the occasion of the mission festival, impress upon our congregations their duty to provide for the recruitment of capable teachers.

The fact that we do not have enough preachers is also evident from the many changes of preachers that take place here. If the money, which the annual moving of preachers and teachers costs, were given for our educational institutions, the many changes would soon be reduced.

This duty of all Christians is also emphasized in our confession. In the Schmalkaldic Articles (Appendix, p. 342) it says: "From this it is seen that the church has power to elect and ordain church servants. Therefore, if the bishops are either heretics or do not want to ordain capable persons, the churches are obligated to God by divine right to ordain pastors and church servants for them themselves."

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "The office of preaching has been instituted and commanded by God, and has glorious promise of God, Rom.

1, 10.: "The gospel is the power of God to all those who believe in it. Isa. 55, II: "The word that goes out of my mouth shall not return to me void, but shall do as I please. If one wanted to understand the sacrament of the order (sacerdotium) in this way, one would also call the laying on of hands a sacrament. For the church has God's command that it should appoint preachers and deacons. Since this is very comforting, when we know that God wants to preach and work through men and those who are elected by men, it is good that such election is highly praised and honored; especially against the devilish Anabaptists, who despise and blaspheme such election along with the ministry of preaching and the bodily word." (S. 203.)

In his writing to the town councils, Luther urges all Christians to establish schools in order to be able to properly appoint preachers. He paints in vivid colors the misery under the papacy, which came from the fact that there were no proper teachers and preachers. Now God, in his grace, has given both the gospel and the external means for the education of proper teachers. Christians should take advantage of this time of grace and blessing, otherwise God's punishment would be unavoidable. Luther's exhortation also fits excellently to our time. The Church has again gone through a time of drought. Yes, in Germany, after a lovely spring seemed to dawn in the thirties and forties, it has become autumn and winter again almost everywhere. At the German universities, as far as the work of modern theology is concerned, no more preachers capable of holding office can be trained. In the seminaries for school teachers, unbelief prevails for the most part. The pure Word of God is not taught in elementary schools. In contrast, how God has showered us in America with grace and blessings! The Gospel goes forth with us in apostolic purity. In our more than a thousand parochial schools, God's Word prevails. However much imperfection may be attached to our higher schools, we must say one thing for the glory of God: righteous teachers and preachers of the Word are trained in them. This is a great grace, which we cannot remember often enough. But now it is also necessary to buy out this time of grace. We should fill our teaching institutions to capacity, and if the existing ones are too small, build new and larger ones. The earthly means necessary for this should be presented by us abundantly, yes, overabundantly. Let us listen to Luther. For "Germans" we need only German-Americans, for the miserable conditions under the papacy only the devastation caused by rationalism and modern theology.

Luther first writes about the conditions under the papacy:

"God let come (from his doom) instead of the Holy Scripture and good books the Aristotelem with innumerable harmful books, which only led us further and further from the Biblia; in addition, the devil's larvae, the monks and the high schools ghosts, which we endowed with inhuman goods, and many doctores, predicatoros, magistros, priests and monks, that is, large, coarse, fat asses adorned with red and brown berets, like the sow with a golden chain and pearls, have received and loaded upon us, who taught us nothing good, but only made us ever more blind and mad, and for this ate up all our goods and collected only the filth of their filthy, poisonous books all monasteries, yes, all corners full; that is horrible to think of. Has it not been a miserable pity so far that a boy has had to study twenty years or longer, only that he has learned so much evil Latin that he might become a priest and read mass? And whoever has come to this, he has been blessed; blessed has been the mother who has borne such a child. And yet he remained a poor unlearned man all his life, who could neither cluck nor lay eggs. Such teachers and masters we have had to have everywhere, who themselves have known nothing and have taught nothing good or right; indeed, they have not known the way how one should learn and teach.

Luther continued to write about the time of blessing that had dawned for Germany with the Reformation: "God Almighty has indeed now graciously visited us Germans and raised up a very golden year. We now have the finest, most learned young journeymen and men, adorned with languages and all arts, who are very well able to make use of them where they are needed to teach the young people. Isn't it a sight to see that a boy can now be trained in three years, that in his fifteenth or eighteenth year he can do more than all the high schools and monasteries have been able to do up to now? Yes, what has one learned in high schools and monasteries so far, but to become only donkeys, blocks and blocks? One has learned twenty, forty years and has known neither Latin nor German. I am silent about the shameful, blasphemous life, in which the noble youth is so miserably corrupted. . . . But now that God has blessed us so abundantly and has given us so many such people, who may teach and train the young people, truly, it is necessary that we do not let the grace of God fall to the wind and let him not knock in vain. He stands at the door; good to us, if we open to him. He greets us, blessed is he who answers him. Let us not let him pass over, who will repeat him? Let us look at our former misery and the darkness in which we have been. I am eighty that Germany has never heard so much of God's word as now; nothing is ever felt of it in history. If we let it go on like this without thanks and honor, it is to be feared that we will suffer even more terrible darkness and plague.



Dear Germans, buy, because the market is at the door, collect, because it seems and is good weather, need God's grace and word, because it is there. For you should know that God's word and grace is a driving downpour that does not come again where it once was. It was with the Jews, but it has gone, they have nothing. Paul brought him to Greece: gone is gone; they now have the Turk. Nom and Latin country had him also: gone is gone, they have now the pope. And you Germans must not think that you will have him forever; for ingratitude and contempt will not let him remain. Therefore grasp and hold who can grasp and hold; lazy hands must have an evil year."

In particular, Luther wrote that teachers and preachers should be trained diligently in this time of grace: "But those who would be the best among them, whom it is hoped will become skilled teachers, preachers, and other spiritual offices, should be left there all the more and longer" (namely, in the Christian schools), "or should be assigned entirely there. . . . This is necessary, because the number of students is almost diminishing, and many of them are unfit to teach and govern, for they can do nothing without taking care of the belly, which they alone have been taught. So we must have people who will give us God's word and sacraments and who will be ministers to the souls of the people. But where will we find them, if the schools are left to dissolve and other Christian schools are not established? (Erl. A. 22, 196. 175. 193.)

So far Luther in his writing to the town councillors. Let us listen to his admonition. A number of congregations have already begun to work diligently in this area. They send students and provide the necessary earthly goods. God has also put great diligence into the hearts of individuals. They maintain pupils and students at our institutions from their own resources. But in all congregations, the duty to provide for the proper and plentiful appointment of teachers in this time of grace is not yet recognized vividly enough. This concern must be in the forefront of our minds. God has prepared a place for the orthodox church in this country in such a way that it is quite obvious that He wants it to flourish and become great here in this last world time. This can only happen if we do everything in our power to educate many and capable teachers. If we do not fulfill this duty, we omit something that we owe to God, to our church, to our country, to our descendants; we neglect something that is necessarily connected with the Christian state, through the neglect of which the Christian can lose faith and blessedness.

Luther emphasizes this particularly in the church postilion, in the sermon on the epistle on the 20th Sunday after Trinity. In order to

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For the sake of the matter, his words are mentioned. He says: "I have often enough admonished that for this purpose, whoever could do something, should do it with all diligence, so that the youth would be brought to school, properly instructed and taught for the parish and preaching ministry, and that they would only be provided with necessities; but unfortunately, few cities and sovereigns do it. Look at all Germany, bishops, princes, nobility, citizens and peasants, how confidently they go along, snoring and sleeping, thinking there is no need; it will do itself well, one can always have pastors and preachers: but they will truly have overslept, if they think they have done it well; for they also become unintelligent and do not want to see what God's will is. Therefore they will have to learn that they do not want to believe now, that it will come to this in a few years after us, that they will look for preachers and find none, and then they will have to listen to coarse unlearned asses, who neither know nor understand the word of God. They shout, preach and exhort until they never want to hear. That is why St. Paul tells us this prophecy beforehand, that such will become unwise and unintelligent, who do not know what God's will is, and thus, as follows, miss and lose the time of grace and their salvation. Now this is God's will, that we sanctify his name, love and promote his word, and thus help God to build his kingdom, etc. If this happens, he will also do our will, namely to give us our daily bread, peace and good things. Therefore let every man first do and help that God's word be preached and heard publicly everywhere, and so that the church may stand properly prepared and built; then let him also put on for himself the wedding garment (of which the gospel says today), and think that he may also be found to mean God's word with earnestness; do not think, as the secure spirits do, O! I have pastors or preachers enough, I can hear or read it when I want to, or come to it every day; I must first see where I can get my bread, etc., Others may also provide for themselves. No, dear man, beware, it may soon happen to you that you miss it and are found without the wedding garment, and thus die or are seduced before you know it; who will then be to blame, neither yourself, who did not want to hear St. Paul's admonition? ... I would much rather burn in hell with Judah the betrayer than be guilty of devastating a parish or giving place to a deceiver; for even the betrayer of Christ will not have such unbearable torment as this one; for by this sin innumerable souls must be lost." (St. L. XII, 926 ff.)

It is quite a wrong conclusion when people say: As little as I have to take care of the education of my neighbor's children to a trade, as little do I owe to help that my neighbor's children are educated to a trade.

The child of a neighbor becomes a preacher or teacher. For Christians, of course, are not commanded by God to see to it that this or that craft is appointed; but as Christians they are entrusted by God with the appointment of the ministry of preaching.

A look at the history of the church confirms that the fulfillment or neglect of this duty has been of great influence on the prosperous progress of the church. When a crowd of young men sat at Luther's feet in Wittenberg to prepare for church service, the church flourished. Rich streams of blessing flowed from Wittenberg not only over Germany, but also over the neighboring countries... In Holland, a Lutheran free church with a lively life had also arisen. But there was no university. One had to make do by asking for candidates from other Lutheran countries. When a request for help came to Holland from distant lands, this request could only be met by turning elsewhere for the requested help. The Dutch Free Church never became a big tree. - In America, too, the Lutheran Church was planted early, and under very favorable conditions; yet it remained a puny little plant. After 50 years, there was no Lutheran preacher in America. There was a lack of a Lutheran college. The expansion of the Lutheran church was out of the question. The existing congregations, however, partly perished completely, partly became a prey of the sects. What an upswing, on the other hand, the orthodox church has experienced here in the last 50 years! When our fathers, now mostly resting in God, settled here under the most unfavorable external conditions, their first concern was the establishment of a school for prophets. And that, while they themselves had enough preachers and an abundance of candidates. Thus the word of God could be spread. This is the healthy spirit, which is active in healthy teaching as well as in healthy and active church life. This is followed by a healthy and prosperous development.

Nor need we fear that there will ever be an abundance of capable teachers. As long as God preserves his grace, we will never have enough, let alone an abundance. For until the last day the saying remains true: "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. When our needs are met, we are commanded to send missionaries to other countries where God's word has not yet resounded. What we have to do is this, that we make it our business with all diligence to order the preaching ministry abundantly.

For the congregation, it was added, it follows from the recognition that it, as the holder of all church authority, has the right and power to appoint church servants, and also that it is responsible for the preservation of the church.

that this right remains in mind. In this country, too, the danger is by no means too remote that the communities will lose this right. The community must take care that the interest in professional matters does not dwindle within its association, that individuals do not usurp the election and thus finally lose the awareness that the entire community has the right of appeal. As much as a community should gladly and willingly accept and follow good advice, it must be the last person to act. The community should also watch outwardly. A feature of our time is the desire to regulate everything by state laws. The school struggle has shown us clearly enough how closely this can also affect our community affairs. The communities must seriously see to it that state and church remain strictly separated. The old saying "Resist the beginnings" applies here. We must not be lax and indolent, but must be faithful in holding what we have, lest someone take our crown.

### **Thesis III.**

Although God calls through the Christian congregation, that is, through human beings, the calling remains entirely God's business. Therefore, congregations and pastors, as well as all those who are active in the calling process, should be most careful to avoid "humanities.

It is through people that God carries out his calling. He does not want to call the names of those who are to serve him in the preaching ministry directly from heaven, but the congregations are to choose the persons. He also does not want to indicate directly from heaven the places in which, and the time, how long in the same place the individual persons are to serve him, but his Christians are to judge and decide about this. And yet God has not given the calling of the preachers out of his hand, but has kept it entirely in his hand. He remains the one who appoints the preachers. He is also the actual agent in the indirect calling.

This is clear teaching of the Holy Scripture. Apost. 30, 28. it is also said of the indirectly called preachers that they were ordained by the Holy Spirit. Those who are called indirectly are no less called by God than those who are called directly. The Lord Christ called Simon Peter and Andrew with the words, "Follow me; I will make you fishers of men." No less definitely and distinctly does Christ call every pastor by his ordinary calling, "Follow me; I will make you fishers of men." The difference is only in the manner of the calling. That calling happened through Christ's

This happens through the mouth chosen by Christ: the church. Therefore Eph. 4, 8. 11. 12. puts those who are called directly and those who are called indirectly on the same line and describes them as equally set by God: "He ascended up on high . . and has given gifts to men. And he hath appointed some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, that the saints should be prepared for the work of the ministry, edifying the body of Christ." By "pastors and teachers" are to be understood in any case those who are called indirectly. God has also appointed them, and through them he wants to build up the body of Christ, just as through the ministry of the directly called apostles. So also today the Psalm word is still true: "The Lord gives the word with great multitudes of evangelists." Ps. 68, 12. God still fulfills his promise today: "I give Jerusalem preachers." Isa. 41, 27. Until the last day the church is to "pray the LORD of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest." Matth. 9, 38.

Tarnov writes about this: "According to its nature, calling is a divine act; for it is not to be thought that God has stopped calling and sending preachers today, but He Himself, the Lord of the harvest, sends laborers into His harvest, just as the Son also wanted His disciples to ask the Father, Matth. 9, 38; the Son gives and sends, Joh. 20, 21. 1 Cor. 12, 5; the Holy Spirit sets bishops in His church, Apost. 20, 28. 20, 28. Hence it is said that one hears and rejects Christ when he hears and rejects preachers, because both the indirect and the direct calling is divine."

How do the congregations and pastors begin so that God's will, not their own, is done in matters of vocation? They must follow the instructions that God has given in His Word for the calling to the preaching ministry. These are very clear. We have seen who is to be called. But God also describes exactly the persons whom He wants to put into the preaching ministry; such must be called by the churches. He also gives the exact rules according to which the calling and transfer of these persons should take place. Congregations and pastors, and in general all those who are active in a calling, must proceed according to these rules. With the appointment of teachers and preachers, God has not given Christians any riddles to solve. Here, too, their course can and should be certain in God's Word. If we waver in transfers, despite careful consideration of the situation, we still know what we have to do: Then the called person must remain at his old congregation, where he already has a certain calling.

We first pay attention to the people to be called. The church cannot call whoever it wants. She is entrusted with the pure Word of God and the whole Word of God. Christ's command to her is, "Teach them to keep all that I have commanded you." Therefore she is to

also call only those persons who preach the pure Word and the whole Word, in a word: only orthodox preachers. To give a few examples: The church is to preach Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man; so it must not call a rationalist or unitarian who teaches that Christ was only a virtuous man. The church should preach that Christ, with his vicarious life, suffering and death, is the only Savior of men; so it must not call a papist preacher who teaches that works of men are also the ground of justification and salvation. If the church is to preach that a man is converted and saved by grace alone for Christ's sake, the church must not call a synergist who teaches that man's conversion and salvation depend not only on God's grace, but also on man's conduct.

That God wants only orthodox preachers in office is attested to in all of Scripture. God wants to have preachers in His church who "hold to the word that is sure and able to teach", Tit. 1, 9; who "hold to the example of the words of salvation", 2 Tim. 1, 13. 14; "the lips of the priest shall keep the doctrine", Mal. 2, 7. 2, 7. The pastor is to apply the word of God "to punishment," to the refutation of false doctrine, 8 Tim. 3, 16.; thus he must not himself cherish false doctrine. He is to ward off the "deceivers", Tit. 1, 10.; thus he must not be a deceiver himself. He should "punish those who contradict", Tit. 1, 9.; thus he must not contradict the word of God himself. He should "shut the mouths of the deceivers", Tit. 1, 11.; thus he must not open his mouth to false doctrine himself. In short, only the pure word of God should resound in the church. 1 Petr. 4, 11: "If any man speak, let him speak it as the word of God." The pure word of God is the right adornment for the church, yes, it makes the church the church. Through false teaching, the church is highly defiled and turned into a sect. If a church appoints a false teacher, it appoints a defiler and desecrator of the church and the preaching ministry. Christ did not appoint the office of preaching for the proclamation of errors and human thoughts, but for the testimony of the revealed truth, the beatific thoughts of God. Teachers who do not stick to the teaching of the Scriptures in every respect should not be called by Christians, but should be shunned, according to Rom. 16:17: "Look at those who cause division and trouble apart from the teaching you have learned, and turn away from them."

And not only should the Christians assume and take it for granted that the person to be appointed will teach correctly, but they should know this. An examination of the person to be called must have preceded. The apostle already says of the servants (deacons) in 1 Tim. 3, 10: "Let them be tried beforehand", that is, beforehand.

Examine. The examination of those to be called is divine order; human order is only the manner of the examination if it takes place outside the calling congregation. The congregation should only call such persons who have the testimony of orthodoxy. Also, only such persons should be allowed to work in the congregation through writings. A congregation must be careful not to distribute in its midst magazines and books written or published by people who do not have the testimony of orthodoxy. Also, none of our students may preach a sermon that has not first been examined by those who already have the testimony that they are orthodox preachers.

The one to be called must not only hold the right doctrine, but also be able to teach it. The office of preaching is the office of teaching others. A preacher must not only want to teach, but also be able to teach. Personal piety, love and zeal are necessary prerequisites for the proper administration of the office of preaching, but these qualities alone do not constitute the essence of a proper preacher. Someone can possess these qualities and still be completely unfit for the preaching ministry, if he does not have the ability to teach others. Therefore, the churches should only call such preachers who have the testimony that they are "teachable". This is expressly prescribed in God's Word 1 Timothy 3:2, where among the qualities that a bishop, that is, a preacher, must have, being "teachable" is also mentioned. St. Paul only calls those to be appointed as preachers "who are able to teach others", 2 Tim. 2, 2. There are degrees of ability; but the lowest degree is that the one to be appointed is able to lead others to salvation through the right preaching of law and gospel.

We must thank God that we belong to such a synodal association, which seriously sees to it that its preachers are capable of teaching; in which great importance is attached to examinations and colloquiums, and in which even afterwards at conferences the preachers are required to further themselves in the knowledge of the truth, as well as in the skill of teaching.

The congregation should also appoint only blameless persons to the preaching ministry. It should spread the word, but not make obstacles for the word. But this happens when the person who preaches the word does not have a good reputation among those who are outside. For this reason the apostle Paul expressly prescribes in 1 Tim. 3, 2. 7: "But let a bishop be blameless, a woman's husband, sober, temperate, sedentary, hospitable, and teachable. ... But he must also have a good testimony from those who are outside, so that he does not fall into the blasphemer's shame and rope." By "being blameless" is not meant that the pastor must be free from all sins, including those of weakness, but only,

that the person to be appointed to the office of preacher must not have lived a criminal, civilly disgraceful life before the world. Luther writes: "St. Paul commands that such a one should be appointed bishop in the church of God who is blameless and leads an irreproachable life. Not that any man may live without all sin, but that he may walk without reproach or walk uprightly. For the Greek word xxxxxxxxxx means as much as without reproach or such a one.

Man whom no man can accuse or convict of any crime." (XIX, 2180 f.) Quenstedt writes: "The Apostle to the Gentiles does not say: a bishop must be sinless, that is, so constituted that he has no sin at all, otherwise not men but angels would have to be set before the church." - This is the rule established in God's Word. About the cases where "necessity and God" make an exception, as Dannhauer expresses it, we need not go on. That must remain: Exceptions must be made by God himself, who has given the rule.

How can a congregation be sure that the pastor to be appointed by it is blameless? As far as the candidates are concerned, who are trained in our institutions, it is self-evident that only those are proposed to the congregations who, after completing their studies, can be given a good testimony in this respect as well. The pastors already in office among us are known; they have walked before the church. Finally, those who come from abroad are not simply proposed to the congregations, but their names are published in the "Lutheraner" four weeks beforehand, in order to give everyone the opportunity to raise any necessary objections at the appropriate place. If, therefore, a congregation only follows the proper procedure, i.e., has candidates proposed by its district presbyter, it can, may, and should be certain that the persons proposed to it are also in good standing with respect to their conduct. Caution will always be necessary on the part of the district presidents; for a president who acted carelessly in this regard would incur a terrible debt. But caution is also necessary in judging individual cases, so that the officials are not unfairly reproached if they have acted to the best of their knowledge and conscience and it later turns out that they themselves would have been deceived.

If the will of God is to be done in the appointment of preachers, the congregations must appoint persons who are orthodox, capable of teaching and blameless. But what are the points of view according to which the choice among the individual eligible persons should be made? The word 1 Cor. 12:7 is decisive: "In each one the gifts of the Spirit are manifested for the common good.

This word already regulates the calling of candidates. God distributes the gifts differently, and the needs of the congregations are



different. Precisely because the needs are different, God also gives different gifts. So how do the congregations come to appoint the people to puff for them? Our congregations have introduced the custom of having the candidates to be called proposed by people who know the candidates on the one hand and the needs of the various calling congregations on the other. In this way, the congregations are not unduly restricting their freedom of choice, but are demonstrating their conscientiousness that they do not want to proceed in the election according to human arbitrariness, but according to God's will, namely that the gifts should prove to be for the common good. The congregations that do not want to be consulted in this way run the risk of acting according to their own will instead of God's will. Pastors, too, who are asked for advice when calling candidates, should be well aware of the responsibility they assume when giving advice. They will not always be able to give the appropriate counsel, since they usually neither know the candidates nor have an overview of the positions to be filled with candidates.

Likewise, the greatest care is needed for transfers. Here, too, pastor and congregation must ask whether God wants the transfer. They do not have to consider: What is our will? What do we like? but: What is God's will? What is pleasing to God? What God's will is in the individual case must be considered in the light of the general rule that gifts should be for the common good.

A congregation must not say from the outset: We do not want a transfer at all, but keep our preacher until his death. God, who has placed the preacher, must also retain the right to transfer him. A congregation that is against any transfer from the outset would thereby place itself above God. That a congregation may not reject from the outset every transfer of its preacher follows from 1 Cor. 12:7: "In each one the gifts of the Spirit are manifested for the common good." If it is obvious that the gifts of a pastor would produce more fruit in another place, or that a pastor no longer has the sufficient gifts or physical strength for the proper administration of his ministry in his previous congregation, then a transfer should take place according to God's will.

Here also the objection does not apply: Why did the person concerned not come immediately to the place most puffing for him? Because often certain gifts of the individual persons appear only in the course of the time; likewise certain lacks in the talent become only; with the time obvious. Then, too, certain needs only gradually become apparent. Vacancies in the teaching institutions have to be filled, or the conditions in the congregations themselves change. A congregation, which was initially small, grows in such a way that the previous pastor's physical strength or even his

the gifts conferred on him are no longer sufficient. If he receives a call from another congregation, it must be considered whether the pastor's gifts and strengths are in better proportion to his service to the calling congregation. Therefore, no congregation may demand from the called person a promise never to accept another calling. Rather, it is necessary to ask and examine in the event of a calling: What does God want? Does God want a transfer?

If one wants to know God's will, the previous and the new profession must be carefully compared with each other in order to be able to act according to the main rule that the gifts should be for the common good. The question, then, is whether, in the Christian judgment of the church, a benefit will accrue from the transfer. The question is not whether the pastor will have a personal advantage, e.g., a larger salary, less work, a more comfortable position, etc., from accepting or rejecting the new profession.

Of course, it is divine order that those who preach the gospel feed on the gospel; also, the congregations that are able should not keep their pastor meagerly, but well; the circumstance that a congregation can no longer provide the necessary sustenance for a pastor with a large family can also be a reason for transfer; but nevertheless, a pastor who has food and clothing in his congregation should not accept another profession for the sake of a larger salary.

Of course, it is also a sufficient reason to follow another profession if the physical strength of a pastor is no longer sufficient to serve his previous congregation. Also, when a pastor or his family suffers from an illness in one place, the probable cure of which by a change of residence is held out by a reliable physician, God Himself speaks and makes known His will for the transfer. But to seek less work out of convenience or excessive anxiety would be to go one's own way. Preachers are there to work, to work hard; they are there to be consumed in the service of the church.

The congregations should make their position as comfortable as possible for the pastors. This is God's clear commandment, which the Holy Spirit inculcates in the churches in many places, 1 Thess. 5:12, 13: "Know them that labor in you, and that preside over you in the Lord, and admonish you. Have them the more gladly for their work's sake, and be at peace with them." 1 Tim. 5:17: "Let the elders, which do well in their work, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they that labor in the word and in doctrine." The congregations should behave toward their preachers in such a way that they "do their work with joy and not with sighing. (Hebr. 13, 17.) But it would be quite wrong for a pastor to choose another profession for this reason.

The preacher must be prepared from the outset that he will also suffer from the infirmities of the congregation. A preacher must be prepared from the beginning that he will also suffer from the infirmities of the congregation. Likewise, a more pleasant environment, the proximity of study friends, relatives or relatives of the wife must not move him to accept the profession.

In short, the decisive factor in a transfer should be solely the question: Does the kingdom of God, the church, benefit from it?

It should be the same with the congregation, both with the one who has been called and with the one whose pastor has been called. The congregation should not think or say: we have a good pastor; who knows what kind of pastor we will get again; therefore we will not let our pastor go, but the congregation should ask and seriously consider: what serves the best of the church? The individual Christian congregations are independent, of course, but they are not isolated. Rather, all Christian congregations form one large spiritual body. "Where one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; where one member is kept glorious, all the members rejoice with it." A congregation should certainly look to itself that it is well supplied with teachers, but it should not lose sight of the whole. If it therefore recognizes that a transfer of its preacher would benefit the church, then it says: God is calling you, you must go. God will provide for us again according to his will. In the expectation that the Christian congregations will handle vocational matters in this way, God has entrusted the calling to them.

It also follows from this that a congregation should seek the advice of experienced, conscientious, impartial persons in professional matters. A congregation that does not want to accept advice in such important matters concerning the welfare of the church and the will of God, insisting on its independence, is acting recklessly and is on the best way to act contrary to the will of God. The pastor, too, should, before taking decisive steps, discuss the professional matter with such persons who are capable of giving good advice.

It is very important that a transfer only takes place if the case is quite clear, i.e. the reasons for the transfer are decidedly predominant. If, despite a thorough discussion, it remains doubtful whether the transfer will benefit the Kingdom of God, the pastor must remain at his previous congregation. Certain steps must be taken in vocational matters.

Here are some testimonies of orthodox teachers of our church. To the question whether a preacher is absolutely not allowed to go from one congregation to another, Chr. Kortholt answers: "As the Lord of the harvest has power to call His servants, so also they

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There is no doubt that this will be done according to the will of this Lord, if only everything is done lawfully, so that the church transfers the ministers of the word in this way. For 1. the apostle, speaking of the deacons, 1 Tim. 3, 13. says: "But those who serve well acquire for themselves a good degree"; which he would not say, if those who serve faithfully in lesser offices could not be raised to greater ones. (2) Why should not those who, being endowed with excellent gifts, preside over the church for a time in low estate, be set before more populous congregations, as this would be to the greater advantage of the church? (3) And if such a transfer of ecclesiastical persons were to be considered quite unlawful, then we would have hardly any others for superintendents, etc., and for pastors of the largest congregations than young men who had not previously administered ecclesiastical offices, which would be quite unsuitable. However, this does not condone the frivolity of those who, without urgent need and without any apparent benefit to the church, frequently change their seat, and (as Seneca says of the sick) use the change as a remedy by leaving their posts either for larger and more abundant pay, or to get rid of work they can do, or to attain higher honor, and whatever other temporal advantages are seen here. For such make a trade out of godliness (which the apostle forbids in 1 Tim. 6, 12). Of them Mathesius says artfully: "Some do like the sun merchants; where the sun shines, when he thinks he will make money, he unties his bag; if a cloudy cloud comes in and the merchandise wants to be more valid at another church fair, he ties it again and leaves; God grant that it remains mother or bride, to whom the Son of God has given as much as she wants.'" (Pastor fidelis, p. 57-60.)

Ludwig Hartmann writes the following about the fact that personal advantage should not be the deciding factor when considering a profession: "You can live better elsewhere" (namely, you preacher who has received a call to another congregation), "but God has bound you to a congregation that feeds you only meagerly; elsewhere you would be more honored, but God has just assigned you a place where you are to live in lowliness; elsewhere is a healthier or lovelier region, but here your stay is prescribed for you. You would like to deal with more educated people, you are offended by their ingratitude, pride or crudeness, finally you do not like the people's ways and customs at all: nevertheless you must fight and do violence to your opposing desires, so that you fulfill the duty that has been assigned to you. For you are not free or independent. Just as in the Jewish church, the Levites, when they were in office, did not do this

But those who were obligated could not wander according to their own free will, but according to a certain necessity and with the help of the knowledge, agreement, and decision of the church where they worked: so it is also not fitting for pious servants of God to wander about, but to remain at their post, unless it becomes their duty to leave through their own or public necessity with the certain decision and agreement of those to whom they are bound. For from this licentiousness ruin tends to ensue for themselves and manifold danger for the church; as, on the other hand, quiet and conscientious abiding tends to bring forth the richest fruit for both parts." (*Pastorale evang. libr. IV, 6. 2. 3.*)

The means by which one arrives at the right decision are given by him in the following words: "From what then is it to be concluded that a profession is divine? Answer: To this end fervent prayer helps, by which the heart is directed to the recognition of God's will, careful comparison of all circumstances, and especially consideration of the greater benefit, examination of one's own character and gifts, and also the judgment and careful consideration of learned and pious friends, all of which God is now accustomed to use as salutary means, after that immediate impulse and that completely clear kind of calling, free from all doubt, has ceased, by which he once took the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles into his service". (*op. cit.*)

Following the 3rd thesis, some particular questions were discussed. 1. Is not the respective profession to be considered first of all and only then the new one to be examined according to importance and urgency? Answer: The professions of the Gentiles must be compared with each other in terms of their importance and urgency; whether the old profession is the more important or not is recognized precisely from the comparison. If, of course, the new profession is not decidedly predominant in terms of its importance, so that anyone who wants to be convinced can be convinced of it, then this is proof that one must not leave the previous congregation. For one knows that one is placed in it by God.

2. Is the importance and urgency of the new profession decisive when the vacant congregation is likely to be in great danger? Answer: No! God does not want His kingdom to be built in one place so that it is destroyed in another. But one should also be very careful not to make the probable danger greater than it is.

3. "The importance and urgency of a profession is often overstated." This should not be. He who acts in professional matters takes upon himself a great responsibility and must therefore be scrupulously conscientious. He should neither fail to state the importance properly, nor be carried away to exaggerate the importance. Otherwise the

The knowledge of God's will in this particular case is clouded. And the consequence is that the called person becomes discouraged when he later finds everything different from what he was told. Of course, this is sometimes also due to the called person himself, who thinks that what is really the truth is an exaggeration, because he sees the circumstances with different eyes. But what if a preacher has really been persuaded to accept the calling by exaggerating the importance of the new field of work? Even then he should consider that he is in a valid divine calling. The one who has accepted the vocation that came from a congregation can and should consider that he is called by God. Our old theologians know only one thing that makes a calling invalid, namely if it does not come from those who alone have the right of calling. A person who is called to the church does not have a divine calling to the church. If humanity is involved in a calling, it may stain the calling, but it does not make it unvirtuous. If, therefore, a preacher learns that his calling was not lawful in every respect, he must not doubt the divinity of his calling. In general, we must not forget that God sits in the government and keeps everything in his hands even in the follies of men. He also knows how to make good out of evil. Thus he also turns the misdeeds that are committed through the weakness of the flesh in such a way that a blessing finally arises from them for the church.

(4) Should a pastor take the side of the calling congregation in the hearing of a call made to him, because its reasons could too easily be overlooked by the present congregation? Answer: We must always keep in mind that matters of calling are God's business and that the strictest truthfulness must be observed. In most cases, however, it will be the case that no one in the congregation will be inclined to emphasize the reasons of the calling sister congregation. In this case, the pastor must not allow himself to be deterred from clearly stating his opinion, even out of fear that it might appear that he definitely wants to leave.

5. May a pastor, who has to teach school and has the strength and ability to do so, accept an appointment to a congregation in which he is exempt from teaching? - This question can hardly be answered in a general way. According to our general rule, the gifts of the called person and the circumstances of the congregation must be compared. There the question will have to be answered soon in the affirmative, soon in the negative.

(6) Even before the appointment, the appointing congregation should take into consideration the field of work of the person to be appointed in such a way that it cannot be reproached for having carelessly tempted the person appointed. It should not only be a matter of concern to them that they themselves are well

but that the kingdom of God is also being built in other places. Therefore, even if a congregation is convinced that the pastor of another congregation is a very suitable man for it, it must refrain from calling him if it recognizes that that pastor is quite appropriate in his congregation, indeed, that perhaps that congregation would suffer such damage from a vacancy that the benefit to be expected from the transfer would not be able to outweigh it.

7. a candidate has received a vocation from a congregation through the so-called distribution commission, which has put the name of the candidate to be called into the vocation letter on behalf of the calling congregation. The same candidate now receives a second appointment, in which his name is written from the beginning, because a pastor has suggested him to the congregation and the congregation has thus immediately included his name in the appointment. Does this circumstance give the latter profession an advantage over the former? Answer: No! In both cases, the person to be called was personally unknown to the congregation; in both cases, the congregation made use of other persons in order to find the fitting person through their service. The "distribution commission" can perform this service at least as well as a pastor. - In addition, it is one of the misconceptions when people who have no profession and often very little judgment recommend candidates who would perhaps be much more suitable and necessary in another place. Our synod has made this order with good consideration, and everyone may well consider whether he can answer for it before God to interfere with such an institution. Each congregation should retain its full freedom of choice, but this freedom should also be used wisely and in the fear of God; for here, too, the general rule applies that the gifts should prove to be for the common good. -

The question: "Is an oral profession sufficient under certain circumstances to be recognized as a divine one? It is true that the written form of the profession is undoubtedly the most suitable, because it is the first to exclude misunderstandings. Already from apostolic times we have examples of Christian congregations that had important decisions, which they wanted to make known to others, written out and delivered. One of the most important decisions a congregation can make is the appointment of a pastor. Thus, the congregation should send a written vocational diploma to the person appointed. In this document, the congregation can unequivocally state once and for all what it expects from the pastor and what it commits itself to. However, the written form of the appointment is not expressly required. An oral appointment, if it is witnessed as originating from the congregation and is sufficiently clear, is not inferior to a written one.

9. of what importance is the granting or refusal of peaceful dismissal on the part of the previous municipality, in order to

God's will in the case of a transfer in question? As a rule, a pastor should not accept a new calling without a peaceful release from his previous congregation. The congregation is the instrument of calling; it should also, if possible, be the instrument of dismissal to another congregation. If the persons who are to advise the congregation are convinced that a transfer is in accordance with the will of God, they should do everything they can to persuade the congregation to dismiss their pastor. If it is not possible to convince the congregation, and if it cannot be proven that the congregation does not care whether the will of God is done and the kingdom of God is built, then it must be judged that the pastor should remain. - The pastor who goes against the will of his congregation must first of all be able to say to himself that he is not seeking anything of his own in accepting the new calling, no more comfortable or more honored position, but that only the fear of disobedience to the clearly recognized will of God drives him. On the other hand, he should not act according to his own judgment, but according to the judgment of experienced, pious, impartial men. Thus, the case will very seldom occur that a pastor can accept a call to another congregation with a clear conscience, that is, in the certainty that God will transfer him, if his previous congregation absolutely refuses to dismiss him peacefully. God often uses the refusal of the congregation to enforce His will against the rash counsels of the congregation.

Chemnitz therefore gave the following opinion to the Brunswick Ministry in 1578: "Just as the consent and will of the church and the community is necessary when someone is legally appointed, so also without the consent and will of the church, no abandonment of the church can take place and be carried out. Among our means, some have often been called without seeking it, even to such places where God could have been served much; but because this church has not been able or willing to give its consent and will to the proposed change and abandonment for considerable reasons, those who have been called elsewhere have not been able or willing in their conscience to leave this church (to which, as far as official matters are concerned, they can give no considerable blame)". (Cit. in Walth. Past. p. 419.)

(10) Is it to be regarded as a peaceful dismissal if a congregation, after an exact comparison of the two professions, does not come to the conclusion that the new profession is more important and that its pastor should accept it, but nevertheless wants to let its pastor go because it "does not want to rule over his conscience"? In this case, it is clear from the behavior of the congregation that it, for its part, has not come to the conclusion that a transfer is in accordance with the will of God and serves the best of the church. It does not say yes to the transfer and refuses to cooperate.



in doing so. But it does not want to rule over the conscience of the pastor, if he is of a different conviction and also acts according to this conviction. Such a dismissal can therefore hardly be brought under the term "peaceful dismissal". In which case a pastor can accept another profession even without a peaceful dismissal on the part of his previous congregation has been answered in the previous question.

In general, it is more likely that pastors and teachers are too easily inclined to accept a new profession. But the opposite also happens, that a pastor or teacher does not want to follow any profession at all, although a transfer is obviously required. If the pastor is an obstacle to the course of God's word, in that his congregation or a large part of it has lost confidence in him through his fault, and he cannot be expected to regain it so easily, then he should accept another calling given to him. If he is not inclined to do so, he may well examine himself to see whether he is not seeking his own advantage by his desire to remain.

Our old theologians have also dealt with this case. Thus Ludwig Hartmann writes about it: "If those who are at the top (with us the congregations and their advisors) notice that the official administration of a preacher will be completely useless, they can transfer him if it is likely that it will be more useful elsewhere. But the administration of the office tends to become useless either because of a given annoyance, if he is a source of annoyance to this congregation, which would not be the case in another place; or if he has completely lost his reputation and his person is held in low esteem; or because of the inequality of gifts in relation to the congregation; or because of enmity, which can hardly be reconciled, as long experience has taught. Therefore, if it be seen that the hearts of a great part are alienated, so that they repel the pastor's labors, and receive his exhortations too little reverently, or there be an irreconcilable resentment, it would be better to transfer him to some place, than that he should be despised by his own, to the dishonor of the office which he administers." (Cit. in Walth. Past. p. 405.)

On the other hand, it is also to be warned that a congregation should not insist on the dismissal of its pastor for the sake of every little disagreement or trivial offense. When the apostle Paul writes to Timothy: "Against an elder take up no complaint except two or three witnesses," and adds: "Those who sin, punish them before all," he is thinking of a case in which a pastor has not only shown the usual human weaknesses, but has once committed a more serious offense, though not in such a way that he has made himself unworthy of his office. He should be publicly punished, but that should be the end of it. Therefore, the congregation need not immediately lose confidence in him.

(12) If a person who has been legitimately called by a Christian congregation is warned against accepting a vocation, because by accepting the vocation he would have to forego certain external advantages, this is also humanity, which is condemned by the truth that it is God who calls through the congregation, and that the gifts should be for the common good. According to this truth, each individual case must be decided; only then, and then certainly, can we take safe steps in matters of vocation.

The Synod unanimously declared its support for these theses and their implementation.

## **Business Negotiations. Inner Mission.**

From the report of the commission, as well as from the oral reports of the traveling preachers, it was vividly evident that the work of the Inner Mission had taken a gratifying upswing in the last two years. Not only have new places opened up for us, but the work is also visibly flourishing in the places that have been tackled. At present we have 51 preaching places in our mission

territory, namely 11 in Tennessee, 15 in Arkansas, and 25 in Missouri. Even if in some places the prospects are not such that one can expect to see large congregations springing up in a short time, the work is everywhere a blessed and hopeful one.

After hearing the report on the individual mission fields, the Synod passed the following resolutions:

1st Moberly and Mexico, Mo. to be filled as soon as possible.

2. to hire a missionary to West Tennessee as soon as possible.

3. to obtain a teacher to be appointed in Sedalia for the time being from the mission treasury.

4. to encourage and assist the Memphis congregation to go forward with the establishment of a mission school in South Memphis.

5. to refer the request of the congregation at Chattanooga, Tenn. for a one-year grant to the Missionary Commission for decision.

Finally, it was recalled that itinerant preachers are required to send regular reports to the Mission Commission.