

Doctrinal Proceedings.

(Speaker: Dr. F. Pieper.)

The "Lay Movement" Ordained by God.

I.

The "lay movement" in the proclamation of the Word.

While it must be acknowledged and maintained that the public ministry of preaching, which requires a special ability and a special calling, is not merely an ecclesiastical institution but a divine order, it must also be acknowledged and maintained that the preaching of the Word by all Christians is both a divine order and of the greatest importance for the Church. — The preaching of the Word by women where it is justified and its limitation.

II.

The "lay movement" in financial terms.

Although the Old Testament order of tithing may not be placed on the conscience of New Testament Christians, it is and remains the divine order that New Testament Christians should give themselves and all their earthly goods to Christ and willingly place as much of it at his disposal for his church as he needs at any time.

III.

The "lay movement" in the Christian walk in general.

Although Christians are above all to build Christ's kingdom through the Christian proclamation of the Word, it is nevertheless the divine order that all Christians should also work diligently for the Christian Church at all times through their Christian conduct in all circumstances of life.

There has been much talk of a so-called "lay movement" in the Protestant church fellowships of America in the last decade. This has especially been the case since 1906, when a kind of organization called the "*Laymen's Missionary Movement*" came into being. Not only ecclesiastical but also secular newspapers published long reports about it.

The purpose of the movement is to win the so-called laymen in all church communities to a more general and greater activity for the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world and, in particular, to encourage greater gifts for the expansion of the Christian Church. In the winter of 1909 and 1910, Laymen's Missionary Conventions were held in 75 cities in the United States. Many enthusiastic speeches were given and large sums of money were collected. A certain John Kennedy alone contributed 10 million dollars for Foreign and Home Missions.

What do we make of this movement? It has been discredited in our country, especially because many speakers have revealed through the content of their speeches that they do not know what Christianity actually is. [See Pieper's 1902 essay "[The Nature of Christianity](#)."] Christianity is often confused with civil culture and human progress. The task of the Christian church is seen not so much to save sinners by preaching the gospel of Christ but to educate the non-Christian world to become civilized people. However, this is quite wrong. We have always rightly spoken out against this purpose of Christianity. It is true that Christianity is the greatest and most secure cultural power in the world. Even non-believers have admitted this. It is reported of the English naturalist Darwin that, after a [visit to Tierra del Fuego](#) in South America

he declared this people incapable of civilization. Missionaries then came to the Fuegians with the gospel. When Darwin later visited them again and saw the change that had taken place with this people as a result of the mission, he is said to have made regular contributions to the mission. But let us be clear: the Christian Church has always regarded good morals and civil culture only as the fruit and consequence of Christianity, not as Christianity itself. The real task of the Church is to preach the Gospel. It is to save humanity not only from barbarism, but from eternal damnation.

But what is right about the so-called "lay movement"? It is the truth that not only pastors, but all Christians without exception and without ceasing should be active in preaching the Gospel near and far. This is divine order. There is a lay movement commanded by God, and in these days we want to visualize it according to its main features from God's Word. This should not really be necessary for Lutherans. We are completely familiar with the matter. Luther brought "the spiritual priesthood" of all Christians from God's Word back to light. But spiritual priesthood is just another word for the Christian lay movement. Spiritual priesthood denotes not only a dignity, but also an activity or movement, namely: teaching, sacrificing, confessing. As I said, we are familiar with this. From our youth we have heard about the spiritual priesthood of all Christians and have been taught the rights and duties of the spiritual priesthood. Nevertheless, because of the flesh that still clings to us, we are all in great need of continual instruction and encouragement from God's Word on this point. There is a lot going on among us in this area that goes against God's Word and will, or is actually omitted. Anyone who knows the situation must say that there is a tendency to leave the Christian proclamation of the Word entirely to the public preaching office and to be passive or almost passive with regard to this point. Likewise, there is always a recognizable tendency to be as passive as possible in giving for the kingdom of God instead of being active. Even in our Christian walk we do not promote the kingdom of God as we should. It is obvious that this means great harm both for the church and for the world. But we ourselves also suffer great harm if, contrary to God's will and order, we fail to engage in Christian movement and activity. Let us take the example of the natural life. If you want to stay physically healthy, it is not enough to eat well and abundantly. You must also get enough exercise, otherwise you will sit and lie stiff or even dead. Impure fluids form which endanger health and life. It is the same in the spiritual realm. It is not enough for

us Christians to eat well. We now have good food in our Church. We have the gospel pure and plentiful. But we must now also move all the more nimbly and abundantly by proclaiming the Word on our part and by offering our earthly goods for the Gospel and by walking most carefully before the world. Otherwise impure fluids will form. O how many a Christian has sat and lain to death spiritually! Therefore, Holy Scripture, from beginning to end, exhorts all Christians to the most zealous lay movement, as we will demonstrate in these days. First, let us consider the activity of the proclamation of the Word.

Thesis I. ^

The "lay movement" in the proclamation of the Word.

While it must be acknowledged and maintained that the public ministry of preaching, which requires a special ability and a special calling, is not merely an ecclesiastical institution but a divine order, it must also be acknowledged and maintained that the preaching of the Word by all Christians is both a divine order and of the greatest importance for the Church. — The proclamation of the Word by women where it is justified and its limitation.

The Christian Church directs everything it does on earth through the proclamation of the Word of God. All other things serve the purposes of the Christian Church only insofar as they serve the course of the Word of God. The life and activity of the Christian Church is so bound to God's Word that the Holy Scriptures, when describing the growth of the Church in the world, also say: "The Word of God grew and multiplied", Acts 12:24. The Christian Church teaches, she is a teacher of the world; but she does not teach her own word or the wisdom of men, but only the Word of God, 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the Word of God." The Christian church resists, it resists all false teaching and all false teachers, but not with the sword and with external force, but only with God's Word. The weapons of the Christian church are not carnal, says the Apostle 2 Cor. 10:4. The Christian church gathers and unites, but not by mere external association and organization in the case of doctrinal disagreement, but by witnessing and confessing the Word of God and by faithfully holding fast to this Word in the face of all deviation from the truth. John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." It leaves it to the Holy Spirit to create and maintain unity through the witnessed Word of God. That the Christian Church conducts its business in the world solely by testifying to the Word of God without all worldly power is the great

truth to which Luther, in contrast to the papacy and the enthusiasts, testified from Holy Scripture.

But who is to proclaim this Word of God? It is a clear teaching of Scripture that all Christians, as Christians, have the command to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments that belong to it. This is clearly taught Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 16:19; 18:18-20. The more detailed explanation follows later. But do Christians also have a command from God to entrust special persons with the teaching ministry in addition to the teaching that belongs to all of them? If this is the case, what is the relationship between this public teaching ministry and the teaching of all Christians? These questions have been raised at all times in the Christian Church and have not always been answered in accordance with Holy Scripture. The errors that have arisen on this point can be divided into two classes. Some have spoken of the public preaching office in such a way that they have restricted the proclamation of the Word, which belongs to all Christians by virtue of their spiritual priesthood, contrary to Scripture. This is done by the Roman sect and also by Romanizing Protestants. They teach: Only "priests" or "pastors" can forgive sin; lay people are not to teach in church meetings, but only to listen and obey. Others, however, have spoken of the spiritual priesthood of Christians in such a way as to deny the divine order of the public preaching ministry. The Quakers did and do this in a very gross way. They reject the preaching of the Word by special persons appointed by the Christian congregation because they see it as a restriction of the freedom of the Holy Spirit. They want no other proclamation of the Word within Christianity than that which is practiced by all Christians when they are seized by the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Günther, Symbolik, p. 372) Hence their "silent assemblies". No one speaks until they have received the "inner light". If no one is driven to speak by "the inner voice", then they disperse again without having said a word. Luther and the Lutheran Church allow both proclamations of the Word as being ordered by God. To remind us in advance of one of Luther's words, Luther remarks on Col. 3:16: "What teaching and exhortation is, is now often said, without St. Paul here making the teaching office common to all Christians, when he says: Teach and exhort yourselves, that is, one to another, and every man to himself, besides the common office of preaching, that thus the word should go forth publicly and secretly, common and special, everywhere in the preaching." (St. L. XII, 394.)

At this synod assembly we want to deal especially with the Christian "lay movement" according to Holy Scripture. We therefore also want to speak in particular about the proclamation of the Word, which belongs to all Christians. We will demonstrate from Scripture

that the preaching of the Word by all Christians is not at the discretion of Christians, but is divine order. We will also recognize from Scripture that Christians without distinction are qualified to preach the Word. We will also remember what a tremendous power for the prosperity and expansion of the Church is contained in the preaching of the Word commanded to all Christians, and what harm comes to the Church from the omission of this activity. However, since the divine order of the preaching ministry has not always been discussed in the same way in the past and present, let us first outline the teaching of Holy Scripture on this point.

The divine order of the public office of preaching.

Let us first remember what we mean by the "public preaching ministry" alongside the spiritual priesthood and by "divine order". We do not call the preaching ministry "public" by location. By virtue of their spiritual priesthood, all Christians also have the right and duty to speak God's word in public places and in front of thousands of people, as the second part of the first thesis explains in more detail. We call the preaching ministry "public" rather from the fact that it is administered on behalf of Christians or — which is the same thing — on behalf of the congregation. It is in this sense that we have previously spoken of a "public preaching ministry". Cf. Walther in "Church and Ministry", Thesis VII on the ministry of preaching: "The holy preaching office is the authority conferred by God through the church as holder of the spiritual priesthood and all church authority to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public ministry on behalf of the congregation." — Furthermore, as far as the expression "divine order" is concerned, we do not merely understand this to mean that God has made Christians in such a way that they, on reasonable reflection and consideration of all circumstances — for example: the nature of the gospel or the needs of the church or the gifts of God to the church — come to the establishment of the public ministry of preaching, but this, that the establishment of this ministry is not left to the pleasure and good judgment of Christians, but is commanded them by God, so that Christians do not merely go against a good ecclesiastical order, but against a divine order, if they do not wish to establish the public ministry of preaching or if they abolish the one that has been established. In this sense we have so far called the public ministry of preaching divine order. Cf. Walther in "Church and Ministry", Thesis I, II and III on the ministry of preaching: "The sacred ministry of preaching or pastoral ministry is a different ministry from the priesthood, which all believers have." "The office of preaching or parish ministry is not a human order, but an office instituted by God himself."

"The ministry of preaching is not an arbitrary office, but such an office as the church is commanded to establish and to which the church is ordinarily bound until the end of time." To give an example: God has, however, made Christians in such a way that they pursue sanctification and good works of their own accord — according to the new nature planted in them by God. The saving grace of God that has come to them chastens them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live chastely, righteously and godly in this world, Titus 2:11 ff. At the same time we rightly say with our Confession "that it is God's will, order and command that believers should walk in good works". (Formula of Concord. [SD IV, 7](#); [Triglotta, p. 939](#)) For thus the apostle Paul writes of sanctification and good works in 1 Thess. 4, 2. 3: "You know what commandments we have given you through the Lord Jesus, for this is the will of God, your sanctification." And to cite another species of good works : Christians are made by God in such a way that they recognize without much thought that "those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel". Nevertheless, Scripture is very clear that this is done according to divine order and by divine command, 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel." Thus we also say of the public preaching ministry that it not only grows out of the nature of Christians, the content of the gospel, the needs of the church, the teaching gifts that Christ bestows on the church, etc., but is moreover God's order and foundation in the sense that it has God's express command and clear commandment.

This is the teaching of Holy Scripture. The apostle Paul commands the establishment of this office when he instructs Titus to appoint elders to the cities on the island of Crete. Tit. 1:5: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should complete the work I left you to do, and appoint elders to the cities back and forth, as I commanded you." The situation on the island of Crete was this: Christian congregations had been established on Crete. But the public preaching ministry had not yet been established in these churches. Why this had not been done is not specified. Whether it was because the Christians still lacked the knowledge to do so, thinking that the establishment of the preaching ministry was not necessary and was at their discretion, whether it was because they lacked the will, shying away from the costs, the financial part of establishing the public ministry, or whether it was because Titus himself hesitated unduly: in any case, the apostle Titus gives the order to establish the preaching ministry. We need only look at the words: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should to appoint elders to the cities back and forth, as I commanded you." Luther says about this passage: "Whoever believes that here the

Spirit of Christ speaks and orders in Paul, recognizes that this is a divine appointment and order, that in every city there are many bishops or at least one." (On the Abuse of the Mass 1522. St. L. XIX, 1093) It is clear that the words Tit. 1:5 do not merely express good advice, for example in the sense: "See whether the appointment of the public preaching office does not naturally develop in Crete from the Christian sense and the state of the churches, and act according to the circumstances", but the words are a command, and indeed a command which the apostle had already given beforehand, that is, before the actual establishment of the office, and which was to be the rule and guideline of action for Titus. The idea of establishing the preaching ministry did not just develop in the churches, but was already in the apostle of Christ before it was carried out. In short, the apostle here commands Titus to do for the churches in Crete what he himself had done in the churches of Asia Minor, according to the account in Acts 14:26: "They appointed elders for them in the churches." If Titus had not appointed elders to the cities on the island of Crete, he would not only have ignored good advice, but also a command from the apostle. Nor should the appointment of elders be done merely in this or that city, where it is deemed appropriate and useful, but city by city, that is, city by city, where there is a Christian congregation. In short, the establishment of the public preaching ministry is by divine command. And in this sense, the public preaching ministry is a divine order. In addition to the command to all Christians to preach the gospel, and in addition to the general command to have everything done properly in the church, God has also given the special command, valid for all time, to establish the public preaching ministry in the local church, namely the ministry by which this church in its entirety and in its individual members is officially supplied with God's Word. We mean this divine command, valid for all times until the Last Day, when we say that the ministry of preaching, which is a different ministry from the priesthood of all Christians, "is not an arbitrary ministry, but a ministry which the church is commanded to establish and to which the church is ordinarily bound until the end of days", apostles, prophets, miracle workers, tongues speakers, etc. belong to temporal relationships. That is why Paul does not command Titus to appoint apostles, prophets, miracle workers, tongues speakers, etc. to the churches on Crete. But he does order him to appoint "elders" to the cities back and forth. But that the elders to be appointed are an office distinct from the general priesthood or administrators of the public preaching office is evident from the fact that in the words immediately following the apostle exchanges the word "elders" for the word "bishops"

and — just like 1 Tim. 3 — adds a list of qualities that should be found in a bishop: "A bishop should be blameless as a steward of God, ... able to exhort with sound doctrine and to reprove those who contradict." At the apostle's command ("as I have commanded you"), Titus is to inspect the cities back and forth with such people.

But even more! If Christians obey this command and appoint preachers from among themselves, then, according to the teaching of Scripture, God himself has placed these preachers in the congregation in question, and not only in the sense that they are God's gifts to the church — which they are according to Eph. 4:11 — nor merely in the sense that God has made them competent to lead the ministry of the New Testament — that is also true — but precisely also in the special sense that God Himself has placed them in the congregation in question, in the place in question, through the calling carried out by men, as can be seen from Acts 20:28. Here the apostle Paul addresses the indirectly called elders of Ephesus thus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, among the which the Holy Ghost hath appointed you bishops, to feed the church of God."

But also the lasting actual relationship that arises when a Christian congregation directs the public preaching ministry according to God's command and order, namely the relationship between preachers and listeners, teachers and taught, watchmen and watched, shepherd and flock, those who care for souls and those whose souls are cared for — this relationship is described in Scripture as ordered by God. Both preachers and listeners are commanded to recognize this relationship as one ordained by God and to behave accordingly. Just as it is not human or ecclesiastical, but divine order that every Christian teaches, reproves, admonishes, comforts, is the brother's keeper, etc., so it is also divine order that the elder or bishop in public office should publicly and especially provide, teach, reprove, admonish, comfort, oversee, feed, etc. the congregation, flock, etc. commanded to him with God's Word. This activity in relation to the congregation, flock, etc. under their charge is not at the discretion of the pastor, but is commanded to him by God. Acts 20:28 says in a commanding form: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, among the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God." 1 Pet 5:2: "Feed the flock of Christ which is committed to you." 1 Tim. 3:5: "If anyone does not know how to rule his own house, how will he feed the church of God?" As "shepherds" of the flock commanded to them by the "arch-shepherd", they will have to give an account to him, 1 Pet. 5:4 — But Christians, the members of the church, should

also recognize the relationship between teachers and taught, between shepherd and flock, between pastors and those whose souls are cared for, as established and ordered by God. It is not left to their discretion whether they want to recognize this relationship or not, but they are commanded: "Obey your teachers and follow them, for they watch over your souls as those who are to give an account of them, so that they may do this with joy and not with groaning, for this is not good for you", Heb 13:17. Luther: "So it must be in the spiritual ministry — which is God's work and rule, and yet everyone wants to master and despise it as he pleases — that one confidently defies such insolent spirits in God's Word and order and says: Reproach and despise me, whoever will, for the sake of my person, but for the sake of my ministry you shall honor and exalt me, as dear as Christ and your salvation and blessedness are to you; for you are not my pastor or preacher, but God has appointed me so that you must receive the gospel from me and come to God's kingdom through my ministry." (St. L. VIII, 1128) In short, God wants the relationship of shepherd and flock in his church here on earth. Thus the ministry of preaching is divine order in its beginning, means and end, or in its idea, execution and continuance.

From what has been said so far, it is already clear that Scripture does not leave us in the dark about the functions or activities of the public preaching ministry. We know the exact nature and extent of these functions from God's Word. We do not know as precisely from Scripture the functions of the diaconate and other offices mentioned in Scripture (1 Tim. 3:8 ff.; Rom. 12:7-8). This corresponds to the practice in our Synod that, for example, the church leaders, church elders etc. have different activities in different places. But we know exactly what the functions of the public preaching office, the pastoral or parish office, are. Scriptural statements that completely cover the whole and the individual are found in the Scripture passages already cited. As far as the type of activity is concerned, those in public ministry are to teach, reprove, admonish, comfort, shepherd, watch over souls, pray for them, be examples in their conduct, etc. As far as the scope of their work is concerned, they are not merely to feed a few souls, but the church of God with God's Word, 1 Tim. 3:5; to feed the flock of Christ which is commanded them, 1 Pet. 5:2; to watch over the whole flock, among which the Holy Spirit has placed them as bishops, to feed the church of God, Acts. 20:28, to all ranks and ages, 1 Tim. 5:1 ff.; Tit. 2:1 ff. Luther therefore calls the office of bishop or preacher the office of ruling Christendom in all classes with the Word of God. Those in this office are also officially obliged to be examples in their walk, not just of some, but of the flock,

1 Peter 5:3: "Not as ruling over the people, but being examples to the flock." The practice in our Synod also corresponds to this. Because we know from God's Word exactly what a pastor has to do according to divine order, we have a very specific goal in our theological institutions that the teachers must strive for and the students must achieve before we recommend them for appointment to the preaching ministry: candidates for the preaching office must not merely be able to teach as Christian brethren teach one another, but they must have attained such a degree of teaching ability that they can preside over a congregation of God with God's Word, supply a congregation of God with God's Word both in public preaching and in private pastoral care. Throughout Scripture we find instructions on how to administer the public teaching ministry. But in three letters of the apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit gives Christians special instruction on both the nature of the persons who are to be placed in the public ministry and the functions in which this ministry is to be exercised. For this reason, these letters have always been called pastoral letters in the Church, i.e. letters about the direction of the pastoral office. Luther rightly writes in his preface to the first letter to Timothy: "St. Paul writes this epistle as a model for all bishops, what they should teach and how they should govern Christianity in all states, so that there is no need to govern Christians out of their own human conceit." (St. L. XIV, 120)

At various times the question has been discussed in detail in the church as to whether a Christian congregation may not also place such persons in the ministry who, although they cannot teach and govern the whole congregation in all ranks with God's Word, nevertheless have excellent gifts to serve in the congregation as exhorters or as rulers and overseers or as teachers or as practitioners of mercy, and so on. Certainly the church can and should do this, because all the gifts that God distributes to his Christians are intended for the common good. Read Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 in particular. But these services are neither individually nor collectively the office of bishop or the public preaching office, which is to watch over the whole church and to provide and govern the whole church in all ranks and ages with God's word. The apostle Paul therefore also expressly distinguishes the office of bishop and the bishops from the ministers in 1 Tim. 3. Compare 1 Tim. 3:1-7 with 1 Tim. 3:8-13. And the persons who serve the church within the church as exhorters, rulers, overseers, teachers, etc., either without or with an express commission from the church, remain under the oversight of the office of bishop or public preaching office, even though this office includes oversight of the

whole flock and responsibility for the whole flock.

In this scope of ministry and the qualities required of "bishops" or "elders", which Scripture describes especially in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28 neither the church nor the pastor can change anything. We are dealing here with a divine order and divine ordinances. For example, a church cannot entrust one person with the public teaching ministry and another person with the Christian walk that is exemplary for the whole flock and with procuring the good reputation that pastors should also have with the world. Both qualities must be united in the one person of the bishop or pastor. Scripture expressly says of the bishop or pastor: "But he must also have a good report of those who are without", 1 Tim. 3:7. A church may not deviate from this rule. It may not call a man to the preaching office or leave him in this office if he has committed civil offenses and thereby lost his good name before the world. If he repents sincerely, he can be a member of the church and be saved, no matter how deeply he has fallen. But he may not remain in the public preaching ministry. That is the divine order. The church must take the office from him. If a congregation would not submit to the divine order even after proper instruction and admonition, we would have to exclude it from our church fellowship. But also with regard to the other qualities that should be found in bishops or pastors, we must not make a distinction that conflicts with God's order. A congregation must not say: We want to have or keep a pastor who means well, is pious and kind at heart, even if he is not doctrinally competent in the sense that he can care for the whole flock in public preaching and private pastoral care. Of course, there are different degrees of teaching and ministry in general. God has also distributed the gifts necessary for the administration of the public preaching ministry in varying degrees. But even the least gifted and trained should possess the degree of ability to lead the whole congregation and every member of it, man and woman, young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick and afflicted, etc., along the right, straight path to salvation. Nor may a congregation say: We are satisfied with the fact that our pastor presents the right doctrine, even if he cannot or will not refute the wrong doctrine. In the divine instruction for the bishop or elder it says not only that he must hold fast to the word which is sure and able to teach, but also that he must be able to rebuke the opposers and shut them up, Titus 1:9-11; he must not only feed the whole flock, but also be able to ward off the

grievous wolves who do not spare the flock, Acts 20:28-29. Finally, a congregation must not say: We are already satisfied if our pastor can only read a sermon by other good preachers or memorize and recite a sermon by Luther, Gerhard or Walther. Walther rightly says in his *Pastorale* (p. 96) that this is not enough, and he adds: "For this very reason God has instituted a personal public preaching office, so that the Word of God may be applied according to the various conditions of men." The sermon must be both "contemporary" and appropriate to the congregation. "He, therefore, who would always preach the same sermons that an excellent servant of God of old preached for the unspeakable blessing of his time, would not do what his office requires of him in his time." (ibid., p. 106)

But what about a congregation that has not yet been able to obtain a person who possesses the qualities necessary for the office of bishop, or that is temporarily "vacant"? Well, this is a Christian congregation. The establishment of the office of pastor is not part of the nature of the congregation. Such a congregation will also not let God's Word rest completely in public. It will appoint one or more people to read out a sermon, visit the sick, perform baptism and serve communion. (Cf. Walther, *Pastorale*, p. 180 f. [[Pastoral Theology](#), p. 211-212]) But the church has not yet organized the public preaching ministry ordered by God.

But these are all things that are well known and generally practiced among us. In all the theological seminaries that exist among us, we train people who possess the requirements and qualities that bishops or elders should have according to 1 Tim. 3, Tit. 1, 1 Pet. 5 and Acts 20. And we do not follow this practice in order to do justice to temporal conditions, but because we recognize the establishment of the personal public office of bishop or preacher as a divine foundation, valid and binding for all times. As Luther reminds us, there may be one or more bishops in a congregation, and they will carry out a certain division of labor among themselves. But each one must possess all the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3 etc. if he is to be called a bishop or pastor without restriction.

Unity and differences of the spiritual priesthood and of the public preaching office.

In order that the functions of the spiritual priesthood and the functions of the public preaching office may not be improperly separated or mixed, it is useful to bear in mind both the unity and the differences of the two according to Scripture.

The unity consists in the following main points:

1. Both proclamations of the Word are acquired through Christ's blood, "dearly earned" (acquired), as Luther says (St. L. X. 424); they presuppose the reconciliation of the whole world through Christ and the message of this reconciliation, the Gospel.

2. Both proclamations of the Word presuppose faith in Christ, the new birth, the spiritual priesthood on the part of the preachers. There is no "theology of the unconverted" (*theologia irrogenitorum*) neither among "laymen" nor among preachers, as some later theologians of our Church have erred. Both must have experienced sin and grace in their own hearts. It is not as if the word preached by an unbeliever is not powerful and cannot save souls, but rather that the unbeliever lacks the personal skill to proclaim the word.

3. Both proclamations of the Word are bound to God's Word and may not go beyond God's Word, 1 Pet. 4:11. the "layman" on the one hand may not refer to his "spirit", 1 Cor. 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge [recognize] what I write unto you: for they are the commandments of the Lord." Pastors, on the other hand, cannot refer to their "office" or their higher education, "science" and the like without and against God's Word.

4. Both proclamations of the Word have the same divine power. Whether God's Word is proclaimed by simple Christians or by highly educated pastors, it is always, according to Romans 1:16, the power of God to save, and according to John 6:63, the Spirit and life. Even the number of preachers does not take away or add anything to the power of the Word of God. The proclaimed Word of God always has the same divine power, regardless of whether it comes from an individual Christian or from a congregation or synod.

5. Both proclamations of the Word have the same binding force for the hearers. Heb 13:17: "Obey your teachers" etc. Matt. 18:17: "Do not listen to the church" etc.

6. Both proclamations of the Word have the same goal: the salvation of the hearers. With regard to the proclamation of the Word through the public ministry, 1 Timothy 4:16 applies: "Where you do these things, you will save yourself and those who hear you." With regard to the proclamation of the word by all Christians, John 7:38:39 applies: "He who believes in me, from his body will flow rivers of living water."

The differences lie in the following main points:

1. The public preaching ministry requires a special, that is, greater teaching ability, a greater gift and equipment. Hence the apostle Paul's warning to Timothy regarding the occupation of the ministry, 1 Tim. 5:22: "Lay hands on no one quickly." Also 2 Timothy 2:2: "And what you

have heard from me through many witnesses, command faithful men who are able to teach others also." Also Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3.

2. A special call belongs to the public ministry of preaching. Not all Christians, insofar as they are Christians, are called to this ministry, but they require a special call from other Christians. James 3:1: "Brethren, do not submit to everyone to be a teacher." Heb. 5:4: "No one takes the honor from himself, but he who is also called by God, just as Aaron was." Every Christian is appointed to be a teacher of the brethren and of the world — this is to be noted — but to be a bishop, a teacher of a church of God as such, someone must first be specially appointed by the Holy Spirit. Acts 20:28; Tit. 1:5. For the proclamation of the Word, which is done through the public ministry, Christians as Christians are not the subject but the object, that is, they do not proclaim the Word in the public ministry, but the Word is proclaimed to them for their own good. Of course, the appointment to the preaching ministry is also for the sake of order. That is true. But order need not be set in opposition to divine order.

3. The sphere and nature of the activity of the public preaching ministry is different from the sphere and nature of the activity of every Christian. The Christian should also teach in the assemblies of Christians, in church assemblies, in synodical assemblies, etc.. But the individual Christian is not commanded to feed the whole church as a flock, but the preacher is, Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; 1 Tim. 3:5, etc.

4. While Christians are to remain in their civil profession in the teaching commanded to them, the public ministers of the Word are not to involve themselves in the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. 2:4: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the the affairs of this life", but according to Christ's command they are to feed on the gospel, 1 Cor. 9:14: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Unity and differences of the two proclamations of the Word according to Luther (on Ps. 110:4): "So it is now also in Christendom. Every man must first be a Christian and a born priest before he becomes a preacher or a bishop, and neither the pope nor any man can make him a priest. But if he is born a priest by baptism, the ministry comes afterward and makes a distinction between him and other Christians. For some must be taken from the whole body of Christians to preside over others, to whom God gives special gifts and abilities to make them fit for the ministry. As St. Paul says in Eph. 4:11-12: He has given some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, that the saints (that is, those who are already Christians and

baptized priests) may be sent to the work of ministry or service, by which the body of Christ (that is, the Christian congregation or church) may be edified. For although we are all priests, we cannot and should not all preach or teach and rule; but some must be separated and chosen from the whole group, to whom such a ministry will be entrusted. And whoever holds this office is not a priest for the sake of his office (as all the others are), but a servant of all the others. And when he is no longer able or willing to preach or minister, he rejoins the common body, entrusts the office to another, and is nothing more than any common Christian. See, thus the office of preaching or ministry must be separated from the common priesthood of all baptized Christians. For such an office is no more than a public ministry, if one is commanded by the whole congregation, who are all priests at the same time." (St. L. V, 1037.) Furthermore: "We all have this authority, but no one should presume to exercise it publicly except one who has been appointed to it by the congregation; privately, however, I may well use it." (Erl. 11, 319.) "All Christians serve God, but they are not all in office." (Revelation 7:79) "Everything is by the order and command of God, who has commanded me both to hear His Word and to preach it to you, and in one faith and spirit, and all praise one Lord at the same time." (Erl. 9, 221.) "All Christians are priests, but not all pastors. For in addition to being a Christian or a priest, he must also have an office and a command. It is the call and divine command make pastors and preachers." (St. L. V, 722) "Many, if they can tell a little of the Gospel, think they must soon appear and preach it to others." (St. L. XI, 1911.)

The importance of recognizing the divine order of the preaching office for pastor and congregation.

The realization that a preacher stands in office and performs his ministry according to divine ordnance and by divine command in a particular congregation is of utmost importance both for the preacher and for the congregation.

First of all for the preacher himself. If the preacher is certain that it is not merely human good will and judgment that has called his ministry into being and given him his commission, but that God himself has created his ministry and placed him in it, then this determines his attitude and his activity in carrying out his ministry with regard to a number of points.

1. Every Christian can and should plead with God, recognizing his own unfitness, that he would make him competent for his civil and spiritual calling. Especially the faithful pastor, however, is repeatedly moved by the thought that he is completely unfit for his ministry. But if

the pastor holds fast in faith that the office in which he stands does not merely develop from the circumstances of the church, but that God himself has ordered this office and placed him in it, he will plead with all the greater confidence to the Founder and Occupant of this office for the bestowal and preservation of the necessary ability. Accordingly Chemnitz has said: "It is not to be thought that this" (namely the calling of pastors) "happens from a human institution or only for the sake of order", he gives four reasons why a pastor is so necessary to recognize his divine calling. The second reason is: "Very many spiritual gifts, but especially divine guidance and protection, are necessary for the right administration of the ministry and for the edification of the church. Whoever therefore has a right calling can call upon God with a quiet conscience and expect certain fulfillment according to these promises, 2 Cor. 3" etc. (*Loci; I. de eccles.*, p. 130 f.)

2. Every Christian should know that he is a sheep of Christ's flock and a resident in God's house, in God's care and protection. The pastor, who holds the office ordained by God and, in each individual case, appointed by God, can and should know that he is doubly protected: first as a little sheep of the flock of Christ and as a member of his household, then also as the shepherd of the flock commanded to him and as "God's steward", Tit. 1:7. This gives him courage and strength to remain faithfully at his post, for example in the case of contagious diseases, when everyone flees. In faith in his divine calling, he knows that he is just as safe in the air of plague as he is in the healthiest region.

3. One challenge of the pastor is: "I labor in vain in my office." If he keeps in mind that he is in office not merely according to good human judgment, but according to God's order and command, he will be all the more likely to commending the success of his ministry to God, who will give fruit and victory in his time.

4. The pastor is tempted by his flesh to mix human thoughts into his preaching, to add to God's Word in doctrine and practice, or even to detract from it, in the opinion that this will benefit the church. If he keeps in mind that this office is God's, God's by origin and commission, he will recognize all the more clearly the folly of bringing anything other than God's Word to bear in his office.

5 As Dr. Walther used to remind us, the ministry of preaching has many temptations to laziness. If one is equipped with some gift of oratory, he can preach sermons that satisfy the majority of the congregation, at least at first, even though the sermons are not diligently and prayerfully studied and God's Word is not applied to the needs of the congregation as God intended through the endowment of a personal preaching office. Now, let the preacher remember: "The office in which I stand is God's,

endowed by God for the special purpose of supplying God's Word to young and old, male and female, rich and poor, the afflicted and the secure; I must take care of the whole flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made me shepherd, bishop and watchman, and I must give an account to the arch-shepherd of the souls committed to me" — if the preacher remembers these divine truths, sleepiness and sluggishness disappear before him like the mist before the sun.

6. All Christians should be careful in their walk. After all, they should show Christ and his Church to advantage through their conduct. If Christians walk offensively, Christ and his holy Christian church will be blasphemed by unbelievers. Therefore, all Christians are admonished not to participate in the disorderly nature of the world. A preacher is now in particular danger with regard to his walk, because his ministry brings him together with all kinds of interpretations and confronts him with tempting opportunities. And how the world rejoices when a pastor falls! The Telegraph reports this from New York to San Francisco. What earnestness in regard to his walk should therefore be found in a preacher! This earnestness will be increased by his remembering that his office is God's and that he is God's servant, messenger, in a special sense, and as such has to represent his God and Savior before the church and the world.

The realization that a preacher stands in office according to divine order and by divine command and performs his ministry is also of the utmost importance for the congregation.

1. In the knowledge that "God Himself instituted the office of preacher and filled it Himself", the congregation believes that their pastor is the best pastor in the world, even if he has fewer gifts than the pastor in the neighboring congregation. Dr. Walther says with regard to this point: "Of what importance it is to the hearers that they are certain of the divine appointment of their preacher to their pastorate, is not to be overstated here. If the hearers are convinced of this, they will be heartily satisfied even with a preacher of lesser gifts, if only he is faithful, and will not leave their church and run after the highly gifted, but will simply hold to this: our preacher is the one God has given us, through whom God wants to lead us to heaven and will therefore leave us under his pasture lacking nothing that we need for our salvation." (*Pastorale*, p. 29 f.)

2. The realization of the divine origin and occupation of the preaching ministry causes Christians to come to church diligently and regularly and also to listen willingly to the Word spoken in private pastoral care. The Christian says to himself: I want to hear the Word that God is saying to me today or on this particular occasion through the preacher

whom He has placed in His office and here. This realization also causes him to relate the word spoken by the pastor to his person. He regards both the punishing word of the law and the comforting word of the gospel as if God himself had spoken it to him.

3. If the public ministry of preaching is God's order for the good of the Church, then all Christians must also always be concerned about the appointment and maintenance of this ministry. How? Above all by establishing and maintaining Christian schools. We then send the best students from our parish schools to our higher educational institutions. These higher educational institutions, the colleges and seminaries, we care for and nurture with great diligence. We do not let interest in them grow cold. It is not doing too much for the cause if, in every congregational meeting, reports are given on our educational institutions as well as on other church work outside the congregation. This will result in both diligent prayers and willing gifts for our teaching institutions. We will also always be mindful of the supply of teaching institutions and not consider our own sons too good for the preaching or teaching ministry. Luther: "Therefore, if God has given (his word), we should also be thankful and courageous, read, hear, meditate, sing and say it day and night, and make sure that we have plenty of teachers who will hold it up to us abundantly and without ceasing. This is what it means to let God's Word dwell abundantly among us." (St. L. XII, 392.)

The papists speak of the Pope as the "Holy Father", even though he profanes the Gospel. Even the non-Romans call the Pope "Holy Father". On the other hand, the faithful preachers of the Gospel are despised by the world, and Christians often share in this contempt. They also speak of the "poor preacher" and do not want their sons to become preachers. Luther, on the other hand, says that those who stand in God's office and faithfully preach God's Word should not only be called "worthy lord", but also "holy lord" and "holy father", not because of their person, but because of the office in which they preach God's Word. He offers to call the Pope "Most Holy" three times, if the Pope only wanted to teach God's Word. (St. L. XVII, 2023 [**Mueller has it VII, 600**])

"All upright, pious souls should hold their pastors and preachers in all honor for the sake of the Lord Christ and his Word, and esteem them highly as a precious gift and jewel given by God, above all temporal treasures and gifts." (St. L. VII, 600.)

The preaching of the Word by all Christians is divine order.

A question that is often discussed in our time is: How can we reach the unchurched masses? It is God's will that the masses be reached. That is why God has arranged it in such a way that Christians do not sit in a corner or settle in

one state alone, but are scattered all over the world. According to Christ's order, Christians are to be "the light of the world", Matthew 5:14; Christians are not to run away from the world, but live in the world and serve the world as a spiritual light. The Christian Church is to be the city on a high mountain, Matt. 5:14, not a city down in a valley or in a bush or hidden behind rocky clefts, in short, not something of whose existence the world is unaware, but the city on a high mountain, so that when someone lifts up his eyes, he has the Christian Church before his eyes. Already in the prophecy of Isaiah 40:9, God calls upon his Church: "Zion, O preacher, ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, O preacher, lift up your voice with power!" But to go up on a high mountain and lift up your voice with power means to preach so that the whole land can hear the voice of Zion. Thus the Holy Scriptures show us in many ways that the Christian Church is to reach "the masses". We are to be completely separated from the world in one respect, namely in our walk. We are not to walk like the children of this world. In another respect, we are to remain closely connected to the world and penetrate the world, namely through the proclamation of the Gospel. Our Christian vocation is in the midst of the world, in the masses and in all social classes.

But how do we reach the masses? Through pastors and itinerant preachers and missionaries, through people who preach the word on behalf of other Christians? Yes! That is one way in which the Lord Christ wants to reach the masses whom He has redeemed: to visit strangers on behalf of a congregation or even several congregations, to invite them to church and welcome them into the church, etc. The congregations should also create enough space in the church, build the church larger for the strangers if necessary, and advertise the services in the newspapers, etc. The pastor should also be given the necessary time to visit the unchurched in their homes. It is part of the Christian's calling to send specially equipped people to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Here we have the example of Acts 13:2: "Send me Barnabam and Saul for the work to which I have called them." In the same way, the churches should not tire of sending out traveling preachers in their own country and employing special traveling missionaries.

But we must not hide one truth. The main means of reaching the masses is a completely different one. It is the preaching of the Word, which should be done by all Christians. Pastors have always been too few to reach the masses. This is also the case in our time. But the masses are reached through the proclamation of the Word by all Christians. In their civil profession they are in closest and constant

contact with the masses of the people. In St. Louis, for example, we have about 30 pastors. But what are these among so many, namely, among the churchless of a city of 800,000 inhabitants? In contrast, there are 5000 of our Christians in the city who come into contact with the world every day in their profession. It is God's will and order that these Christians, wherever they go and stand, should be the spiritual light for their surroundings and speak God's Word in a very simple way, without coming out as professional preachers. While they go about their civil business with all diligence and faithfulness, they always have the opportunity to testify both the law and the gospel to their coworkers and associates. This actually happens among us. But it is also omitted in very many cases.

Christians have a call for this way of preaching the Word. Here in the United States, too, the false teaching has arisen, and our fathers had to combat the idea that spiritual priests only had to deal with God, not with their neighbor. Christians could deal with God, pray to God, but speaking the word to their neighbor was not their calling. According to Scripture, the spiritual priesthood also has to do with proclaiming the word to one's neighbor. According to 1 Peter 2:9, Christians are to proclaim the gospel as spiritual priests. There is probably no other place in Holy Scripture where Christians are given so many honorific titles as in this passage: "chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, a peculiar people". But the titles of honor are immediately followed by the duty of all Christians: "to proclaim the virtues of Him who called you from darkness to his marvelous light". Isaiah 40:9 also belongs here: "Zion, O preacher, ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, O preacher, lift up your voice with power!" "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are designations not only of the preachers, but of the entire Christian Church. A very strange event is reported in Numbers 11:26: Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp of the children of Israel. To prophesy means to proclaim the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. Joshua was horrified and spoke to Moses (v. 28): "My lord Moses, forbid them!" But Moses said (v. 29): "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" This wish is fulfilled in the New Testament, as Acts 2:17 (Pentecost): "In the last days" (that is, in the New Testament) "I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." What was the privilege of individuals in the Old Testament has now become the duty of all Christians in the New Testament. Thus, all Christians without exception are called to proclaim the Word. Luther: "Every Christian is a king for himself and a priest for others. The priesthood is higher than the kingdom, for it

extends further" (that is, it has a wider sphere of activity). "For the priest ministers the word not for himself alone, but for others; but the faith, by which he first becomes king, he has for himself alone." (St. L. III, 1017.)

But what about the ability of Christians to proclaim the Word? The ability in this direction is completely underestimated by Christians — I would almost like to say — in 5 out of 100 cases. Our Christians very often truly do not know how much they know and consider themselves to be more ignorant than they are. That is why God's Word is there and teaches them about themselves, how much they actually know. Let us remember what Paul calls out not only to pastors, but to all Christians in Romans 15:14: "filled with all knowledge, that you may be able to reprove one another", and 1 Corinthians 1:4 ff: God has made you "rich in all things, in all doctrine and in all knowledge." It is true that we always have to deal with the fact that church members think that they are not able to testify of God's Word to the world around them. We must confront this error. When God himself testifies to his Christians in Scripture that they are rich in all teaching and knowledge, then it is true. God knows Christians much better than they know themselves. But it is often quite difficult to convince Christians of their rich knowledge and their ability to teach. It is not a question of preaching sermons. But all Christians can and should testify to everyone that all people are sinners and are completely reconciled with God through Christ. If we look at the history of the Church, we must say that Christianity has been spread precisely through lay preaching. Admittedly, there are individual cases of overestimation of ability among Christians. People resort to public preaching without being qualified to do so. But much, much more often we find cases in which people fail to proclaim the word for which they are qualified and called. This happens to the great detriment of the Church and the Christians themselves. The Scriptures testify to this qualification in the Old and New Testaments. Acts 2:17: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." John 7:38: "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water."

Through a brief examination of Christians, we can easily convince them how rich in doctrine and knowledge they are made by God. For example, if we remind a Christian that the so-called worldly wise (philosophers) still disagree about the origin of the world, and we then put the question to the Christian: "Do you perhaps know where this world, heaven and earth, and what is in it, comes from?" the Christian will immediately answer: "Of course I know that. How could I not know that? I

believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe that God created me together with all creatures" etc. Then perhaps you also know who the one true God is? The Christian will answer: "Of course, I know that too. I know the three articles of the Christian faith! I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I learned that from a young age, and we sing it every Sunday in the "Creed"." People are still arguing about who Jesus Christ is. Do you perhaps know? Do you know who Jesus Christ is? The Christian will answer: "Of course I know that very well. I believe that Jesus Christ is truly God, born of the Father in eternity, and also truly man, born of the Virgin Mary." Then do you know what Jesus Christ has done for you? The Christian may be somewhat reluctant to answer this question and reply: "What are you asking? Jesus Christ is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and damned man, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death." But what about faith in Christ? Do you also know how you can come to faith in Christ and remain in faith? "Certainly, I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the right faith." But if you now have to confess that you still sin much every day and certainly deserve punishment — how will you get out of this embarrassment? "Thank God, I know that too! I remember the passage: Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In Christianity, God forgives me and all believers daily and abundantly for all sins." If you lack anything in spiritual and physical things, do you know where you can turn and fill your lack? "What a question! Even my mother taught me to pray. The Savior says: 'Ask and it will be given to you'." I can see you know quite a lot. Do you also know what will happen at the end of the world? "Of course I know that. Every Christian child knows that. I know that on the Last Day Christ will raise me and all the dead and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life; that is certainly true." That is enough. No offense intended! I know that you know even more things. You also know about Baptism and the Lord's Supper and many other things. Now thank God for the richness of your knowledge and share the treasure of your knowledge so that others may also benefit from it and rivers of living water may flow from your body.

The area of the preaching of the Word, which is to be done by all Christians.

1. All Christians should preach the Word in their own homes. There should be no house in which a daily service is not held in one form or another. Home worship is not yet found in all Christian homes. And it is a shame if all kinds of things are read in a Christian home, but not God's Word. In many cases the reason for this is that people believe that they cannot hold a home service, that they are not qualified to do so. But that is only imagination. Our Christians can all at least read, and that is all that is necessary at first. Reading God's word, reciting and listening to biblical history and catechism, that is already a home service. And how knowledge would grow in this daily interaction with God's Word! We learn by teaching. In many cases it is only necessary to make a start, Dr. Walther therefore advised that the pastor should give the congregation public and special instructions for holding a home service.

But what about the time to hold a home service? Every Christian has the time. Every Christian, whether he is a big or a small businessman, knows that he is speaking an untruth when he says that he has no time to read a chapter from the Bible or a short meditation and prayer from a devotional book every day in the presence of his family. The devil tries to prevent the general introduction of home devotions because he knows well what harm it would do him. I would especially like to encourage the brothers among the delegates: see to it that in the parishes you represent, home worship is introduced in all homes where it is not yet. Discuss the matter in the congregational meeting, for example. The Christian is first and foremost a priest in his home and has the duty to speak God's Word to children and servants. Certainly, it is the parents' duty to provide for their children physically. That is what parents are there for. But they are also parents primarily for the purpose of providing for their children spiritually day by day, and the father should know that he is leaving the main part of fatherhood undone if he is not obedient to the word: "Train up your children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4. This is the point that Luther constantly emphasizes: "If Christianity is to come into power, it must truly raise up children, and then it will be a fine thing. I would suffer it well to begin in the cradle." (St. L. X, 636.) "It is the duty of every householder to raise his children and servants and to teach them or have them taught. For he is in his house as a pastor or bishop over his servants, and is commanded to see what they learn, and to answer for them." (St. L. VII, 353.) "No one should become a father unless he has learned to preach the commandments of God and the gospel to his children, so that he may raise up devout Christians." (St. L. X, 636.)

In former times in some places no one was married until he had passed an examination in catechism with the pastor. Luther gets a little rough at one point. He complains: "Parents think only of adorning their children and making sure that they are seen by the world; they make them rich, hang gold on the scumbag's neck and he can hardly walk. ... It is highly necessary for every married man to regard his child's soul more, more deeply, more diligently than the flesh that has come from him, and not to regard his child otherwise than as a precious, eternal treasure, which God has commanded him to keep, lest the devil, the world, and the flesh steal it away and kill it." (St. L. X, 636. 643.)

2. Another area of preaching by all Christians is preaching among the brethren. When Christians come together, they should teach and exhort one another. Just as Christians are made by God so that, filled with all knowledge, they can exhort one another, Rom. 15:14, so it is also God's order and command that they make use of their ability in the company of the brethren. Col. 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly in all wisdom. Teach and admonish yourselves," etc. According to divine order, each Christian is the teacher and guardian of the other. No one may say: "Shall I be my brother's keeper?" Our Lutheran confession also includes *mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*, that is, the mutual conversation and consolation of Christians with one another, among the various ways in which the gospel is to be practiced among Christians. (Smalcald Articles, Art. IV; [Triglotta, p. 491](#).) This also includes the preaching of the word in church meetings. When a Christian in the church meeting, by the remembrance of the Holy Spirit, quotes a word of Scripture that belongs to the matter at hand, this also belongs to "prophesying", which is a gift of the Christians of the New Testament. Likewise, it is perfectly in accordance with divine order if — as is our custom, thank God — lay deputies also teach and exhort at our synodical meetings, both in doctrinal discussions and in business matters.

3. But a Christian can and should also speak in front of a large audience and in front of thousands. This can and should be done wherever it is not a matter of proclaiming the word to Christians and among Christians, which is only entrusted to a few specific persons. It would be quite wrong to say that only pastors are allowed to speak God's Word to large gatherings of people. No, if, for example, a Christian is in a mixed assembly of thousands and a testimony of Christ is needed, for example because Christ's church and his word have been attacked, then the Christian has a calling and a duty to testify before thousands as to what the divine truth is. Our Christians should not underestimate their abilities in this

respect either. If they can speak about political matters in public places before thousands, they can also confess Christ before thousands. Luther writes: "This is the call of a public office among Christians" (for which a special call by other Christians is necessary). "But if one were to come among the multitude where there were no Christians, one would want to do as the apostles did and not wait for a call. For there" (in the unbelieving crowd) "one does not have the office of preaching, and one would say: 'There are no Christians here, I will preach and teach them about Christianity,' and a group would gather, elect and appoint me as their bishop, and I would have a call." (St. L. III, 723.)

Here are a few more passages from Luther in which Luther speaks out about all kinds of proclamation of the Word to which all Christians are entitled. Concerning Ps. 110:4 he writes: "But if we have become Christians through this priest and his priestly office" (namely through Christ) "and have been incorporated into Him in Baptism through faith, then we also have the right and power to teach and confess the word that we have from him before everyone, each according to his calling and station. For although we are not all in public office and profession, every Christian should and may teach, instruct, admonish, comfort and punish his neighbor by the Word of God, when and where someone needs it, as a father and mother their children and servants, a brother, neighbor, citizen or farmer the other. For one Christian can instruct or admonish another who is still ignorant or weak about the ten commandments, faith, prayer, etc., and whoever hears it is obliged to accept it from him as God's Word and to confess it publicly." (St. L. V, 1038.) Luther deals with this subject in great detail in 1 Pet. 3:15: "Always be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Luther remarks on this (St. L. IX, 1233 ff.): "We must confess here that St. Peter spoke these words to all Christians, clergy, laity, men, women, young, old, and whatever their status; therefore it follows that every Christian should know the reason and cause of his faith and be able to give cause and answer where it is necessary. Now, until now, it has been forbidden for laymen not to read the Scriptures. For the devil has had a nice trick to tear people away from the Scriptures, and he thought thus: If I make the laymen not read the Scriptures, I will then bring the priests away from the Bible in Aristotle, so that they can do whatever they want; then the people must hear what they preach to them. Otherwise, if the laymen read the Scriptures, the priests would also have to study, so that they would not be punished and overcome. But look, what St. Peter tells us all that we must give an answer and give the reason for our faith. If you are to die,

I [Luther] will not be with you, nor will the Pope. If you do not know the reason for your hope and say: I believe as the Council, the Pope and our fathers believed, then the devil will answer: What if they (people) were wrong? So he has won and drags you into hell. Therefore we (we Christians) must know what we believe, namely, what God's Word is, not what the Pope or Council say or proclaim. For you must not trust in men at all, but in the pure Word of God (not in human interpretation of the Word). [**Against Prof. Biermann**] Therefore, if you are attacked as a heretic and asked why you believe that you will be saved by faith without works, answer: "I have the Word of God and the clear passages of Scripture, Romans 1:17: 'The just shall live by faith'; and 2 Pet. 2:6, where St. Peter, quoting Isaiah, speaks of the 'chief Corner-stone,' namely, Christ, and declares: 'Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame'; there I build up and know that the Word does not deceive me. But if you want to say, as other fools do, 'Well, we will hear what the council decides, and we will abide by it,' you are lost. Therefore thou shalt say, Why do I ask what this or that man believes or decides; if it is not the Word of God, I will not hear it. Yes, you say, it is a confusing thing about faith that no one knows what to believe; therefore one must wait until it is decided what to believe. Answer: You will go to the devil in the meantime. For when the time comes for you to die and you do not know what to believe, neither I nor anyone else can help you. Therefore you must know for yourself and turn to no one and stand firm on the Word of God if you want to escape the devil and hell. Therefore it is necessary that even those who cannot read should grasp and keep some clear passages from Scripture, at least one or two, and stand firm on the foundation, one of which is Gen 22:18, where God says to Abraham, 'In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed'. When you have grasped this, you can groan and say: "If the Pope, the bishops and all the councils stand and say otherwise, then I say: This is God's Word, it stands firm and does not lie; what is to be blessed must be blessed through this seed. What is blessing? It is to deliver from the curse, that is, from sin, death and hell. Therefore it follows from the saying: Whoever is not blessed by the seed will be lost; so my works and merits cannot help me to salvation. Thus concludes the saying of Isaiah 28:16: Whoever believes in the stone will not be put to shame. Therefore, if someone attacks you and demands the reason for your faith, answer: "There is the reason, I cannot lack it; therefore I ask nothing about what the Pope or bishops teach and sneak. If they were true bishops,

they should teach the reason of faith, that all Christians might know it in common; so they go on and cry out that the laity should not be allowed to read the Scriptures. Therefore, if you are asked whether you consider the pope to be a head, say: Yes, I consider him to be a head, not of the Christian church, which has Christ as its head, but of the devil's synagogue. Why? Because he is the Antichrist. For St. Paul says 1 Tim. 4:1 ff: 'There shall come teachers of devils, who shall forbid marriage, and shall avoid the food which God hath created to be eaten with thanksgiving', etc. This has ever been done by the Pope, as it is in the day; therefore he is the true Antichrist. For what Christ teaches and gives, he goes against. What Christ makes free, he binds. Christ says it is not sinful to eat all kinds of food, etc.; so the Pope says it is sinful.

"So now we must learn to give cause and answer of faith, for it will come to pass; if it does not come to pass in life, it will come to pass in death. Then the devil will come out and say: Why hast thou reproached the Pope as an Antichrist? If you are not prepared and do not know why, he has won. So here St. Peter wants to say: Because you have now become believers, you will have much persecution from now on, but in persecution you must have hope and wait for eternal life. If anyone asks you why you hope, you must have the Word of God to rely on. The sophists have also perverted this text, that one should overcome the heretics with reason and from Aristotle, the natural light, which is why the Latin says *rationem reddere*, as if St. Peter meant that one should do it with human reason. That is why they say that Scripture is far too weak to overthrow heretics, that it must be done with reason and come from the brain, from which it must be proved that faith is right, since our faith is above all reason and is the power of God alone. Therefore, if people do not want to believe, you should keep quiet; for you are not guilty of forcing them to take the Scriptures for God's book or word; it is enough that you give your reason. As if they should do so and say, "You preach that we should not hold the doctrine of men, when St. Peter and St. Paul, even Christ himself, were men. If you hear such people who are so blinded and hardened that they deny that this is God's Word, what Christ and the apostles have spoken and written, or doubt it, just keep quiet, don't say a word to them and let them go; just say this: I will give you reason enough from the Scriptures; if you want to believe it, go ahead; if not, go ahead. So you say: 'Well, then, God's Word must stand with shame'. This God commands! Therefore it is necessary that we take heed and know how to meet those who now arise and pretend such foolishness."

The preaching of the Word by women, its legitimacy and its limitation.

It is a clear teaching of Scripture that the woman should also teach. According to Titus 2:3, the older women are to be teachers of the younger women. Example: Timothy is reported to have known the Scriptures from childhood because he had good teachers in his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois, as we see from 2 Timothy 1:5. Luther therefore wanted not only teachers, but also "female teachers" in the schools. (St. L. X, 477. 459.) But Scripture excludes women from teaching in public assembly before men. Two passages support this. 1 Tim. 2:11 ff.: "Let the woman learn in silence. ... But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." 1 Cor. 14:34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak.... And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." It has been objected that these are Oriental views that have no validity in the New Testament, especially in America, where we live far away from the Orient. To this it must be said: there is nothing in the text about restrictions to the Orient and to certain times. These passages show that the prohibition of teaching is valid for all regions and for all times until the Last Day. The very reason for the apostle's prohibition ("for Adam was made first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived") shows that the prohibition is binding for the Christian Church of all places and all times. The woman is to be a good teacher in her own circle, but not publicly before men. — It has also been asked in our midst whether women and girls could also be teachers in our parish schools. This teaching is perfectly acceptable as long as it is teaching children. Women should not be excluded from teaching children. But as soon as it is a matter of adult men, even adolescent boys, the woman is no longer in the right place with her teaching. Objection: However, in individual cases even in the Old Testament, women have taught by appearing, driven by the Holy Spirit, and instructing those present with God's Word, such as Miriam, Exodus 15:20-21. With regard to the example of Miriam, it must first be said that Miriam appears here as the leader of the women of Israel. But from the example of the judge and prophetess Deborah it can be seen that in special cases, at God's instigation, women appeared as teachers before men, Judges 4 and 5. To this we must say: If God makes exceptions to his rule, we cannot do the same. For us humans, the rule applies; we must leave the exceptions

to God. Luther says: "God hangs down the law, but He does not take it up again", that is, He acts as He wishes; we humans, however, remain bound by the rule. The objection that some women are smarter and more eloquent than men does not apply either. We have to admit that. God also knew that. Nevertheless, he gave order: "Let your women keep silence in the churches", 1 Cor. 14:34, and: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve", 1 Tim. 2:12-13.

The following applies to women's right to vote in the state: because the right to vote in the state implies participation in the rule over men, it is contrary to the natural order that God has made with regard to the relationship between man and woman. Again, the objection that women are often smarter than men, can make better election speeches and vote more intelligently does not apply. We are bound to the order God has made, Gen. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:12-13, and the reversal of the Creator's order is severely avenged.

Thesis II. [^](#)

The "lay movement" in financial terms.

Although the Old Testament order of tithing may not be laid on the conscience of New Testament Christians, it is and remains the divine order that New Testament Christians should give themselves and all their earthly goods to Christ and willingly make as much of it available to Him for His church as He needs at any time.

Two religious communities in the United States are reported to never lack funds. These are the Mormons and the Seventh-day Adventists. The reason given for this fact is that these communities have introduced tithing. People in other communities have also advocated the introduction of tithing. A certain [Thomas Kane](#) of Chicago has been sending pamphlets and books to all theological institutions at his own expense, urging all Christians to tithe their income for church purposes. Kane proves statistically that congregations and individuals who introduced the tithe contributed five and ten times as much for church purposes as in the past. We do not doubt the accuracy of these statistics. We are completely convinced that if all our Christians were to offer the tithe of their income to Christ for his kingdom, all lack of money would be ended in one fell swoop. In two writings that have come to our attention, Kane reproaches the professors at theological institutions for not advocating the tithe

emphatically enough. Professors and pastors are to blame for the church's lack of money.

What do we have to say about this? We do not, however, impose tithing as a duty on the conscience of New Testament Christians. And we do not do this because it would be contrary to Scripture. Tithing was God's order in the Old Testament, but it is not a divine order in the New Testament. The New Testament speaks often and much about giving for Christ's kingdom. But nowhere are Christians commanded to tithe. And what Christ did not command, the Church and one Christian must not command another. We want to hold strictly to this against the papacy and the sects. We do not want to allow ourselves to be robbed of the freedom with which Christ has liberated us.

But on the other hand, we also need to be reminded to the highest degree that we should not turn the freedom with which Christ has set us free into a cover for sin. Although tithing is not prescribed for us, "it is and remains the divine order that Christians of the New Testament should give themselves and all their earthly goods to Christ and willingly place as much at his disposal for his church as he needs at any time". This is scriptural teaching. Through faith in the gospel, Christians leave the kingdom of darkness and enter Christ's kingdom, the Christian church. When they enter, they bring everything they have with them: Body and soul with all their strength and also their earthly possessions. In the 60th chapter, the prophet Isaiah describes the entry of the nations into the Christian church like a large painting. "Lift up your eyes and look around you: all these gathered together are coming to you. Your sons will come from afar and your daughters will be brought up alongside. Then shalt thou see thy desire and break forth, and thine heart shall wonder and expand, when the multitude by the sea shall be converted unto thee, and the power of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. For the multitude of camels will cover you, the runners of Midian and Ephah", Is. 60:4-6. Truly, a magnificent painting! But the Holy Spirit has also drawn the "financial movement" into this magnificent, heart-lifting painting. The people who enter the church praising and singing also bring all their earthly goods, their gold and silver, with them. For the prophet continues in v. 6: "They will all come from Sheba, bringing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord", and v. 9: "The isles are waiting for me, and the ships of the sea before me, to bring your children from afar, with their silver and gold, the name of the Lord your God and the Holy One in Israel, who made you glorious." I have said in passing at synods and also written in our magazines that we as a church are not poor in earthly goods, but rich, because the church possesses as many earthly goods as all its members

put together. I have therefore been called an optimist here and there, that is, a man who sees all things in a rosy light. But the optimistic view that the church possesses as much as its members put together is entirely Scriptural, as can be seen from the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah quoted above. Luther writes on Isaiah 60:6: "This must be the opinion of Isaiah, that the people of this land of Arabia will gather together in great multitudes for the faith and the gospel, and will give themselves there with all their goods, camels, cattle, gold, incense and whatever they have. For where there are true Christians, they give themselves and all they have to serve Christ and His own. As we see, it has also happened here on our side that great goods are given to the Church, and everyone willingly and gladly gives himself with all that he has to Christ and His own, as St. Paul also writes of the Philippians and Corinthians 2 Cor. 8, 1 ff." (St. L. XII, 312 f.) The situation is this: Christians as Christians are willing to place themselves with all their goods at the service of the Church and to offer what the Savior needs at all times. We can say with Luther: Even in our time, many are extremely willing to serve their Savior with their earthly goods. We know of cases in which not just a tithe of income is given, but 25 percent. We also have among us those who have imposed it upon themselves to tithe; also those who give 11 percent to distinguish themselves from the Jews; also those who have said: All that I gain in my business I put at the service of my Savior. Christians have many weaknesses. But insofar as they are Christians or new people, they give themselves completely to their Savior with everything they have, including their earthly goods. A St. Louis businessman who died a few years ago said: "I run my business for my Savior." And he didn't just talk like that, he also acted like that.

But of course, Christians are not entirely spirit, but also have the evil flesh in them. And according to the flesh they are stingy and always seek to withhold from Christ what he needs for his kingdom. When the Lord tells them that he needs their donkey for his entrance into the world, they first give their flesh the word and let the Lord say that they use their donkey themselves. And quite often the flesh has the last word in the matter. The Lord, who shed his blood for his own, cannot obtain the donkey he asked for from them. The flesh of Christians is just as evil and wicked. It is always necessary to strengthen the spirit through the gospel so that it may kill the business of the flesh. It is also necessary to keep the old man in check outwardly through punishment and threats, so that he does not hinder the business of the spirit too much.

1. The size of the gifts.

The question has been raised: Whence is it that the Christians of the New Testament are not prescribed the quantum of their gifts? Some members of our churches would like to have the quantity determined. When they see the success the Papists, Mormons, and Seventh-day Adventists have had with their giving laws, they are inclined to try the law. But we are not to do wrong to accomplish good; and we do wrong every time we go beyond God's Word with areas. In the Old Testament, tithing was commanded by God and had to be given. In the New Testament, however, the amount of gifts is free. The reason why in the New Testament the amount is left to the Christians and the legal provision of the tithe is abolished is given in Gal. 4:1 ff: "As long as the heir is a child, there is no difference between him and a servant, even though he is master of all, but he is under the guardians and caretakers until the appointed time from the father. So also we, when we were children, were in bondage under the outward statutes." In the New Testament, after Christ is fully revealed, Christians are no longer children, but spiritually mature people; therefore, Christians of the New Testament do God's will out of the willing spirit of sonship in a financial relationship, all that and more than what the people of the Old Testament were forced to do by external statutes. Thus Luther says, completely in accordance with Scripture: "In the Old Testament it was commanded that over and above all the annual tithes given to the Levites, they were to set aside a special tithe every three years for the poor, widows and orphans, and so on. Now, such giving is not specified by name in the New Testament, nor is it laid down by law; for it is a time of grace, when everyone is exhorted to do this voluntarily, as Paul says in Galatians 6:6: 'Let him who is instructed in the word share all good things with him who instructs him,' item v. 10: 'Let us do good to everyone, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. (XII, 337.) It is part of our Christian freedom that we determine the quantity of our gifts ourselves.

But it is a terrible abuse of Christian freedom when Christians use the freedom from tithing to give Christ as little or nothing as possible for his kingdom. They then use freedom to cover the wickedness of their flesh. They then do what the Apostle Peter warns against with the words: "As free men, and not as having liberty to cover yourselves with wickedness", 1 Peter 2:16. God has taken off the yoke of bondage, of compulsion, of tithing, from the New Testament Christians with the intention and expectation that they will now serve Him not less but more, willingly sacrifice to him in holy adornment,

place all their goods at his disposal and actually always hand over to him what he needs. And lo and behold, they now disappoint God, so to speak. God had his trouble with the Jews, who cheated him on the tithe and tried to break off either the quantity or the quality of the tithe. Read, for example, Mal. 1:8; 3:8 ff. In the latter passage it says: "Is it right for a man to deceive God as you have deceived me? Then say ye, Wherein do we deceive thee? In tithes and offerings." So God has his trouble with Christians even now. He has taken away their tithes with the intention that they will now serve him all the more diligently in freedom. But they abuse their freedom. Instead of giving about 11 percent in freedom, they use their freedom to pay God with 1 percent or even less. Someone has not inaccurately said that the weakest Christian should start in Christian freedom where the Jew left off, namely with 10 percent, and then strive in Christian freedom to get higher and higher. Some of us do that too. But we must also lament with Luther: many, many Christians misuse freedom to cover their wickedness! Of course, this abuse of freedom was already present in the apostolic church, and Paul describes it as a mockery of God with the words: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked." Gal. 6:7. According to the context, the apostle is speaking here of the giving of Christians. The flesh of Christians in the apostolic church was just as wicked as the flesh of Christians in our time. That is why the apostle Paul uses such strong, frightening words: "Do not be mistaken; God cannot be mocked!" This abuse of Christian freedom was also to be found in Luther's time. It is well known what bitter complaints Luther made about it. He says: "Before, when the devil was served in the papacy, everyone was merciful and mild; then they gave with both hands cheerfully and with great devotion to maintain the false worship. Now, when people should be mild, give gladly and show gratitude to God for the holy gospel, everyone wants to perish and die of hunger, no one wants to give anything, but only take. Formerly, any city, when it was large, could amply feed several monasteries, not to mention the sacristans and rich monasteries; now, if only two or three persons who preach God's Word, administer the sacrament, visit and comfort the sick, instruct the youth honestly and Christianly, are to be fed in a city, and moreover not from their own property but from that of others, which has been left over from the papacy, everyone is hard put to it." (St. L. XI, 301.) In another place Luther says: "In the papacy there was no measure, and there was no end to giving and giving to maintain the ungodly, false worship. Hence came the monasteries and convents, the princely bishoprics, the vast empires of cardinals and popes; there the devil was able to blow against Christ and

drive people to such weariness and ungodly gifts. For such things were pleasing to him, and the people thus served the idolatry and blasphemy that was publicly taught at that time. That is why the bullfinches, bishops and abbots had everything to themselves, even though they were a "public nuisance" to the whole world. They have become fat, strong and fat." On the other hand, Luther says of the treatment of real teachers in his time in some places: "Look at the parish priests in the villages now and then, how so many of them have to languish miserably from hunger and thirst, and often have not enough to buy their children a shirt." (St. L. II. 1235 f.)

Thank God, things are not as bad here as they were in Luther's time. Luther had to deal with regional church conditions, which he also lamented. He had not yet reached the point — which he did strive for — of gathering together and separating from the world those who seriously wanted to be Christians. In our American Lutheran Church we have this gathering of those who earnestly want to be Christians. Those who want to belong to the world remain outside our congregations from the outset. But the abuse of Christian freedom with regard to giving to the gospel, which we have so abundantly, is also found in our midst. We would have to close our eyes to obvious facts if we did not want to admit this, and by God's grace we must seek to put an end to this abuse of Christian freedom. We owe it to our Savior; we owe it to the Church. We owe it to ourselves, as will be explained in more detail.

2. The danger of small gifts.

The small gifts have their great honor. The smallest gifts will be honored until the Last Day wherever there is a Holy Scripture. For Scripture tells us of the widow's "mite", who put a penny into the treasury, that the mite was a greater gift than the gifts of the rich; for they had put in all that they had, all their food, out of the rest, but the widow out of her poverty, Mark 12:41-44, so the smallest gift may have the highest price. But alas, when the "mite" is misused by those who are not poor widows, but who have plenty of earthly goods, to seek the smallest possible gifts and to soothe their conscience with the "widow's mite"! In so many cases, the widow's mite is turned into a cover for avarice by the devil's deceit. Let us pay attention to the dangers that are often associated with small gifts!

1. Seeking small and few gifts is against God's will. Holy Scripture warns against meagre giving

and exhorts us to give abundantly when it says: "He who sows meagrely will also reap meagrely; and he who sows in blessing will also reap in blessing". 2 Cor. 9:6. And the apostle praises the churches in Macedonia: "Although they were very poor, they gave generously in all simplicity", 2 Cor. 8:2.

2. Small gifts in many cases spoil the quality of the gifts; that is, small gifts often reveal that one does not give to his Savior and does not give gladly. Of course, there are also small things in which small gifts are quite appropriate. If, for example, a congregation were to arrange for its Sunday collections to raise the salary of the churchwarden, this would still have a certain connection with the church, but larger gifts would obviously not be appropriate in this case, since it is only a matter of raising a small sum. This is where the penny and nickel offerings are most appropriate. But when it comes directly to the great things of the kingdom of God, to the preaching of the gospel in the world, to missions, teaching institutions, etc., i.e. the things that Christians are actually still in this world to do and the world is still standing (Matt. 24:14): if in this case we strive for the smallest possible gifts. There is a great danger that we do not think of our Savior at all, that we do not sacrifice to Him, but only give mechanically in order to maintain the appearance of giving. When we think of our Savior, who has given himself so completely for us and now wants us to place ourselves out of gratitude at the service of the preaching of the Gospel: when we think of this, it necessarily entails that we do not strive for the smallest possible gifts, but for the greatest possible gifts. Seeking small gifts in this case does not prove willingness to serve Christ in holy adornment, but the opposite, unwillingness and stinginess. Thus even the small gifts become completely worthless before God. It is easy for self-deception to creep in here, even among Christians, as a result of the stingy flesh that still clings to us. It happens that a Christian feels that he could and should give more for the gospel than he actually does. He feels that the quantity of his gift is not at all in proportion to his means and to the greatness of the cause. But nevertheless, he sticks with the small gift and agonizes inwardly to replace the lack of quantity with quality, by convincing himself that he wants to give his small gift "right from the heart". The phrase "little, but from the heart" may be fully justified if someone really has very little. We then come close to the glory of the widow's mite. But if our conscience warns us that we could and should give more in view of our means and in view of the importance of the matter, then the "little but from the heart" can easily mask a self-deception. All

inward pressure for quality will be in vain and will not make up for the lack of quantity. Instead, we should remember another saying: "*Quality goes with quantity.*" So let us also pay careful attention to the quantity of our gifts! The Lord will give us understanding in all things.

3. The pursuit of small gifts also has its great danger when we look at the reward. God has placed a glorious reward, a reward of grace, on all the gifts we give him. From this we recognize the great grace and goodness of our God. God gives us heaven and salvation completely free of charge, without any merit of works on our part, solely for the sake of Christ's perfect merit. "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast," Eph. 2:8. But God is gracious and kind beyond measure. If we serve him in vain, that is, merely out of gratitude for the mercy shown to us in Christ, it should not be "in vain" inasmuch as he wants to crown all the works done for him with a glorious reward of grace eternally. So the good works of Christians are worth a tremendous amount. Luther says that they are worth more than the whole world. The world and all that is in it will burn up on the Last Day; but the good works of Christians will not burn up, but will follow them, Revelation 14:13. Therefore we should not strive for small gifts, but for great gifts for Christ and his gospel. The Holy Spirit reminds us of this when He says in Scripture: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows in blessing will also reap in blessing", 2 Cor. 9:6. We are only wise stewards of the earthly goods that God has given us if we give back to our God with full hands. There are many fools in the world. The whole unbelieving world is foolish. But Christians are the greatest fools when they strive for as small and few gifts as possible with the available resources.

4. By striving for small gifts, the Christian causes himself constant offense by leading himself to doubt his state of grace and the truth of the Christian religion. According to Scripture, good works should also be done for the purpose of having an outward witness to our faith. We have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to our sonship in God through faith in the gospel, which the Holy Spirit works and sustains in us. But the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts through faith, now also impels us to good works, and indeed also for the purpose that we can also read the testimony from our works: "You are a child of God, because you love the brethren, love God's Word, his Church on earth

is above all things to you", etc. Just as Christian works do not come from the flesh, but only from the Spirit, we have in our Christian works the external testimony of the Holy Spirit — *externum Spiritus Sancti testimonium*, as our old teachers say — to our state of grace. In this sense Scripture says of sanctification and good works: "Wherefore, brethren, be diligent to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10). In the same sense our Lutheran confession says: "As in other sacraments Christ attaches the promise to the outward sign, so here also he attaches the promise of forgiveness of sin to outward good works." (Apology, p. 134). (Apology, p. 134.) What do we do, therefore, if we are as industrious in sanctification and good works as we are stingy in the gifts of the gospel? By striving for small gifts we constantly bear witness to ourselves: "Your Christianity is in a bad state." The doubt about our state of grace is certainly in many cases also caused by our stinginess in giving for the kingdom of God.

5. But the desire for small gifts also easily becomes an offence to the unbelieving world. Just as the world keeps a sharp eye on the conduct of Christians in general, so it does in particular on the gifts of Christians for their church. The world rejoices when it sees a Christian fall, and telegraphs it over the whole continent, because it sees in it a welcome excuse for its unbelief. For the same reason it rejoices immensely when it perceives that Christians have to complain of constant financial embarrassment in their supposedly so important cause and even resort to gambling and dubious entertainments in order to drive out money. Judgment Day will reveal how many of the world's children have been vexed and lost by the stinginess of Christians in giving to the Gospel. [[Andrew](#)] [Carnegie](#) literally peddles his mockery of the Christians' meagre gifts. At a recent banquet in the East, he asked why the Scots had a particularly small coin, not otherwise in use in England, in circulation. (The name of the coin escapes me.) When no one knew the answer, he answered the question himself: the particularly small coin was in the world so that the Scots could fulfill their duty to the Church. Well, Carnegie cannot excuse his unbelief with the sins of the Christians. That the world is angry is and remains their fault. The Lord says: "Woe to the world of offense!" Who the Lord also adds: "But woe to that man through whom offense comes!" Matt. 18:17. Let us also remember this when giving for Christ's kingdom and, by God's grace, not walk in this respect for the world, but in an edifying way.

6. Those who seek small gifts also easily cause offense to their pastors. Pastors are still human and are challenged by fear of man. When they see the unwillingness to give and even hear words like these: "Eternal begging!" they lose the courage to insist on God's Word and will. They bend the yardstick and say: "At least give of the rest!" But where does it say in Scripture that Christians should give from what is left over? Christians are not prescribed any quantity, nor time or hour, for their gifts. But God's will for them is that they should give gladly and willingly, and that giving for the kingdom of God should be their priority or first priority. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things" — the needs for earthly life — "will be added to you", Matthew 6:33. Such passages as this: "Give at least of what you have left" are contrary to God's Word. We cannot forgive our Christians the truth that they must first serve the kingdom of God even with their earthly goods. Of course, the goal will never be fully achieved. The flesh will hinder complete obedience. But Christians should recognize the deficiency in this as deficiency and sin. They should humble themselves before God because of this sin, beg forgiveness for it for Christ's sake and ask God for strength to force the ungodly, stingy flesh more and more under them. We know that Christians will not achieve complete sanctification in other things either. But that does not mean that we are distorting the goal they should strive for. We do not say to them: "Avoid at least the grossest excesses of the flesh", but we urge them: "Therefore, beloved, since we have this hope, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit and continue in sanctification through the fear of God", 2 Cor. 7:1. In the same way, we must not change the goal of Christians to give first to the kingdom of God. Otherwise we would fall into antinomianism, perhaps — to paraphrase Luther — be good Easter preachers, but shameful Pentecostal preachers. Let us only confidently tell the Christians the divine truth concerning this point! We have the Christians, insofar as they are Christians, completely on our side. Even the weakest Christian, Walther reminds us, wants to live completely according to the new man for his Savior, who bought him with his blood of God.

7. He who seeks small gifts grieves the Holy Spirit who dwells in him. Every Christian, even the weakest, is a temple of the Holy Spirit. With faith in the forgiveness of sins acquired by Christ, the Holy Spirit enters our hearts. "Do you not know," the apostle calls out to all Christians, "that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

1 Cor 3:16 And the Holy Spirit is active in us. He fills us with love for God and our neighbor. He also impels us to give willingly and abundantly of our earthly goods to Christ for His kingdom. If we do not follow the inner teaching and impulse of the Holy Spirit, we grieve the Holy Spirit and may well drive him out of our hearts altogether. Many a man has lost faith and salvation by closing his heart to the needs of the kingdom of God.

8. Those who seek small gifts hinder the building of the kingdom of God on earth. But that is no small thing. In order for the kingdom of God to be established here on earth, the Son of God became man and shed his blood on the cross. "Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and have repentance and forgiveness of sins preached in his name among all nations", Luke 24:46-47. The world still stands for the preaching of the gospel, Matthew 24:14. We Christians, who actually belong in heaven, are also still in this world for the preaching of the gospel. Yes, it is through us that the preaching is to take place. That is the divine order. Christ wants to use our prayers, our mouths and also our earthly possessions to preach the gospel. How terrible if we hinder the building of Christ's kingdom on earth by refusing our earthly goods!

9. He who seeks small gifts prevents God from giving him abundant earthly goods. God acts according to the rule which he has published very clearly and distinctly in Luke 6:38 and in many other places: "Pray and it will be given to you." This does not seem to apply in individual cases, because God's ways are often wonderfully intertwined with individual people, so that we cannot find the threads apart. God sees what our human eye cannot see, namely why a person needs poverty or a little earthly good in order to stay on the narrow path to eternal life. But in most cases we humans will also be able to perceive that God gives back abundantly to the abundant giver. I know people in the Synod who have given generously. They gave abundantly for the gospel, so abundantly that they were warned by cautious friends not to give too much. But they kept on giving and, to everyone's amazement, became more and more prosperous. Even from heavy business losses they recovered surprisingly quickly. God dealt with them according to his word: "Pray and it will be given to you." I have also known people who were poor. When it came to giving for the gospel, they not only sought small gifts, but used certain circumstances to avoid giving altogether, and lo and behold, their financial prosperity went downhill. And what they passed on to their descendants did not prosper them either, because it was

"*tainted money*". This is cursed money that you keep in your possession or inherit, which you have withheld from the Savior for the Gospel. God have mercy on us all! May He make us recognize the sin of avarice, repent of it, obtain forgiveness through the blood of Christ and then resist the cursed avarice! — But aren't Christians also often poor because, out of fear of God, they don't reap some of the profits through which worldly people enrich themselves? Most certainly. Scripture refers to this case when it says in Psalm 37:16: "The little that a righteous man has is better than the great wealth of many wicked men." But in many, many cases, the poverty or small possessions of Christians is also due to the fact that they give so little for God's kingdom. God speaks to his people through Malachi: "Bring all the tithes into my granary, that there may be food in my house, and prove me herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, whether I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out an abundance of blessing." Mal. 3:10. This applies not only to the Old Testament, but also to the New, as we see from Luke 6:33: "Pray, and it will be given to you. A measure full, pressed down, shaken, and overflowing will be given into your bosom; for with the same measure that you measure, it will be measured to you again."

10. He who seeks small gifts for the gospel brings God's wrath on himself and the land in which he lives. Read the first chapter of the prophet Haggai. The Jews had returned from captivity and eagerly set about gathering goods and building their own houses. After they had gathered and built enough for themselves, they also wanted to build the Lord's house. Through the prophet Haggai, God tells the people of the impropriety of this procedure: "This people says, 'The time has not yet come to build the Lord's house. But your time has come to dwell in paneled houses, and this house must stand desolate?'" But the prophet also clearly indicates what punishment will follow this sin. He says: "See how it is with you: you sow much and bring in little ... so that my house stands desolate and everyone hastens to his own house. Therefore the heavens have withheld the dew from you, and the earth its fruit. And I have called the drought, both over land and mountains." In the New Testament, God speaks no less sharply about the same sin: "Do not err; God is not mocked!" If we have drought and other plagues in the land, this is certainly a punishment for the unbelieving world, which does not respect God's Word and does not thank God for physical goods. But we Christians should also examine ourselves at such times to see whether we too have not become a blight on the land through our ingratitude and stinginess in giving to the gospel. The world is blind. But we Christians are wise people. We Christians know that all earthly gifts come from God. We also know that through Christ we have

heaven and salvation. Moreover, we know that God gives and leaves us spiritual and bodily goods primarily for the purpose of serving the preaching of the gospel. If we build our own houses and leave the Lord's house desolate, then we must regard drought and other plagues as the judgment of God, which begins first with the house of God, that is, with Christians. Then it is time to repent, to organize public services of repentance and to give up seeking small gifts for the Gospel. Luther explains this in his preface to the prophet Haggai. Luther concludes this preface with the words: "God wants to eat with us, otherwise He will not give us anything to eat."

11. Finally, whoever seeks small gifts instead of rich gifts for the preaching of the gospel causes God to withdraw the gospel from him. That is the end, the greatest misfortune that can come upon us. Luther's complaints about Germany are well known. He says again and again that in his time Germany had the Gospel as bright and pure as never before. But Germany was lazily and casually opposing the Gospel. Only a few were willing to give for it. God would punish deep sin with the withdrawal of the gospel. He writes: "They (the ungrateful) will lose both the physical and the spiritual. For this sin must necessarily be followed by the most severe punishments, and I truly believe that the churches in Galatia, Corinth, etc. were destroyed by the false prophets for no other reason than because they neglected their true teachers." (St. L. IX, 748.) Let this also be said to us as a warning. We now have the gospel as clear and pure as the Christians of the apostles' time. Now let us see to it that we show ourselves thankful to God for it, also by willing and abundant giving for the gospel, so that it may be preserved with us and spread far and wide through us. "That we have the gospel and the ministry of preaching," says Luther, "what is it but the blood and sweat of our Lord? He has acquired it through his fearful, bloody sweat. ... Shall Christ, the Son of God, have earned nothing else with it among us, except that some persecute such his dearly acquired office, etc., while others withdraw their hand, neither feed pastors nor preachers, nor give anything to maintain it; about which the children also turn away from it, so that such an office may soon come to an end and Christ's blood and torture be in vain, etc.? If this is how it is to be in German lands, I am sorry that I was born a German or that I have ever spoken or written in German. And if I could do so before my conscience, I would again advise and help that the pope with all his abominations should come upon us again and oppress, ravish and corrupt us more than ever before. Before, when the devil was served and Christ's blood was desecrated,

all bags were open and there was no measure of giving to churches, schools and all abominations; then children could be driven into monasteries, convents, churches and schools, pushed and forced at unspeakable cost, so that all was lost. Now, however, proper schools and proper churches are to be founded ... no one can give in, all the bags are closed with iron chains, etc. I pray to God for a merciful hour, that he will take me away and not let me see the misery that must befall Germany. ... God grant that I may have to lie and be a false prophet in this matter, which would happen if we improved ourselves and honored our Lord's Word and his precious blood and death differently than has happened so far." (St. L. X, 456 f.)

The salary of the preachers and teachers of the Word of God.

Luther says in his explanation of Galatians that he does not like to speak of this subject because it has an appearance of selfishness and avarice. And we all agree with him. Nevertheless, we cannot refrain from talking about it because it is part of the proclamation of the doctrine of Scripture. Luther writes the following about Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap", among other things: "All this belongs to the doctrine of the livelihood of preachers. I do not like to interpret such passages. For they seem to boast of us (preachers), as indeed they boast of us. Then it has an appearance of avarice when one tries to impress this on the listeners with great diligence. But people must also be taught about this so that they know that they owe their teachers reverence and sustenance. Christ teaches the same thing in Luke 10:7, saying: "Eat and drink what they have, for a laborer is worthy of his wages. And Paul 1 Cor. 9:13-14: "Do you not know that those who offer sacrifices eat from the sacrifice, and those who tend the altar enjoy the altar? So also the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel" (St. L. IX, 749.) Let us now also speak of this point on the basis of Scripture.

If we pay close attention to Scripture, we find that it presents two different lessons concerning this delicate point, one lesson for the churches and another lesson for the preachers and teachers. It warns both sides against selfishness and avarice. It tells the churches that they are obliged to provide willingly and abundantly for the people who tell them the Word of God. On the other hand, Scripture admonishes teachers to minister with the Word, not for shameful gain, but for Christ's sake, and also to be willing to forsake their right.. Much misunderstanding and disorder has arisen in the church at all times from the mixing of these lessons. The exhortations addressed to teachers to serve without avarice for Christ's sake have

been abused by congregations to pay teachers as small a salary as possible, and conversely the exhortations addressed to congregations to provide for their teachers in debt and abundance have been abused by the latter to seek their own, and not Christ's, interest in the teaching office. Thus, on the one hand, the apostle Paul must warn the churches of his time against sin on this point, even with the terrible threat: "Do not err; God will not be mocked!" On the other hand, he also complains about certain teachers of his time: "They all seek their own, not the things of Christ Jesus", Phil. 2:21.

1. The lesson for the congregations, that is, for the Christians who are ministered to with the Word by certain persons who are placed by God in the ministry of the Word through the churches. God's Word clearly teaches that the bodily care of these persons is not a work of mercy, such as is done to the poor and needy without return, but is to be regarded as a work of duty and obligation, just as a laborer is entitled to the wages he has earned. It is also not uncommon to find among us the false idea that the congregations that provide their pastors and teachers with physical sustenance are doing a work of mercy, like giving alms to the needy. Scripture protests against this view from beginning to end. This saying: "A laborer is worthy of his wages" is referred to in the New Testament primarily to those who labor in the Word and in teaching. When the Lord Christ speaks in Matthew 10 about how his messengers earn their living, he says: "A laborer is worthy of his hire." "Eat and drink what they have." And when the apostle of Christ comes to the same point, the physical provision of the preachers, he again uses this word: "A laborer is worthy of his hire", 1 Tim. 5:18. According to Scripture, withholding the wages due is one of the so-called heaven-defying sins. Scripture expressly says Jer 22:13: "Woe to the man who makes his neighbor work for nothing and does not give him his wages!" and James 5:4: "The wages of the laborers who have reaped your land and broken off from you, cry out." This also applies to the wages owed to those who work in the ministry of the Word of God.

It has been objected that Scripture also says: "You received it for free, give it for free" (Matthew 10:8). This word of Christ remains completely untouched. What teachers and preachers give, offer and distribute through their work in the Word, through the proclamation of the gospel, namely God's grace and salvation, is of such infinite value that it cannot be paid for with all the silver and gold in the world. This is a good that God himself has purchased with his blood of God. If a church were to give a salary of

hundreds of thousands to those who minister to it with the word, what the pastors give through the gospel would still be given in vain. What should the preachers be paid for? The work, the hard work. When someone provides a congregation with God's Word, it involves a lot of work, a lot of study, sighing, praying, physical, mental and spiritual effort. And this physical labor should be rewarded. That is why Scripture says, especially with regard to preachers: "A laborer is worthy of his hire." Luther: "My ministry is only a service which I am to render to everyone freely and for nothing, seeking neither money nor goods, neither honor nor anything else. ... But trust, if I do this, you will be obliged to feed me again afterwards." (St. L. VII, 1040 f.) This is not a purchase as in worldly trade. In worldly trade, the goods and the purchase price correspond. This is not possible in the preaching ministry. The shab is too great. It is given for free and received for free. But the preacher's work should be rewarded.

The following story of a Negro preacher was recalled here. Whether it is history or fiction remains to be seen. In any case, it expresses the simple truth. *"A negro parson had labored faithfully in his congregation without receiving any material remuneration. Having no other means of livelihood, he finally appealed to the congregation for a stipulated salary. Consternation was written on the faces of the members. Finally one of them recovered his breath sufficiently to remonstrate: 'But, pahson, de Holy Book tells us dat de water of life am free.' The parson, however, was equal to the occasion and settled the matter by saying: 'Dat's true, brudder, but de congregation mus' pay for de pipin'."*

One more word from Luther should be noted. Luther says: "If we take our livelihood from the congregation, this is not a payment that should be considered equal to this gift, which is so great and expensive that it could not be paid for with the whole world's goods. But because such a great and abundant gift cannot be distributed in any other way than through people who must have food and drink, they must be nourished and maintained. But this is not payment for the gift, but for their toil and labor." (St. L. I, 1624.)

Thus it is clear that, according to Holy Scripture, the physical care of teachers is not at the discretion of Christians, but is divine order or commanded by God. The apostle Paul makes this clear by his own example. In 1 Cor. 9 he says to the Corinthians: I have taken nothing from you, nor will I take anything from you. He would rather die than take wages from the Corinthians. Why? The circumstances in Corinth were such that Paul would have been suspected of preaching for the sake of earthly gain by taking wages. That is why he worked with his hands to earn a living for himself and his

family. But lest anyone refer to him and say: "Because the apostle did not take a salary, all other preachers should not claim a salary either", the apostle explains in the same chapter that his actions were outside the divine order. He adds: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel", v. 14.

How much should the teachers of the New Testament be given for their work? We have heard that all legal compulsion, including tithing, is abolished in the New Testament. God expects New Testament Christians to do what is right without lawful order. Yet Scripture clearly teaches that Christians should provide for their preachers and teachers. Just as Christians should not seek a small gift for the gospel in general, so they should not seek to give their preacher as small a salary as possible. 1 Timothy 5:17 says: "The elders who preside are to be held in double honor." "Twofold honor" here is not a double bow, a double greeting, a double removal of hats and the like, but "honor" here is the physical provision, honorarium, salary. This is clear from the context: "thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn", v. 18. In the Old Testament there was a very strange order: the oxen that treaded out the grain were to be allowed to do their work with their mouths muzzled. There are some examples in the Old Testament whose meaning is only revealed to us in the New Testament. Here, in 1 Timothy 5 and 1 Corinthians 9, the apostle explains why the mouths of working animals should not be muzzled. God did not do this for the sake of the oxen, says the apostle in 1 Corinthians 9:9, but it was intended that the laborers who do the hardest work should not have their labor unrewarded. And these are the "workers in the word and in teaching". This is how Scripture itself explains this type.

People have asked: Is it an "honor" to give a worker wages for his work, to reward him accordingly? Indeed it is! The outward honor, the outward recognition of the worker is his reward. You can do no greater dishonor to a worker than to give him a very low wage for honest and valuable work. You are actually saying to a worker: "You are worth little or nothing as a worker." Employers should remember that. They should strive to pay their workers as high a wage as possible, i.e. one that corresponds to their work, and thereby give the worker the honor he deserves. If they do not do this, they should know that the breaking of the workers' wages cries out to God and will be visited by God with severe punishment. But what are we to say when Christian congregations strive to give the smallest possible wages to those who work diligently

and with all the strength of body and soul in God's Word and teaching, and thus do not honor this highest work, but declare it inferior? We should say to this: This is displeasing to God, for God says in his word that the workers in the word and in teaching should be held in "double honor". I have been told — I have not experienced it myself — that in earlier times statements like this were made in churches: "The smaller the pastor's salary, the better the pastor preaches, because he then remains under the cross." Woe to such an attitude! A preacher may well groan under the cross if he has barely the bare necessities for himself and his family, even with modest demands. But this is not good for the church, as God's Word expressly says in Hebrews 13:17. If we want to lay a cross on our neighbor, it is both foolishness and ungodliness. Laying on a cross is a privilege of God, because God alone knows for whom a cross is good and of what kind it should be. If we lay a cross on our neighbor, it can happen that the neighbor collapses under the cross and we ruin the one to whom we, in our folly and presumption, wanted to give a benefit. Luther complains that in his day preachers were induced to leave the preaching ministry because of their meager salaries. The same may have happened in our time. That is not right on the part of the preachers. But the congregations are certainly not blameless either if they provide meagerly for their preachers and teachers without just cause. Incidentally, we can also point to congregations in our midst that now provide amply for their preachers after the preachers have endured their poverty. They say: "Our preachers have shared our poverty with us; now they should also share in our prosperity."

2. The lesson for preachers and teachers. Pastors and teachers should take care that they do not fall into a worldly sense and avarice, which happens when the real aim of their ministry is to provide for earthly needs and to maximize their salary. Holy Scripture warns the teachers of the Word against this harmful and shameful deviation in many places. The apostle Peter writes: "Feed the flock of Christ as you are commanded, and watch carefully, not under compulsion but willingly, not for shameful gain but from the heart", 1 Pet. 5:2, and the apostle Paul admonishes pastors: "No man of war entangles himself in the affairs of this life", 2 Tim. 2:4. True men of war do not see their life's work in foraging, but they leave it to the commissary department to supply their rations. Thus the preachers feed the flock of Christ that is commanded to them; that is the content and goal of their activity, and in doing so they have confidence in Christ that He will also provide for them in the physical, if not always abundantly, at least in a sufficient way. Admittedly, pastors in our synod have also

suffered real hardship in some cases, but as far as we know, there has never been a case of a pastor in our Synod starving to death. Indeed, we expect our pastors, like the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:9, to preach under certain circumstances even without a salary. These will only be temporary conditions. But through the work of the Holy Spirit the same attitude should be found in us as in the apostle Paul. It is part of a pastor's ministry that, if need be, he will lay down his life in the pursuit of his ministry. Under certain circumstances he will also be able to do without a salary. And especially if it is only a matter of undue reduction in physical care. The fact is, however, that in most cases the pastors of our Synod are not treated according to the divine order: "A laborer is worthy of his hire" and: Those who labor in the word and in teaching are considered worthy of "double honor". Worldly people beat their hands over their heads when they hear how little money many of our pastors are paid and how much effort they put into church and school. Worldly people point out that they could not get a "decent clerk" for the pastor's salary that is usual in many of our churches. Nevertheless, our pastors are not "on strike". It has become customary in some places for sect pastors to form unions and strike "for higher salaries". We do not do that, but continue to work cheerfully when congregations — or even the Synod — do not do to us what is right and proper. We remember that the Lord Christ was not treated correctly financially when he preached here on earth. Neither were his apostles. Neither did Luther. But Luther says with regard to this point: "What do we care about that?" Our reimbursement and retribution in heaven will be so great that we will also "greatly reproach" ourselves for not having suffered more. (St. L. II, 1237.)

Luther warns against the pursuit of earthly goods, especially in the preaching ministry. He writes, for example: "One sees by daily experience what a shameful, cursed vice avarice is and what harm it does, especially in high offices and estates, spiritual and secular. For if the devil of avarice possesses the heart of a pastor or preacher, so that he seeks only how he may bring great good for himself like the rest of the world, he is already thrown into the devil's jaws like Judas the traitor, that he might betray Christ with his word and his church for the sake of a penny." (St. L. XI, 1319.) With us pastors and teachers, as Luther also reminds us, it should be like this: "Everything we do in this world, we do together only for God's glory, so that many people may be converted and saved." (St. L. II, 1237.) May God grant and preserve us pastors and teachers of such a disposition! Without such an attitude we cannot be true servants of Christ. Of course, our congregations

should not misuse this attitude for their own avarice. They should not think: "Our pastor is faithful and diligent and content with his low salary. But he is so contented and pious that he is not likely to run away from us if we give him a hundred or even a few hundred dollars less." That is mixing up the lessons of Scripture. For the pastors it says: not for avarice, not for shameful gain. For the congregations it says: Those who labor in the word and in teaching are to be held in double honor. "Every man learn his lesson, and it will prosper in the house."

I would like to remind us pastors and teachers of one more thing. Even if we work so faithfully in our ministry that people have to give us a testimony of faithfulness: before God we confess our bungling in work, in diligence, in prayer and in intercession. We say to God with regard to our ministry: "Do not enter into judgment with your servant!" If we thus have to confess our bungling before God and ask for merciful forbearance, then we are also content in God that our churches are only doing bungling with us with regard to the repayment of our work. And how is it then? Are we unhappy people? It has often been said to me, "There are no happier people in the whole world than Missouri pastors and teachers." This is consistent with my experience at conferences and synods. Faithfully serving others by God's grace, especially faithfully serving with God's Word, makes happy and joyful people. With regard to this very point, the apostle Paul says in Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The cause and cure of financial sluggishness.

Where does the financial sluggishness that we so often notice among us come from?

1. The sluggishness comes from the God-alienated flesh, which Christians also still have in them. If Christians were completely spiritual, they would also do everything God wants them to do financially, namely, they would come running with their earthly goods to provide their Savior with as much as he needs. They would also constantly inquire whether their Savior could use more of their goods. But the flesh of Christians is just as evil as the flesh of the world, as Luther often reminds us. Of course, the business of the flesh must be put to death, including the business of the miserly flesh. But this is difficult work and never succeeds completely.

2. Sloth comes from evil habit. It is often an inheritance from state church circumstances. In the state churches, little or nothing was given for church purposes because the state usually covered the costs of church and school. We live here in

a church that is independent of the state and are happy about that. But when it comes to giving to the church, we often still behave like the state church. And sluggishness does not always die out with the first generation but, like other diseases, is passed on to the second and third generations.

3. Sloth comes from the devil's special deception. The devil is always out to make Christianity contemptible and to hinder the kingdom of Christ. He achieves his deep purpose when he succeeds in keeping Christians from giving to the gospel. How the preaching of the gospel has been held up among us to this day because the necessary earthly means were not available!

4. There is also a partial lack of clarity in the doctrine of justification. It is thought that the doctrine of the justification of the sinner without the works of the law is harmed if one insists energetically and continuously on good works and especially on the fact that Christians should above all serve the kingdom of Christ with their earthly goods. But this is an erroneous opinion. The more seriously we teach good works in a Christian manner, the more powerfully we preach the gospel. After all, we don't bring about good works through the threats of the law, but by attracting and enticing with the divine mercy that has been shown to us in Christ Jesus. Luther famously says that good works are done from heaven. If we want to make our Christians willing to be sanctified and to do good works, then we always do one thing first: we lift them up to heaven. We remind them that through Christ, their Savior, they have free forgiveness of all their sins and heaven freely. When we remind Christians of this, they rejoice with great joy, gratitude wells up in their hearts and they want to lay down their lives for their Savior. And if we then say to the Christians: For the time being, it is not yet a question of laying down one's life for the Savior. That may come later. But at present the Savior wants to have your donkey for his entry into this world: then the Christians are very happy and let him have the donkey and the colt. In this way, every Christian exhortation to give becomes a reason to preach the gospel fully, completely and unadulterated.

But here we have already come to the cure for laziness. When we get cold and freeze, we stand by the fire. When we Christians realize that our love for our Saviour and for service in His kingdom is growing cold, then we place ourselves before the fire of divine love that has appeared to us in Christ Jesus. This warms the heart and solves "the problem of giving", which unfortunately requires so much talking and writing. In one form or another, we have an image

of our Savior in our home, such as a crucifix. When it comes to gifts for the gospel, and we look at the head crowned with thorns, then our gifts automatically take on the right quality and also the right quantity. We give willingly and abundantly. These are not my thoughts, but this is how the Holy Spirit teaches, e.g. 2 Cor. 8. There the apostle exhorts Christians to give, and in order to achieve the right quality and quantity of gifts, he brings the cross of Christ before their eyes. V. 9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he was poor." If we follow this method, follow it unceasingly, the "financial movement" of Christians will not fail to materialize.

External aids. Christians will only and can only give to the gospel with understanding, willingly and to the right extent if they are familiar with what is going on in the church and with the needs of the church. Here again, two kinds of people need to be reminded of their lesson.

1 We pastors. It is the pastor's duty to make the Christians under his charge continually aware of the Savior's need for their earthly good. The pastor has an official duty to ensure that the Christians under his charge also become rich in good works, accumulate a great store of good works in this life and thus reap an eternal reward of grace on the Last Day. If the pastor fails to do this, he is not fully fulfilling his ministry. The first and main fruit of teaching the gospel is, of course, faith in Christ and salvation. But the good works of Christians are also a purpose of teaching the gospel. The apostle Paul urges Titus: "This is what I want you to teach firmly, so that those who have believed in God may be found in a state of good works", Titus 3:8, and soon afterwards (v. 14) again: "But let ours also learn that they may be found in a state of good works where they are needed, so that they may not be unfruitful." The field of good works is a very broad one. But the foremost good work that Christians are called to do in the world is and remains this: "Preach the gospel to every creature! Proclaim the virtues of him who has called you from darkness to his marvelous light. Zion, you preacher, ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, you preacher, lift up your voice with power!" That Christians may do this most important work is the official duty of the preacher. And so that the Christians do this work with understanding, willingly and abundantly, the preacher, as has already been said, is ex officio obliged to constantly draw the attention of the Christians under his command to where the Savior needs their earthly good. Thank God, this happens among us. I have noticed at synods how pastors and church delegates sit with open notebooks and carefully note

down where, in the opinion of those gathered, the Savior wants to use his Christians to further his kingdom. But we cannot and will not deny that we pastors and teachers could become even more complete in acquainting our congregations with the needs of the kingdom of God. The pastor has many obstacles to overcome, both with the congregation and with himself. There are otherwise dear Christians in the church who are willing to stand up for the local needs of their local church, even with large gifts, but are inclined to oppose the pastor as soon as he calls for gifts for the preaching of the gospel in other places. This is an extremely dangerous attitude for the Christians concerned and for the whole church. Christians who think and act in this way deny part of their Christian calling and cause God to measure them with the same measure in church work that they use to measure him in preaching the gospel in other places. This is also proven by the inner history of our synod. If anything is certain to us through experience, it is this: the congregations that have prospered best both internally and externally are those that have been most diligent and zealous for so-called "extra-church purposes". But the pastor also has to overcome obstacles within himself. Dr. Walther used to recommend the following to the candidate class in § 49 of his *Pastorale*: "You may only receive a small salary and therefore worry whether the congregation will provide you with what you need. If you are tempted to stop encouraging giving to missions, teaching institutions, etc., remember that there is a divine nemesis. The church will become increasingly unwilling to give you what you need. And that is a righteous judgment from God, because you are neglecting a part of your ministry." These are sharp but completely true words from Dr. Walther. And they do us pastors and teachers good, provided we still have the flesh on us. So let us not neglect, as much as it is up to us, to familiarize our Christians with the needs of the kingdom of God and to encourage them to give willingly and abundantly! That is the lesson for pastors.

2. But it is also the responsibility of every church member to educate himself about where his Savior needs his gifts. When church deputies at synods have heard about a lack of money in this or that treasury, I have repeatedly heard the reproach from their mouths in public meetings: "Why didn't our pastor tell us that?" Well, we have just heard the lesson for the pastors. But I ask the counter-question: "Why didn't you, as a member of the congregation, inform yourself?" As a Christian, you are obliged to keep your own eyes open. Perhaps you don't even keep a church newspaper, for example [*Der Lutheraner*](#), [*or the Lutheran Witness*] which keeps you up to date with what is going on in the kingdom of God and its needs.

It is not just a small, but a very great deficiency, indeed a disgrace, if there are church members who do not even read a church newspaper. They read secular newspapers that report on daily events and market prices. And that is quite right, because they are also citizens in the kingdom of this world. But because they have been given the grace of being citizens in the kingdom of Christ, they should also be interested enough in this kingdom to keep and eagerly read a magazine that gives news from and about Christ's kingdom. I do not know how the *Lutheraner* is distributed in this district. But I ask the brethren who are present here as deputies of the congregations: When you get home, find out whether there are any members in your congregations who do not yet read a church magazine. If you find such brethren, then speak to them in a friendly manner that you want to catch up as soon as possible. There is no greater joy for Christians, as far as news is concerned, than when they hear about the work in the kingdom, which after all is closer to their hearts than all other things in the world.

The question has repeatedly been raised as to whether wealthy and rich Christians should also be encouraged to give particularly generous gifts. This has been denied here and there and a corresponding practice has been introduced. I have known congregations in which all members entitled to vote gave the same contribution, for example to the congregation's budget. This did not mean much, as the contribution was so small that even the less well-off were not burdened by it. And yet this was an injustice against the wealthier. It is a great injustice against the wealthy if they are not expected to give more of their goods to Christ's kingdom than the less well-off. Also, the wealthy themselves are in danger, because of their evil flesh, of speaking of the same contribution and saying: "It is wonderful that with us, as a rule, only small gifts are given. In other churches, individual kingdoms give large gifts. But we give all Christians the same opportunity and let the widow's mite be honored among us." This speech can conceal self-deception and miserliness. Let every man examine himself! The fact is that Scripture contains a special exhortation to the rich to give. We read, for example, 1 Timothy 6:17 ff: "To the rich of this world I charge them not to be proud, nor to hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they may do good, be rich in good works, giving gladly, being helpful, storing up treasures for themselves a good foundation for the things to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." This exhortation can be found at the end of the first letter to Timothy. The apostle Paul had already finished, already said Amen, v. 16.

But by inspiration of the Holy Spirit he begins anew with a special exhortation for the rich. We in the Missouri Synod are also gradually becoming rich. So, by God's grace, let us also diligently read 1 Tim. 6:17-19 and act accordingly. — We have now exhorted ourselves somewhat abundantly and at length to "financial movement". Will the word of exhortation do any good? Certainly! For Isaiah 33:24 is written of the church in the New Testament: "No inhabitant will say, 'I am weak. For the people who dwell within will have forgiveness of sins.'" We are certain of the forgiveness of our sins through Christ. Therefore we are strong, even financially strong. Let us only beware that we do not make ourselves weak! Let us banish from our midst such talk as: "The rich Catholic Church." According to statistics, Protestants are on average richer in earthly goods than Catholics. In addition, we Lutherans are much, much richer than Catholics in spiritual goods. We are assured of the forgiveness of our sins through the pure Gospel. Thus we are superior to Catholics in two respects. If we do not make ourselves weak, we willingly give more for the Gospel than they are forced to give for the deceit of the papacy. May God grant us this grace! —

This was followed by a discussion about the support fund for old and sick pastors and teachers and their families and surviving dependents. Almost all church communities have their problems with this. Dr. Walther was also very concerned about this matter. He quotes (*Pastorale*, p. 60 [*Pastoral Theology*, p.72-73]) the words of Balduin: "Not only the minister of the Word, but also his family is to be fed, and in such a way that they have enough in sickness and after the death of the husband and father." Walther commented: "Yes, who thinks about that here in America!" In fact, in our country, workers are almost without exception treated quite differently from other workers in the Word and in teaching. A bricklayer, for example, is not paid according to "love", not according to the smallness or size of his family, not according to his momentary needs, but according to the value of his work. It is the same with all other workers. As a rule, their wages are calculated in such a way that, after their labor has been used up, they are provided for in old age. They have been able to save. It should be the same with preachers and teachers. Their salary should not be measured according to what they need at the moment, but according to the work they do, and this work is worth "twofold honor", that is, twofold wages, according to the estimation of Holy Scripture. If this is done, they have money left over for sickness and old age. But in 96 out of 100 cases among us it is probably the case that pastors and teachers live from hand to mouth. When their labor is exhausted, they are indeed destitute. From here

it goes without saying that all churches that have not paid their pastors and teachers according to the value of their work, but only according to their present needs, are guilty before God and man of providing for their former workers in their old age. They are not doing a work of mercy, but of duty.

The congregation also commented on this point: When discussing the support of sick and elderly pastors and teachers and their widows and children, it has often been said in synod meetings that it is first and foremost the duty of relatives to provide for them. Here and there one even finds in the regulations of the support commissions the provision that the responsible commissions should first remind the relatives to care for the elderly pastors and teachers, and that only then should the congregations or the synod begin to provide for them if the relatives are unable or unwilling to do their "duty". This is certainly wrong. At best, provision on the part of the relatives could be claimed in the few cases in which the workers in the Word and in teaching were rewarded according to their work, that is, considered worthy of "twofold honor", and were thus able, like other workers, to communicate to their relatives. In this case, they could expect their relatives to repay them in kind. In the many cases, however, in which the congregations only provided their workers with food and clothing, they should not hand these workers over to their relatives after they have used up their strength. This is neither right before God nor before men. Relatives may, and in some cases will, provide for them. But they should not be required to do so.

Thesis III. [^](#)

The "lay movement" in the Christian walk in general.

Although Christians are primarily to build Christ's kingdom through the Christian proclamation of the Word, it is nevertheless divine order that all Christians should also work diligently for the Christian church at all times through their Christian walk in all circumstances of life.

A conference of sectarian preachers, recently assembled in St. Louis, decided with all votes except one to advertise the activities of their churches in the political newspapers. What is to be made of this? This advertisement is not to be rejected outright if it is done in the right way. Our traveling preachers make use of secular newspapers in many places to advertise the time and place of public services. This "advertising" is within the realm of Christian freedom and wisdom.

But there is an advertisement of the Christian Church that is more important and directly commanded in God's Word, that is, divine order. If Christians omit this "display", they are acting contrary to God's commandment and order, sinning grievously and causing themselves and the Church terrible harm. This is the display of the Christian church through the good walk of Christians, of which it says in Titus 3:14: "Let ours learn that they may be found in a state of good works", and 1 Peter 2:12: "Lead a good walk among the Gentiles." Let us now emphasize individual points.

Christians must prove their faith through good works that can be seen by people. A Christian who walks disorderly and thereby makes his Christianity suspect must not say: "Do not judge me by my works, but by the faith I have in my heart. If you could only see into my heart, you would realize how sincere and strong my faith is." The Christian who speaks in this way should be told: "We cannot and will not look into your heart. Only God can do that. God alone is the heart's revealer. It is virtually forbidden for people to want to look into the heart. But it is God's will and order that you show people your faith through good works." It is not up to the Christian whether he wants to prove his faith with good works or not. In this sense, the letter of James (2:18) states: "Show me your faith with your works", literally translated: from your works. Abraham was justified by his works, namely before men. Scripture teaches two things: 1. we are justified by faith alone without works; 2. we are justified by works alone. We are justified before God by faith alone, Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16. Woe to the man who also wants to be justified before God by works. The Scripture says of such a person Gal 3:10: "Those who walk in the works of the law are under the curse." But before men who cannot see into the heart, we are only justified by works, Luke 7:44-47.

Let us therefore note that we cannot exempt any church member from proving their faith through their works. If a member of the church points out to us the faith he has in his heart, we say to him: "Fine, we cannot see what is in your heart, but you must prove your faith to the church by your works. If your works speak against you, then we cannot and should not consider you a Christian. We Christians are commanded by God to judge you by your works." Of course, the works of Christians are and remain a fragile thing. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But the Holy Spirit gives every Christian so many works that he can prove his faith to his brethren by his works. Even

the thief on the cross proved his faith with his works, although he did not live long after his conversion. He punished the other evildoer, called upon Christ and confessed him as his Savior. When we confess our sin, including our infirmities and shortcomings, ask for forgiveness and promise correction, these works are proof of faith before men. Sin tempts us, it makes us sluggish, but it does not rule us. St. Paul says of Christians in Romans 6:14: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under law but under grace." The proof of faith by works is therefore divine order, Titus 3:14: "Let ours learn to be found in a state of good works where they are needed." 1 Peter 2:12: "Lead a good walk among the Gentiles." V. 15: "This is the will of God, that you should fill up the ignorance of foolish men with goodness." Titus (Tit. 2:1 ff.) is to urge all ages and classes: old men and old women, young men and young women, masters and servants, to a godly walk "so that they may adorn the teaching of their God, our Savior, in all things".

Scripture goes even further with regard to the "lay movement" in its walk. God not only wants us to show good works in ourselves for the recommendation of the Church, but we are to pursue good works with the greatest seriousness and zeal. "No easy-going" in this respect! Scripture punishes Christians who play around with regard to the Christian walk. Rather, they are to be diligent, literally translated: zealous, zealots, in good works, Titus 2:14; they are to "always pursue what is good, both among themselves and toward everyone," 1 Thessalonians 5:15. This is related to how Christians are to treat the old Adam, the sinful flesh that still clings to them. They are to kill the members that are on earth, Col. 3:5, 6; crucify the flesh, Gal. 5:24; they are to die to sin in order to live to God, Rom. 6:11. The most powerful word in relation to the divine order of the ruthless killing of the flesh was probably spoken by the Savior when He used the powerful words of cutting off hands and feet and plucking out eyes in Mark 9:43-47.

Christians owe this to themselves, their brethren and the world.

a. To themselves. Christians fall from the faith if they are not diligent in good works. Good works do not sustain faith. Faith is produced and maintained solely by the work of the Holy Spirit in the gospel. "By the power of God you will be saved for salvation through faith", 1 Peter 1:5, but evil works destroy faith, and the omission of good works puts faith in danger. Through faith, the Holy Spirit has entered our hearts and continually warns us

from within: "You must serve your God and walk carefully. With regard to evil he says: You must not do that, and with regard to good he admonishes: You should do that. If we do not listen to the Holy Spirit, ignore his warning against evil works and disregard his admonition to do good works, then the Holy Spirit is grieved and departs from our hearts. It is therefore a very dangerous thing when Christians lack holy earnestness in their walk.

And there is another point to consider as to why we Christians owe it to ourselves to be diligent in good works. According to God's will, we Christians should have an outward divine testimony in our good works that we are God's children. We can distinguish a double testimony of the Holy Spirit for our Christian status: 1. the inner testimony. We have the inner witness in that the Holy Spirit has worked faith in our hearts in our dear Savior or the Gospel. The faith in our hearts is the affirmation of the gospel of God wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. "God's testimony is that which he has begotten of his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has such a testimony with him," that is, in himself, 1 John 5:9-10. 2. The outward testimony. We have the outward witness of the Holy Spirit in that the Holy Spirit produces tangible fruits of faith and moves us to good works. By our good works we then realize that we are God's children. When I realize that I enjoy listening to God's Word, I have a testimony issued by the Holy Spirit: you are a child of God. For only the children of God have love for God's Word, John 8:47. We also have a testimony of the Holy Spirit in our love for the brethren, for the Scripture says: "We know that we have come from death into life, because we love the brethren," 1 John 3:14. The fact that we all so often doubt our state of grace is also due to the fact that we are so little concerned with our works. Whoever is constantly eyeing the world, is stingy, gives nothing for the kingdom of God, his works tell him: You are actually a hopeless person.

A wonderful statement by Luther about the fact that we should not only prove our faith to the world with our works, but also to ourselves, may find a place here. Luther writes: "Set the works so that they are a certain sign and pressed like a seal on a letter, so that I may be sure that faith is right. Cause: If I feel in my heart that the work flows from love, then I am sure that my faith is righteous. If I forgive, forgiveness makes me certain that my faith is righteous, and assures and proves my faith that God has forgiven me and forgives me daily; but if I do not forgive, I may conclude that I lack faith. So it was with Abraham; the work made his faith known to him.

God knew that he believed, but he also had to know it and prove his faith. Therefore the works are henceforth only the free fruits and evidence of such faith. For what good would it do me if I already had a strong faith if I did not know it? As if I had a treasure chest full of florins and did not know it, it would be of no use to me; but if someone revealed it to me, he would do me as much service as if he had given it to me. So even if I have faith and do not know it, it is of no use to me. Therefore it must break forth and be made known to me through the works that follow; these then are signs and seals that faith is there. This is also what St. Peter means when he says in 2 Peter 1:10-11 about the works of love and the virtues of faith: 'Therefore, brethren, make every effort to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will not fall, and so the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you. He does not say, 'Do good works that you may be called, but that you may make your calling sure. (St. L. XI, 1277 f.)

This genuinely biblical teaching has also been incorporated into our Lutheran Confessions. It says in the Apology, (Latin text) [Art. III; [Triglotta, p. 199](#)]: "Christ often attaches the promise of forgiveness of sins to good works; not that he intended good works to be a propitiation, for they follow reconciliation, but for two causes. One cause is because they must necessarily follow as good fruits. He therefore warns us that repentance is hypocrisy and conceited if it is not followed by good fruits. The other reason is that we need to have outward signs of such a great promise, because the fearful conscience needs multiple consolations. Therefore, just as Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs that continually remind, lift up, and assure the fearful spirit that it may believe all the more firmly in the forgiveness of sins, so also the same promise is written and painted on good works, that these works may remind us to believe all the more firmly."

b. We also owe our brethren a devout Christian walk. Let us be mindful of our brethren in our walk! Oh, how earnestly the apostle speaks on this point! Every time we give offense to a brother through evil conduct, so that he is in danger of falling, we are busy destroying a work of the Holy Spirit, corrupting the temple of God which God has built up in the hearts of the brethren through faith. And whoever corrupts the temple of God, God will corrupt him, says the Apostle 1 Cor. 3:17. What the Savior says about giving offense to the children is particularly striking. "But whosoever shall offend one of the least of these that believe on me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matthew 18:6.

On the other hand, it is God's will that we so conduct ourselves in word and deed that it may be for the edification of all brethren, great and small, Ephesians 4:29.

c. But we also owe the world a pious walk. The world has no judgment of the gospel. The gospel is a hidden mystery to the world. But the world has a judgment on the walk of Christians. The world still knows to some extent how a person should walk according to the law of God. It knows that a person should honor his parents, not harm his neighbor in body, life, property or honor and should be faithful, reliable and diligent in all activities. In all these works, Christians should walk in such a way that their good conduct will attract attention and cause the world to question the source of this conduct. "This alienates them, that you do not walk with them in the same desolate and disorderly way", 1 Peter 4:4. Through the conduct of Christian women, those who do not yet believe the word of the gospel are to be won, 1 Pet. 3:1 ff. Luther: "From this it is easy to see that Christ does not teach here to become pious and righteous by works, but exhorts those who are already pious and righteous to be merciful like their heavenly Father, etc., so that the Gentiles may be improved thereby, and thus attract the unbelievers with their merciful and innocent life, that they may be converted and improved not only by their preaching, but also by their good walk." (St. L. XI, 1288.) The good conduct of Christians towards the world has been compared to the ringing of bells. The ringing of bells in our churches does not convert people, but rather calls them to church to hear the Word of God. The bells thus become the cause that people hear God's Word and come to faith through the Word. It is the same with the walk of Christians. No one is converted by the way Christians walk. But by the fact that Christians shine as lights in this world with their walk, so that the world must say: They walk quite differently from us — by this the world becomes aware of the Christian church, is drawn to the Word, and the Word can now exercise its saving power. In this way the walk of Christians should be in the service of the Church of God. This is divine order.

That is why the admonition now applies to us all: Let us watch how we walk! Let us walk in such a way that we do not harm the Christian Church through our walk, but on the contrary, that our walk is an "advertisement" of the Christian Church, printed in large letters and legible from afar. Yes, God grant us grace that we may keep to God's order in our diligent and faithful preaching of the Word, in our willing and abundant giving for the Gospel and in our careful Christian walk in general!