

# THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY

C. F. W. Walther

## Translator's Preface

For almost 50 years, C. F. W. Walther was the leading voice of confessional Lutheranism in America. The influence of Walther, "the American Luther," was felt around the globe through his writings and synodical publications. He shaped generations of Lutheran pastors inside and outside of the Missouri Synod. This leader and theologian, however, left no comprehensive dogmatics book from his own pen. The closest Walther came to doing so was in 1879 when he published a new edition of Johann Wilhelm Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* for use as his dogmatics textbook at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Walther took the concise summary theses of Baier and annotated them with German and Latin quotations from sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians. At times Walther included quotations from more recent Lutheran writers. While Walther's comments on these quotations are seldom included in the three volumes he published, these quotations provide a window into his classroom since he used them as illustrations in his teaching. In 1899 one of his students, Theodore Buenger, published an additional volume of indices with a section of Baier's statements which Walther did not approve. Some of these "corrections" refer to Walther's classroom lectures. Throughout the *Compendium* Walther leads the reader to see not merely what Lutherans have written, but how they have answered the challenges of their day with God's Word. Every quotation was chosen by Walther and merits attention. The translation presented here is chapter fourteen, *De Ministerio Ecclesiastico*, from volume three of J. W. Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, edited and annotated by C. F. W. Walther, St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag., 1879. This edition from Walther was based on Baier's third edition, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, Jena: Oehrling, 1694.

A few comments about this translation are in order. Although some classic Lutheran works are now available in English, everything within this chapter has been freshly translated. ("Plow with your own heifer" remains timeless advice.) This includes statements from the Lutheran Confessions, Luther, and Chemnitz. For the Lutheran Confessions, the *Concordia Triglotta* references are listed for cross-reference purposes. The American Edition of Luther's Works (LW) and the

English translation of Martin Chemnitz's *Examination of the Council of Trent* (CPH Kramer) are also noted where appropriate.

Occasionally Walther inserts a comment before or within a quotation. All quotations have been enclosed by quotation marks, and Walther's comments are placed outside of the quotation marks. This formatting follows the 1879 edition of Baier-Walther, as the italics within the translation also do. Additions by the translator have been indicated with brackets [ ] where necessary. The paragraph headings were created by the translator. They serve as a brief summary of each section and are listed on the contents page. The letters of the alphabet in the introductory paragraphs of each section serve as a kind of footnote system which points to the explanatory comments which follow.

I pray this work will lead the reader to seek out the sources and, above all, soak in the scriptural theology of our Lutheran heritage. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

*Benjamin P. Schaefer*

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### Editor's Preface

This abridgement in the *Quarterly* contains about 60% of the material from this chapter of the *Compendium*. The full chapter can be downloaded from the online essay file of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary library. It is filed under the author name of Walther and the topic "ministry." In studying this abridgement or the full edition, readers should take special note of the issues that are still much discussed today: the distinction between ministry in the abstract and ministry in the concrete (Section 1), the recognition that individual, local congregations share the right to establish the ministry with the community of churches, not to the exclusion of the community of churches (Section 4), and references to forms of ministry (Sections 7 and 11). The dogmaticians of the 17th century were not clear on the roles of church and state, so Walther questions some of their views on this matter (Sections 6 and 7). The numbered footnotes are by the translator, those with small Greek letters are comments by the *WLQ* editor, flagging key issues.

Neither the translator nor the *Quarterly* is endorsing every opinion in every quotation (nor did Walther) but they are offered for study and evaluation.



## Part One: The Essence of the Ministry

### § 1. The Necessity of the Ministry

It is necessary for the a) gathering and preservation of the church that certain human beings perform the office<sup>1</sup> of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments, b) so that faith is conferred on humans through these means and, once given, it is strengthened and increased. This is c) that office which is called the *church's ministry*.

a) Surely *God is able without means* to illumine humans anywhere and to confer faith on them, to maintain and to strengthen the faith which has been given. But *it pleased him to prescribe an order, a means*, and a use of these means for the purpose of acquiring faith by his grace. Therefore he willed that the revelation, which was made to a few directly, is not only offered and publicized to many by the ministry of these and others who would follow after them, but he also willed that those things, which we must believe and do, are declared and instilled, set forth according to the capacity and station of various people, and established and defended from corruptions. From this especially, the necessity of the church's ministry is also easily recognized because the doctrine of faith exceeds the capacity of human reason and ought to be learned from Holy Scripture alone, although the light of reason teaches in a certain manner the necessity of entrusting the holy office to certain persons, and heathens to some degree recognize this fact. Confer the sainted Musaeus, *A Refutation of the Writings from Certain Sects*, p. 54, 66. In addition, his "Tract on the Church," Part II, Disputation I, § 36, p. 16, 17.

LUTHER: "Here it is remarkable to note, although God speaks with Paul from heaven, he *certainly does not want to abolish the preaching office, nor does he want to make someone an isolated individual, but directs Paul into the city to the pulpit or clergyman. There he should hear and learn what there is to learn.* God wills that we should go in and hear the gospel from those who preach. There one should find it, *and nowhere else.* . . . Therefore Paul comes to the knowledge of Christ and of the Word through Ananias. He must receive his light from the little match Ananias, who didn't compare with Paul and was like a candle to the sun. Such is noteworthy in

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<sup>1</sup>The Latin term *officium* and its synonym *munus* will be translated with the terms "office" and "duty, function," as appropriate to context. The office is a combination of duties and attributes, which have been established by God. The office itself is not a concrete entity, but an abstraction. It is truly a concept in the mind of God and Holy Scripture, but Christ entrusts the office through his church to suitable individuals. They are the concrete entities. Throughout this section of Baier-Walther, there is no attempt to establish dogmatically one form of the ministry. A number of forms (Latin: *gradus*) and duties (*officia*) are listed, especially in quotations from Luther. This chapter supports the view that Walther's doctrine of the church's ministry does not disagree with the public doctrine of the WELS.

this history, that we might learn to think highly of the preaching office. For here it stands loud and clear, that Paul, the great teacher, received his understanding through the little teacher, Ananias." (*House Postil*, "The Festival of the Conversion of Paul," Walch Edition, Book XIII, p. 2528ff.)

LUTHER: "Indeed, many come out and say: 'Why do we need more pastors and preachers? Couldn't we just read [the Word] at home?' So, they go out and they don't even read the Word at home. Or when they do in fact read it at home, thus *it is still not so fruitful, nor so powerful, as the Word is through public preaching and the mouth of the preacher*; whom God has called there and arranged it that he should preach and teach the Word to you." (*House Postil*, 8th Sunday after Trinity. XIII, p. 1816-17)

LUTHER: It could happen that the world will become so completely epicurean that there will be no public pulpit in all the world and the public speech will be an empty, epicurean abomination—but the gospel would be preserved in homes only by the head of the house. This would be like the time between the words of Christ on the cross: 'It is finished' and 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' For just as Christ, after such completion, still would live a little longer, so also the church could remain for a little bit after the public silencing of the gospel" (Preface to the Prophet Daniel, VI, p. 1487ff.)

### Ministry Abstract and Concrete

L. HARTMANN: "The term *'the Ministry'* can be used in two ways: 1) *abstractly*, it refers to the station itself, namely the very office subject to Christian reflection. This is the way the Augsburg Confession presents it in Article 5, *Concerning the Ministry*; 2) *concretely*, it refers to the persons, who are engaged in this holy office. This is the way Article 14 of the Augsburg Confession presents this theme, namely that no one ought to teach publicly in the church or to administer the sacraments unless he is legitimately called." (*Pastorale Evangel.*, p. 25)<sup>a</sup>

AUGSBURG CONFESSION: "*The ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted* that we may obtain this faith. For through the Word and the sacraments as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given. He works faith, when and where it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel. That is to say that God, not on account of our merit, but on account of Christ, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace on account of Christ. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Spirit comes to men without the external Word through their own preparations and works." (*Triglotta* p. 45, Art. 5, para. 1-4)

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<sup>a</sup>Notice that the *Compendium* recognizes both the abstract and concrete use of the term ministry. Note especially the understanding of AC V.

B. MENTZER: "This fifth article [of the AC] was taken from the 7th chapter within those 17 [Torgau Articles], in which Dr. Luther embraced the Christian doctrine not much before the Augsburg assembly. His words are in Book 5 Jena Edition (folio 15, p.1, edit.a.75): 'To obtain such faith or to give it to us men, God has established *the preaching office or spoken Word*, namely the gospel, through which he allows such faith and his power, advantage, and fruit to be proclaimed, and gives also through the same, as through means, faith with his Holy Spirit, how and where he wants. Apart from it, there is no other means or method, neither road nor path, to obtain faith. Therefore, any thoughts outside of and previous to the spoken Word, no matter how holy or good they appear, are still empty lies and errors.'" (*Interpretation of the Augsburg Confession*, Ed. 3, p. 221ff.)

FORMULA OF CONCORD: "We also condemn the Schwenkfeldian errors, which teach: . . . that the *church's ministry, that is, the preached and heard Word of God*,<sup>β</sup> is not a means or an instrument, by which God the Holy Spirit teaches men and through which he gives to them the true knowledge of Christ." (*Triglotta* p. 1101, Art. 12, para. 28, 30)

GERHARD: "The fact that Romans 10:17 says 'faith comes *from hearing*,' is not to be understood exclusively, that the hearing of the preached word is opposed to the reading of the written word. But we must understand this inclusively, that God has established as effective for faith and salvation not only the Word heard but also *read*, since the same is and remains the Word whether it is preached or heard, whether it is written or read. Consequently, John notably says regarding the gospel history that has been put in writing, and therefore, regarding the whole Old and New Testaments: 'These things are written, that you may believe,' (Jn 20:31), and 'We write these things to you that your joy may be complete,' (1 Jn 1:14). Therefore, it is also possible to draw out faith and spiritual joy and consequently eternal life, from the *written* Word of God translated for our use in *reading and meditation*.'" ("Exegetical Locus on Holy Scripture", § 364)

b) Namely it is *in their use* that they are established as those means of salvation. The seed of the word is sowed in the field of the church. Baptism (also known as the sacrament of initiation) produces spiritual children of Christ in the church, and the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is given to more full-grown children for the strengthening of faith and spiritual nourishment of the soul. Cf. Musaeus "On the Church," loc. cit.

c) Thus the apostolic office is called διακονία (Acts 1:17; 6:4; 20:19; Rom 11:13; 2 Cor 3:8, 9). Paul also calls others ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ καὶ

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<sup>β</sup>"Ministry" here is clearly the means of grace itself.

οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ (1 Cor 4:1). Elsewhere he calls himself δοῦλον Χριστοῦ (Tit 1:1).

SMALCALD ARTICLES: "In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul makes all church servants equal and teaches that the church is above the servants (*ecclesiam esse supra ministros*). Therefore one cannot say with any truth that Peter would have had sole superiority or power over the church and all other church servants before the other apostles. For he spoke in this way: 'All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas,' that is, *may neither Peter nor other servants of the Word assign to themselves sole power or superiority over the church.*" ("Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope," Triglotta p. 507)

GRAUER: "The church order is called the *ministry* because it is not some civil lordship, as the popes falsely imagine. For Christ expressly prohibits lordship for servants of the church (Lk 22:26). Nowhere in Holy Scripture are they called lords of the church, but watchmen, planters, water-ers, *servants* etc. Each and every one of these titles indicates that the duty of this class is not to rule in the church but to serve. Accordingly it is also called the church's *ministry.*" ("Preface on the Augsburg Confession," Ed. IV, p. 1138)

GRAUER: "Our pastors are incorrectly called priests, because there is not an external sacrifice among us. Where there is not an external sacrifice, properly mentioned in this way, there are no priests. The custom indeed continues in our churches that preachers are called 'priests,' but improperly, since today in the New Testament no external sacrifice is held." ("Preface on the Augsburg Confession." Ed. IV, p. 763)

LUTHER: "For this reason also the Holy Spirit in the New Testament diligently prevented the name *sacerdos*, priest or cleric, from being given to any apostle or to various other offices, but it is solely the name of the baptized or of Christians as a hereditary name with which one is born through baptism. For none of us is born through baptism as an apostle, preacher, teacher, or pastor, but we are all born simply as priests and clerics. Afterward, some are taken from the ranks of those born clerics and called or elected to these offices, which they are to discharge *on behalf of all of us* . . . However, one should, I think, excuse the fathers for the fact that they called those who had been set apart *sacerdotes* [priests] and that the name thus became common usage, and for many other matters. If their consecration and ordination had been retained, then the name would have done no damage, for they set apart *pastors*. But the Abomination retained the name, because it was so glorious, and abandoned the fathers' consecration. In exchange for it, it set up its private consecration and thereby disgracefully devastated and destroyed our true priesthood and baptism." ("The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests" XIX, p.1536ff.) [LW vol. 38, p. 188-189]

LUTHER: "It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is truly a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need be intimidated by it because of this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. . . . *Therefore, when a bishop consecrates it is nothing else than that, in the place and stead of the whole community, all of whom have like power, he takes a person and charges him to exercise this power on behalf of the others. It is like ten brothers, all king's sons and equal heirs, choosing one of them to rule the inheritance in the interests of all. In one sense they are all kings and of equal power, and yet one of them is charged with the responsibility of ruling.* To put it still more clearly: suppose a group of earnest Christian laymen were taken prisoner and set down in a desert without a priest among them ordained by a bishop. And suppose they were to come to a common mind then and there in the desert and elect one of their number, whether he were married or not, and commit to him the duty to baptize, say mass, pronounce absolution, and preach the gospel. Such a man would be as truly a priest as if he had been ordained by all the bishops and popes in the world. *That is why in a case of necessity anyone can baptize and give absolution. This would be impossible if we were not all priests.*" ("To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," 1520. X, p. 302ff.) [LW 44:127]

## § 2. The Creator of the Ministry

The **a)** main effecting cause of the church's ministry, both **b)** in itself and **c)** by reason of the ministers who perform it is **d)** God, **e)** the Triune God, and **f)** Christ θεάνθρωπος [God-man].

**a)** The main effecting cause is the one to whom sufficient power or strength belongs for *establishing* the ministry and *committing* it to certain people and also for bestowing a good result or *producing* spiritual fruit through it.

**b)** To be sure, there is an *estate (status)* of ministers, instituted and set apart with a sure rationale. In this respect ["ministry"] is viewed *abstractly*.

**c)** Or as far as it is considered *concretely* from the side of humans by whom this office ought to be performed and conducted.

**d)** For it belongs to him who is the *Author of Grace* to set apart *the office*, by which the means of grace are applied to humans. At this point we bear in mind 1) that God *revealed* what things pertain to carrying out this ministry rightly, for example, what we must preach as doctrine (Gal 1:8,9,12), what things are suitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting morals and training (2 Tim 3:14ff.), what things are *sacraments*, and how they are to be administered (1 Cor 11:23, etc.); and 2) that God

*gives* this office to *particular* persons or sends humans for the purpose of performing it (see Ps 68:12; Matt 9:38; Lk 10:2), which they sometimes label as a *calling* (according to Rom 1:1 and Heb 5:4); and 3) that it agrees with the actions of servants (1 Cor 3:5ff.).

APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION: "God has established and commanded the preaching office and it has God's glorious promise (Rom 1:16), 'The Gospel is the power of God to all who believe' etc. and (Is 55:11), 'The Word which goes out from my mouth shall not return to me empty, but it shall do what pleases me.'" (*Triglotta* p. 311, Art. XIII, para. 12, 13)

LUTHER: "I truly hope that believers and whoever wants to be called a Christian knows very well *that the spiritual estate has been established and instituted by God*, not with gold or silver but with the precious blood and bitter death of his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For the sacraments truly flow from his wounds (as they often depict on written documents with art). He paid dearly that people everywhere might have such an office, to preach, baptize, loose, bind, give the sacrament, comfort, warn, and exhort with God's Word, and whatever else belongs *to the office of caretaker of souls* . . . I am not thinking, however, of the spiritual estate in the monastic houses and the foundations . . . But *I am thinking rather of the estate, which has the preaching office and the service of the Word and the Sacraments*, which gives the Spirit and salvation, blessings which cannot be attained by any amount of pomp and pageantry. It is, for example, *the pastoral office, teachers, preachers, lectors, priests (whom people call chaplains), sacristans, schoolmasters, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons*. This estate the Scriptures highly exalt and praise . . . Now if it is true and certain that God himself has established and instituted the spiritual estate with his own blood and death, we may conclude that he will have it highly honored. He will not allow it to be destroyed or to die out, but will have it maintained until the Last Day. For the gospel and the church must remain until the Last Day, as Christ says in Matthew 28:20: 'Behold, I am with you always to the end of the world.'" ("A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," 1530. X, p. 488ff.) [LW 46:219-222]<sup>7</sup>

e) For this is an *opus ad extra* [activity outside the Godhead]. So Paul attributes his calling to God the Father and Jesus Christ (Gal 1:1), but he elsewhere teaches that *the Holy Spirit establishes overseers to shepherd the church of God* (Acts 20:28). Cf. 1 Cor 12:4-11.

f) Certainly not only as God but also as man, [Jesus] determines the parts of this office and entrusts it to particular humans and works effectively. (See Matt 28:19ff; Mk 16:15; Eph 4:11, 12)

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<sup>7</sup>Note the clear reference to forms in addition to the pastoral office. This category is quite open-ended.



### § 3. The Call into the Ministry

However, God sometimes calls people to an ecclesiastical office **a) immediately** or **b) without any arbitrating, mediating works of other people**, and sometimes **c) mediately** through the church, which commits that office to certain persons **d) in the name of God**. Consequently, when this happens, the church is able to be called the *lesser principal* cause of the calling of ministers.

LUTHER: "The keys belong to the whole community of all Christians and to every individual, who is a member of the same community. This is the same not only according to power, but also according to use and any way there could possibly be, so that we add no power to the words of Christ who directly and usually speaks to all: 'He should be to you' etc. [Matt 18:17] Likewise: 'Whatever you bind,' etc. [Matt 18:18]. I would treat also the phrase, which Christ had spoken to St. Peter alone, here as a confirmation, 'To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Likewise, Matthew 18:19, 'Where two become one on earth,' and verse 20, 'Where two are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' In this saying the all-perfect right and use is appropriated and affirmed on the most thorough [basis] that they are permitted to bind and loose. It would then follow that we were promised the right and the use of the keys by Christ himself, when he dwells in the midst of two people." ("Open Letter to the Council and Congregation of the City of Prague," Book X, p. 1847) [LW 40:27]<sup>6</sup>

LUTHER: "(Matt 18:19,20) In this passage we hear that also two or three, gathered in the name of Christ, have a power completely equal to Peter and the Apostles. For the Lord himself is there, as he also says in John 14:23, 'Who loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make a home with him.' Hence it has happened that often one man who believes in Christ has stood against an entire crowd,<sup>6</sup> as Paphnutius at the Council of Nicaea, and the prophets stood against the kings, priests, and all the people of Israel. In short, God will not be bound by numbers, greatness, importance, power, or whatever is personal in people, but wants only to be with those who love and keep his Word, even if they should be mere stable boys. What does he care about high, great, powerful lords? He alone is the greatest, highest and most powerful . . . We have here the Lord himself over all angels and creatures who says, *they shall all have the same power, keys and office, even two simple Christians gathered in his name*. The pope and all devils shall not make this Lord into a fool, liar, and a drunkard. On the contrary, we will trample the pope under foot and say he is a desperate liar, blasphemous, and idola-

<sup>6</sup>The keys are given to every Christian not only for delegation but for use.

<sup>6</sup>Luther modestly fails to mention himself at Worms.

trous devil, who has snatched the keys for himself in the name of St. Peter, though Christ has given them to all equally in common." ("Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil," 1545. XVII, p. 1346ff.) [LW 41:317-318]

LYSER: "When the power of binding and loosing was promised to Peter in Matthew 16:19 and entrusted to all the apostles in John 20:23, in this way Christ gave it to the church, which ordinarily is able to grant this power to individuals legitimately called for this purpose. However, any and every true member of the church has the same right and is able to use that power to the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbor outside of the ordinary way and in cases of necessity." (*Harmony of the Gospels* on Matt 18:18. I, p. 1748)

LYSER: "Christ left to the church the keys of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 18:18. In this particular matter we do not worry about the sneers and ridicules of the Jesuits who claim: 'Therefore, among you Evangelicals every shoemaker, farmer, cook and common laborer has and exercises the right of the keys. Thus you have erected Babylon itself and introduced a confusion of all matters.' We respond: Who will deny that in a case of necessity any one of the believers is able to baptize another believer, teach, absolve from sin, and thus to reveal heavenly citizenship to that person? The church has always made an exception out of this case of necessity, as Jerome testified against the Luciferians and Augustine to Fortunatus. But outside the case of necessity none of these is permitted for anyone, unless he is the legitimately called and established minister of the church. For this militates against the divine rule: 'How will they preach, unless they have been sent?' (Rom 10:15). Likewise in Jeremiah 23:21: 'They are running, but I did not send them.'" (Loc. cit. p. 1620ff.)

BALDUIN: "The church is the bride of Christ (Jn 3:29) and his wife (Ps 45:10) and the matron in his house (Ps 68:13). Therefore, just as the keys of the house are given by the master to the matron, thus also Christ the Master of his house, the church, gave the keys to his bride, who *gives them over*<sup>2</sup> to her ministers who are called stewards or managers of the mysteries of God." (*Treatise on Cases of Conscience*, p. 1104)

#### § 4. The Power to Set Up Ministers

This right or power to establish ministers also belongs to a) *individual* churches separated from the community of other churches, including those separated b) by an unjust *excommunication*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Baier-Walther reads *omittit*, an obvious misprint for *committit* (cf. the first edition of Friedrich Balduin, *Tractus luculentus . . . casibus nimirum conscientiae*, Wittenberg: Paul Helwig, 1628, p. 1104).

<sup>5</sup>The right to establish ministers is not given exclusively to local congregations. It is *also* given to local congregations, as it belongs to the whole church.

a) For those things are conceded in an orderly way to the *universal* church according to the *common goal*, which is spiritual edification. *Individual* churches, through which the universal church should be built up and as far as they belong to the universal church, correctly lay claim to those things for themselves. Confer the sainted Musaeus Part II, "On the Church," Disputation III, § 7ff., p. 166ff.

b) For churches *do not cease being true churches* through the unjust excommunication they suffer. Therefore, they do not lose the rights which are appropriate for all true churches of Christ. Confer Musaeus, loc. cit., Disp. IV, § 35, p. 318-319.

LUTHER: "We also confess that there is much Christian good under the papacy. Indeed, all Christian good exists there and has come to us from there. For instance, we confess that in the papacy there are the true Holy Scriptures, the true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true keys for the forgiveness of sins, the true preaching office, the true catechism, such as the Ten Commandments, the articles of the creed, and Lord's Prayer. Likewise, the pope in turn admits that we (though he condemns us as heretics) and all heretics, have the Holy Scriptures, baptism, the keys, the catechism, and so on. . . . If Christendom is now under the pope, it is truly the body of Christ and a member of the body. If it is his body, then it has the true Spirit, gospel, faith, baptism, Sacrament, keys, *the office of the ministry*, prayer, holy Scripture, and everything that Christendom should have . . . . Therefore, the talk of the Anabaptists and enthusiasts is nothing when they say, 'Whatever the pope does is wrong,' or, 'Because this or that happened in the papacy, we want something different.'" ("Letter on Rebaptism," 1528. XVII, p. 1647-1648ff.) [LW 40:231-234]

BALDUIN: "Wherever there is a certain church which has baptism complete in its essential parts, some part of the divine word, such as the gospels and Sunday epistles, the Passion history, and the Apostles Creed, there also the true ordination to the ministry can exist, even if it has been corrupted as far as the external rites are concerned, provided that it is left complete in its essential parts." (*Tract on Cases of Conscience*, p. 1040, 1041, 1042ff.)

## § 5. The Components of the Call

*Three things* come together for the ministers' *call*, which is done mediately by the church: First, there is **a)** the *election* or judgment concerning the worthiness of the person applying to the holy ministry, with an evaluation of the learning and the gifts necessary to correctly perform the acts of the office and of the person's disposition to the ministry. Second, there is **b)** the *ordination* or the elected person's solemn installation to the holy office, done through certain rites. Third, there is **c)** the *call* (so mentioned in a special way) or the con-

cession of the power and the entrusting of the function to teach the word of God in public gatherings and administer the sacraments.

c) This is customarily done today through *call letters* as they say.

### § 6. The Church and Secular Arrangement

For these things to happen, **a)** two institutions must work together in different ways. They are **b)** *the ecclesiastical order* and **c)** *the secular order*. **d)** *The former* must examine the learning and the other necessary gifts of the person being chosen and pass judgment on them; then **e)** they ordain the designated or elected person in a customary rite. **f)** The ecclesiastical order does both things in the name of the church. *The secular* order usually is content with the judgment of the ecclesiastical order concerning the ability of a person. But if, **g)** upon hearing a preacher, the secular order correctly points out something about his outward gifts and **h)** purity of doctrine and **i)** the way he lives, those comments deserve attention. The secular, *acting jointly* with the ecclesiastical order, designates or elects a person to the ministry, and thus with unanimous consent **k)** confers on the chosen person the power of teaching the Word and administering the sacraments.

**a)** For although the arrangement of ministers belongs to the *whole church per se* and *by its nature*, yet since the *parts* which make up the church are diverse, thus what belongs to each ought to be left to *that one* as far as things required for the arrangement of the ministry.

KROMAYER: "Through the term 'church' clergy and laymen are understood together. The papalists and the hierarchical Anglicans agree with us concerning the clergy, although the former distribute church power from the pope into the remaining members of the church, the latter from the bishops alone. On behalf of the laymen we thus prove: from whom a judgment is required for setting up a deacon (who is distinguished from the shepherd of souls in the expression of the ancient church), from those a judgment is much more required to call a pastor. But now the judgment of the laymen [is required to set up deacons, and therefore, also pastors.] See 1 Corinthians 16:2. Also see the sainted Huelsemann Brev. chapter 19, thesis 5, *Because of this right no one is able to withhold [anything] from these estates*. For whoever cannot give up the discernment of doctrine in general to the pastor or leader is much less able to transfer to them the discerning judgment concerning his future pastor. But now the laymen [cannot give up the discernment]. See Matthew 7:15 and 1 John 4:1." (*Theologia Positivo-Polemica*, II, 531)

**b)** This they commonly call *the clergy*, but not so much by the power of the words of Scripture, (which denotes the church or the assembly of believers by this term) as by ecclesiastical custom.

c) Or *political*, which certainly includes within its definition both magistrate and people.

d) To the degree that the examinations of those who are to be ordained are conducted in this matter and are rightly permitted by the calling body, to that degree they succeed.

It happens in a similar manner whether he who carries out the rite of ordination is a *bishop* or a *priest*. For bishop and priest *do not differ* according to *divine right*, as is clear from Acts 20:17,28 and 1 Peter 5:1,2. Ordination could also be carried out when a minister of some church in which there are not many other ministers, or possibly because of other reasons, is ordained at *other* places (e.g., in schools and colleges of ministers of another church). There it is enough when the church, which he is ready to serve, has investigated the *ικανότητος* [capability] and shown the clear testimonies for ordination.

HUELSEMANN: "In a case of necessity not only a priest, but also elders of any particular church can ordain others, because the power of ordaining does not belong to one member of the church, e.g., to the bishop, because of a measure of *quality* or permanent character, but because of a measure of *commission and transitory power*, such as an agent or manager of businessmen receives from his overseer. This is most clear from every word in 2 Timothy 2:2, "What you have heard from me, ταῦτα παράθου, entrust these things, commit these things to others, that they also may teach others." (*Lectures on the Book of Concord*, p. 838)

GRAUER: "The papalists will press that a church cannot exist if orthodox bishops do not follow in the same ordinary, continual, and uninterrupted *succession* one after another. But truly this is most false, as is shown more broadly in the locus concerning the church. For the church can be preserved by the Holy Spirit through a corrupt ministry. This was not only done in the Old Testament at the time of Aaron, Elijah, and John the Baptist, but also in the New Testament, chiefly at the time when the church was forced to flee into the desert because of the persecution of tyrants. Therefore, the papalists themselves are not able to demonstrate that kind of succession in their church. Indeed you see that I am not pressing this matter because the papalists differ greatly in numbering Roman popes and cannot show with certainty who was the second or third or fourth pope. Thus Bartholomaeus Garanza, a papal writer, leaves a judgment to the will of the reader in this very perplexing matter. The papalists are never able to prove that all those popes and bishops whom they number from the apostles' time up to this day always and in all things believed and taught the same as the apostles believed and taught. Therefore, if the papalists were able to set forth a personal and local succession chiefly among their bishops, yet they would never be able to demonstrate a continual and uninterrupted succession. (The Greeks today could prove more

definitively their succession than the papalists, because the evangelist John taught in Asia.) Therefore, as we conclude this argument, let us say that the succession of the faith or doctrine is enough in the legitimate and true calling of the church's ministers. The continual, personal succession cannot be proved, however, nor can any other kind in which there always have been orthodox teachers." (*Lectures on the Augsburg Confession*, Ed. 4, p. 765ff.)

BALDUIN: "Is someone able to be admitted to ordination who has not yet been called to some particular ecclesiastical office? I respond: No. For ordination is the confirmation of the call. Therefore, when the call is lacking, ordination cannot have a place. Accordingly the custom of the Geneva church justly incurs blame, when those instructed in theology are sent into France and placed in charge of churches, although no church called them. For no church has the power to send ministers to another which does not give consent in its calling, lest someone is sent to those who don't want him." (*Tract on Cases of Conscience*, p. 1045ff.)

f) Certainly this is done by the power conceded from the church itself. Accordingly ordination is also customarily carried out in an assembly of the church with the crowd of believers adding their prayers.

BALDUIN: "The ordination of ministers of the Word is in the possession of the *church*, but she *executes* this right through her ministry. The management of its performance is exercised through the bishop or the inspector of the church not with a regard for some superiority, which he does not have by divine right, but with a regard for order and εὐχημοσύνης [decorum], just as the church arranges according to her freedom." ("Disputation concerning chapter 1 of Philipians," B. 3)

g) Which they therefore call δοκιμαστικήν [for examination].

h) For they are not only able to distinguish suitable speech and action from unsuitable, but also to test the *spirits, whether they are from God*, even whether other human beings are from God, in addition to ecclesiastical men. See *1 John 4:1*.

i) Sometimes the morals and actions of those who strive for the ministry become known to the common people rather than to the leaders in the church.

k) Thus in the churches of the *Protestants* it is received with more frequent use that the right of electing, or *nominating* and *presenting* belongs to the *patron* of the church (or to him, who once *founded* and *endowed* the church, or who *followed* in his place). The right of *examining* the one specifically designated and of judging whether he is fit for the ministry is granted to the *bishop* and is exercised through the *consistory* or the *theological school*. When a dignity has been recognized or aptitude has been examined, that one is presented to the

whole church, so that it is heard *publicly* and thus *he is called either* by the church *or* by the patron with the church consenting. Then, *he is ordained* by the bishop's command or by the bishop himself, in whose possession are the episcopal rights through the church's ministers, and finally, *he is confirmed*.

### § 7. The Essence of the Ministry

The church's ministry brings with it **a)** the *power* and *office* 1. **b)** publicly *teaching* and regularly **c)** administering the *sacraments*; and 2. the **d)** power and duty of *loosing* and *binding* sins.

**a)** Generally, this power is separated into power of *order* and of *jurisdiction*, and the things we have discussed in this thesis are sometimes summarized in this way, although the differentiation of the terms is explained differently in the *papacy*.

GERHARD: "They call the former (the power of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments) the power of the *order*; but the latter (the power of the keys) they call the power of *jurisdiction*. Although this nomenclature leaves something to be desired, nevertheless, since it has been received by the use of the church, we therefore retain it *with the proper sense*." ("Locus on the Church's Ministry," § 192)

**b)** For undoubtedly here we have to distinguish between *public* and *private* teaching (or the *presentation of the faith*, as they say). Outside the public assemblies believers are able to inform anyone else in Christian doctrine according to Acts 18:26, where *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, his wife, are said to *have explained the way of God more accurately* (ακριβέστερον). However, Paul teaches that the duty of teaching the children what things pertain to piety belongs to parents by right (Eph 6:4). The same Paul commends to believers the mutual information through conversations and united prayers and hymns (Col 3:16). "May the Word of Christ," he says, "dwell in you richly (πλουσίως) in all wisdom. Teach and admonish one another (διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς)." Concerning these words the sainted Balduin says (p.m.1090.b.): "We use the divine Word for our mutual instruction and admonition. For this reason God bestows the Word and his saving understanding, so that we might be devoted to mutual edification not only for ourselves, but also for others; whereby, in this matter no one ought to be lacking a neighbor." In addition, the public office of teaching is not appropriate for women (whom rather it is fitting to *keep silent and in silence to learn in the church* according to 1 Cor 14:34 and 1 Tim 2:12ff.), nor for every believing man who wishes (because not all are teachers, διδάσκαλοι, 1 Cor 12:29), *but* those specially chosen for this office. Confer the sainted Musaeus, "On the Church," Part I, Disp. VII. § 17, 18, 19. p. 391, 392.

MIESLER: Should the one who preaches for the sake of practice be said to have a call to preach? The goal is the same, namely the conversion of man. And such preachers are sent from those, to whom the inspection of the church was entrusted. We must surely not mention a public calling, but a private sending. Luther distinguished between the calling of faith and of love. He called it the calling of faith, when someone from those who have the right of calling is called to the ordinary ministry of teaching. He called it the calling of love, when someone for the sake of practice is called and sent to hold an assembly on behalf of others." (*New Work on Questions of Practical Theology*, f.474.b.)

**c)** Indeed a layman or a woman can also administer *Baptism* in a case of emergency. See chapter 10, thesis 4, notes c) and d). But this is *extraordinary*. Accordingly no one other than the ordinary minister is permitted to administer the *Holy Supper*, which does not have the same necessity. See chapter 11, thesis 4, note c).<sup>3</sup>

**d)** It is elsewhere called the *power of the keys, of binding and loosening*. See Matt 16:19; Jn 20:23.

LUTHER: "As the office of the Word is given to one individual, thus all offices are also given to him—all offices which are performed through the Word in the church." ("Open Letter to the Council and Congregation of the City of Prague," 1523. X, p. 1862)

LUTHER: "Upon whom the preaching office is placed, upon him the highest office in Christianity is placed. The same man may accordingly baptize, hold Mass, and carry out every care for souls. Or if he does not want to do these, he may focus solely on preaching, leaving baptizing and different lower functions to another, as Christ and Paul and all the apostles did (Acts 6)." ("The Foundation and Basis from the Scriptures that a Christian Gathering or Congregation has the Right and Power to Judge All Teachers and to Call Teachers, to Install and Depose," 1523. X, p. 1806)

CHEMNITZ: "Because many duties belong to the ministry of the church—duties which neither a single person nor even a few could

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<sup>3</sup>Baier-Walther directs the reader to this note: "c) [The Lord's Supper is] *not* ever on the same plane as in baptism [which] also a *layman* or a *female* [could administer]. For the same necessity does not exist for both sacraments. However, when an ordinary minister is lacking and a believing person anxiously desires this sacrament, *nevertheless* it is preferable to convince that person in every possible way of the sufficiency of spiritual eating and to show the dangers of other temptations, which can spring forth if the sacrament is administered by someone without a legitimate call, and therefore, with a dubious spirit and occurrence. / "Z. GRAPUUS: Priests are laymen, but only with an internal *ικανότης* [sufficiency] for all sorts of offices of the church and thus also for the administration of the Eucharist. Let us not think that the sacrament is less valid because a layman induced perhaps by necessity or error shall have given [it]. See Justus Schomer in his tract concerning gatherings, dissertation I, thesis 34. (*Systema novissimarum controversiarum*, Book IV, p. 89. Cf. the above notations at Part III, chapter 8, thesis 6, p. 408ff.)"



completely accomplish among the great crowd of believers—those duties of the ministry are divided into certain *grades* of ministers, which afterward they called τάξεις [orders] or τάγματα [ranks], in order that therefore all duties are performed and undertaken properly, orderly, and for edification by the enlarged assembly of the church and in order that each one might have a certain designated station, as it were, in which he might be devoted to certain duties of the church's ministry. Thus the apostles in the beginning took care of the ministry of the Word and sacraments and at the same time also distribution and management of alms. But afterward, when the number of disciples increased, they commended that part of the ministry, which pertained to alms, to others whom they called deacons . . . . But those grades, concerning which we have spoken of up to this point, have not been something beyond or outside of the ministry of the Word and sacraments, but they have been the true duties of the ministry itself distributed among those grades because of the reasons already explained." (*Examination of the Council of Trent*, Geneva Edition p. 574, 578) [CPH Kramer vol. 2, p. 682-683, 685]

CALOV: "There are *grades* in the holy office in respect to order, but not in respect to jurisdiction. Nevertheless, in this matter a difference is detected between the Old and New Testaments. For formerly there had been a certain ecclesiastical jurisdiction, for example Aaron's jurisdiction over the priests and Levites and gatekeepers. Yet, we leave that in its place. But in the New Testament we admit no church jurisdiction which comes from divine right, except a general one, that all is to be done in an orderly and proper way in the church. Still by agreed-upon human right the lord of a territory exercises jurisdiction either through the consistory alone or also through superintendents (such as perhaps Titus was in Crete) or by whatever method he pleases, provided that the propriety of order is not violated." (*Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, Book VIII, p. 288)

LUTHER: "In this history (Acts 6:1ff.) you see first, how a Christian congregation should be fashioned. In addition you see a correct picture of a spiritual government, which the apostles here rule. They look after souls, going around with preaching and with praying, yet provide also that the body is taken care of, raising up several men who distribute the goods as you have heard. Thus the Christian government supplies the people both in body and soul, that no one has any need, as Luke says, and all were fed richly and supplied well both in body and soul." (*Church Postil*, XI, p. 2754ff.)

GERHARD: "We say that the *duties* of the ministry are most correctly appraised on the basis of the goal, because of which the church's ministry has been divinely instituted and to this time is preserved. . . . Therefore in general the duties of the church's ministers are *seven*, to which the rest can generally be related: 1. the divine preaching of the Word, 2. the dispensing of the Sacraments, 3. prayer on behalf of the flock entrusted to him, 4. honest manage-

ment of life and morals, 5. the administration of church discipline, 6. the preservation of church rites, 7. the care for the poor and the visiting of the sick." (Locus on the Church's Ministry, § 265)

## Part Two: The Duties of the Ministry

### § 8. The Duties in Teaching

**a)** These things belong to the office of teaching: that the **b)** *teachings* of the faith, **c)** which are divinely revealed, **d)** and taught according to the capacity of the hearers; **e)** are clearly set forth and **f)** firmly established; **g)** that the opposing *errors*, concerning which we must fear lest from some other place they worm their way into souls, are distinctly denounced and **h)** are proved to be evil, in so far as they wage war with the Word of God; that the things, which ought to be **i)** *done* according to the law and duties of Christians in whatever their station, are clearly taught and men are stirred on and moved to the preferred things with firm direct arguments and **k)** convinced at appropriate points; that *sins* and *vices* to avoid and to consider are shown, as far as guilt and culpability of punishment are concerned and after that the souls of men are diverted and **l)** are corrected. Finally, it belongs to the office of teaching that the minds of the afflicted and anxious are encouraged and strengthened **m)** with solace in their proper condition conferred from heaven.

**a)** According to the words of 2 Timothy 3:15, 16, where *good works of the man of God* or of the minister of the church are numbered. Cf. Prolegomena, chapter 2, § 11.

**b)** To which the word *διδασκαλία* refers. (cf. loc. cit.)

**c)** For they should *not* form *new* teachings, *but* they should show that they have clearly been derived from the Scriptures, the only source of knowing. Thus the minister is ordered to be *tenacious for that which accords with sound teaching and is a faithful saying*, or for that which belongs to the sure and established faith and was produced by divine inspiration. (Confer the sainted Musaeus' preface to the *Introduction to Theology*, close to the beginning.)

**d)** It is necessary, namely, that he is *διδασκτικόν*, *able to teach* (1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:24). Thus in general, one method of teaching ought to be applied to the common group of believers in the church's gatherings around the pulpit. Still another method should be used for those youths, who are free to attend to the development of good skills and to the study of theology and to be taught in the doctrine of faith and morals in the theological schools from the academic chair. (See the more extended section of the sainted Musaeus in the locus cited.)

e) This is sometimes called παραφράζειν to explain the ambiguities which develop surrounding words, if they occur. At other times it is called ὀρθοτομεῖν, to *rightly divide the word of truth* (2 Tim 2:15).

f) Lest the hearers *allow themselves to be carried about as children being driven by every wind of teaching* (Eph 4:14). But rather *they should grow in the name of Christ* (2 Pet 3:18; Col 1:9). Confer the sainted Musaeus, loc. cit. p. 9, 10. At the same time it stands that *a part of teaching which is not taken from the Scriptures must not be set forth as though it were necessary to believe it for salvation (or to do it for moral purity of life), nor should anything which does not agree with Scripture be attached to its interpretation or verification.* (Ibid. p. 5)

g) Nor should any errors, however shabby and obsolete, be examined in an unwholesome way, much less in such a way that they appear to be taught or recommended.

h) Here is where ἔλεγχος [correction] belongs, which Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 3:16 and Titus 1:9. We must defend the sacred doctrine against enemies of the truth, and therefore, against their objections and exceptions. They must be compelled to be silent, since those who do not comprehend the things they oppose with the appearance of truth should be compelled to be silent. And this is ἐπιστομίξειν τοὺς ματαιολόγους καὶ φρεναπάτας, *to close the mouths of idle talkers and deceivers of minds* (Tit 1:10, 11). Confer Musaeus loc. cit.

i) Accordingly, among the works of a minister Paul includes ἡ παιδεία ἢ ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ, the *instruction* (for someone, just as for a child) *in righteousness or moral purity of life* (2 Tim 3:16).

k) For the intellect must be taught in such a way that the will at the same time is moved to action.

l) Here this ἐπανόρθωσις, or *correction of morals* (2 Tim 3:16), considers how it happens that those things, which have for instance fallen down or been distorted, are restored to their upright state. That is to say, they are set back up or brought back.

m) See 2 Corinthians 1:4. However, the *consolation* itself must be directed to παιδείαν or to διδασκαλίαν, just as Gerhard teaches in his commentary on Romans 15:4. Confer the things we have said in the *Compendium of Homiletical Theology*, Part I, chapter VII, § 3, p. 128.

## § 9. The Duties in Administering the Sacraments

In the administration of the *sacraments* ministers should pay attention that they not only accurately observe the a) sense of the *institution* of each sacrament, but that they also administer those means of grace b) at the right time to those who have need and are *not unworthy*. Likewise they are equally *not* to admit the c) *unworthy*.

**a)** Accordingly Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23 writes concerning the Eucharist: *I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you.*

**b)** Lest by their own fault they therefore allow an *infant* to die without baptism or an *adult* human being, contrite and longing for it, to die without the gift of the Eucharist.

**c)** Lest *holy things are tossed to the dogs or pearls to swine* (Mt 7:6). So we speak concerning those people, who are *clearly* recognized to be unworthy and *can* be held back. In this manner it is taught more thoroughly in Moral Theology.

### § 10. The Duties in Loosing Sins

As far as the office of the *loosing* and *binding* of sins, we have to note that **a)** the *forgiveness* of sins should be announced not only **b)** *universally* and impartially to all penitent believers in Christ, but also specifically and **c)** *individually* to those, who have given **d)** by means of a *confession* **e)** plausible signs of repentance and faith and seek to be absolved from sin. And that is not a mere declaration, but serves as **f)** an *effective confirmation* of the forgiveness of sins accomplished by God.

**a)** It is certain that the very *authority* and power [to forgive sins] do not *essentially* belong to any person who forgives sins, but only to God. (See Is 43:25; Mk 2:7) But God and Christ, θεάνθρωπος, exercise that forgiveness *through the ministry* by announcing it to men with an audible voice. Nevertheless, this announcement is not ineffective, as we shall soon discuss.

**b)** Just as in our churches on individual *Sundays* a formula of confession is read *in general*, so also absolution generally understood is applied.

**c)** This they call *private absolution*. Article XI of the Augsburg Confession teaches that the same should be *retained in churches*.

**d)** Certainly [this confession is given] in the presence of a minister of the church. *Either* a person confesses sins in the assembly *or* he confesses specific sins face to face, especially if his sins are distressing him. Indeed sins are to be confessed elsewhere both in the presence of God, according to Psalms 32:5 and 51:5,6, and in the presence of a *neighbor*; if he has been hurt by us (see James 5:16). Here we must especially consider what is meant by "in the presence of a minister" and whether that is required to obtain absolution or remission of sins from the office of the keys. Cf. Matthew 3:6 and these words of *Gerhard*: *They call the private confession in the presence of a minister of the church auricular confession. Although it does not have an express and special mandate and therefore, is not of absolute necessity, private confession should, nevertheless, by no means be rashly neglected or*

*abrogated, since it offers many advantages and is not the least part of ecclesiastical instruction, and since it has been received by public consensus of the church. Rather, it should be used devoutly and in true reverence for God, especially by those who come to the holy assembly* (Vol. III, Locus on Repentance, § 99).

B. MEISNER: "Our adversaries distinguish between that which is necessary for the essence and that which is necessary for the benefit. The rite of private confession is useful for the remission of sins and for the use and fruit of the Supper, not absolutely as if those things could not be obtained without that rite, but with the view of drawing things out for the advantage of the individual. For 1) the person who makes use of it can more firmly believe the word of absolution, because that absolution is announced and applied to him as an individual by the minister who acts in the place and name of Christ himself; and 2) he can prepare himself better to partake worthily of the holy Supper, since he listens attentively and learns diligently in private conversation as his method of preparation. None of our teachers has either censured or condemned *general absolution* as impious. Rather, it is used not only among the Reformed (those formerly called Calvinists) but also in certain Lutheran churches. And by the grace of God we know that the word of absolution, which a minister announces generally by the name and command of Christ to those who confess, is that very same word which in our churches the minister applies not to all in a general way, but to each person individually as true and efficacious. This absolution is not only true and efficacious, but it is also advantageous, as we said above for the reasons stated." (*Disputation concerning the Adiaphoristic School*, VII. E. 2. b.)

LUTHER: "For this reason, if they desire our counsel in this matter, they should understand us in this way, that there are two parts in confession: first, to recount sins. In this part, before the enthusiasts were able to dream up something else, we by God's grace have released and set free consciences from an unbearable burden and impossible obedience to papal law, in which [the pope] commands a recounting of all sins and with that produces such anxiety and distress for poor consciences that they must despair. . . . It is only reasonable that we content ourselves with such great, glorious freedom and thank God without ceasing for it, as a great, inexpressible, comforting gift . . . Next to this freedom we maintain the custom that a penitent person recount some of the sins which weigh down on him the most. And we do this not for the sake of those who understand. For we demand nothing from our pastor, chaplain, Master Philipp and such people who know what sin is. But because our dear youth are growing daily, and because the common man understands little, for their sakes we maintain such a custom, so that they may be educated in Christian discipline and understanding." ("Letter of Warning to Those at Frankfurt am Main to Beware of Zwinglian Teaching," 1533. XVII, p. 2448-54.)

e) For sins need to be confessed by reason of the *liability to guilt and punishment* and even as *displeasing things*, which trouble us and from which we desire to be freed through Christ.

f) For that which is signified by the word of the minister is really that same thing which is presented and exhibited, actually confirmed from heaven to those contrite believers. This is done as surely as if Christ himself would personally speak to the penitent what he said to the paralytic in Matthew 9:2, "Take heart, your sins are forgiven." For this reason he observes in John 20:23, "If you forgive anyone, they are forgiven."

AUGSBURG CONFESSION: "By this the people are taught how comforting the word of absolution is; they are taught how highly and dearly to esteem absolution. For it is not the voice or word of some common man, but rather *God's word* which forgives sins. For it is spoken in the place of God and by God's command. It is taught with great diligence concerning this command and power of the keys how comforting and how necessary it is for terrified consciences. In addition to this, as God demands, we ought to believe this absolution no less than if God's voice would ring out from heaven. We should take comfort and know that through faith we obtain the forgiveness of sins." (*Triglotta*, p. 69, Art. XXV)

LUTHER: "Truly absolution is certain and eternal, even if you don't believe in it. Just as the sun truly shines and beams in heaven and is the true sun, even if you don't see it or are crawling around in the cellar so that you aren't able to see it, which isn't the sun's fault, but yours . . . Thus God knows nothing about the selling of the keys which the pope sponsors. Rather, absolution is entirely certain. If then you don't believe the absolution, it is not their fault, but yours. Why don't you accept it? If I hand out gold and silver and you accept it, then you have it. But if instead you despise and refuse my gift, then it nevertheless remains gold and silver in its nature and worth. In the same way, God does not fail. We do. We often receive absolution without faith, but for that reason it does not become ashes and filth. Rather, it is God's gift." ("Sermon on the last chapter of Matthew," Erlangen Ed., XLIV, p. 167ff.)

Compare the words of Luther written above on this matter to those written in Part III, ch. 5, p. 263ff.

### § 11. The Duties in Binding Sins

Likewise, regarding the *binding* of sins by the church's minister, it stands that he announces a) *universally* not only b) the wrath of God and punishments to all the unbelieving and impenitent people, but he also withholds the remission of sins in particular or c) *individually* from d) gross and e) widely known sinners and f) by the consensus of the church keeps them *either* g) from the use of the holy Supper alone

or directly expels them **h**) from the company of the church and hands them over to Satan. This in turn is not a mere declaration, but an **i**) effective **k**) judgment.

**a**) Accordingly Paul pronounces *anathema* on all who assert false doctrine (Gal 1:8-9) and on all *not loving Jesus Christ* (1 Cor 16:22). And for this reason in our churches a *general* formula of the retention of sins is appended to the general absolution read in the public gatherings.

**b**) For just as absolution from sins conveys an announcement of grace, so the retention of sins conveys an announcement of divine wrath. And the minister should not bind the sins of humans by his own authority, but by the authority and name of Christ and of the church.

**c**) By identifying a specific person, just as Paul identifies an *incestuous man* (1 Cor 5:2) and *Hymenaeus and Alexander* (1 Tim 1:20).

**d**) "For a mild admonition, along with an encouragement to watch out for lapses in the future, suffices for someone who has sinned due to ignorance or weakness," says the sainted Gerhard in his "Locus on the Church's Ministry," § 286.

**e**) It is widely known when a public offense arises from a fall into sin. For such people "are to be rebuked in the presence of everyone, that the others also may be afraid," as the apostle teaches (1 Tim 5:20).

**f**) Where this is considered (Matt 18:17): "Tell it to the church (i.e., to the presbytery, the assembly of elders, who represent the church). If he will not listen to the church, (then finally) let him be to you as a pagan and a tax collector." For although this passage deals with the causes of *private* offenses and of seeking reconciliation according to law, nevertheless we are rightly commanded to observe the administration of church discipline with any sinner, keeping in mind certain steps of admonition and a final decision. See the blessed Johann Major in the preface of his *Apologetic against Valerius, the Great Capuchin*.

SMALCALD ARTICLES: "Christ gives the highest and final judgment to the church when he says, 'Tell it the church.'" ("Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope," *Triglotta*, p. 511)

GERHARD: "In the apostolic and primitive church, there were two kinds of *presbyters*, whom you will have called *seniores* [*elders*] in Latin, as is understood from 1 Timothy 5:17. For some people were performing the duty of teaching or as the apostle says in that passage, 'they were laboring in word and doctrine.' They were called bishops, pastors, etc. But certain others took the lead as far as the judgment of morals and the preserving of church discipline were concerned, since the magistrate was still a heathen and somewhat left teaching alone in this church. These were being called κυβερνήται, governors, as is gathered from 1 Corinthians 12:28, and προϊστάμενοι [*leaders*] from Romans 12:8. Ambrose on 1 Timothy 5

at the beginning: 'Both the synagogue and, later, the *church* had elders, without whose counsel nothing was carried out in the church. I do not know what carelessness caused that to become obsolete, except perhaps it was the idleness of the teachers or great pride, until they alone would be seen as something [special].' And both were commonly called προεστῶτες [ruling ones] (1 Tim 5:17) and ἡγούμενοι [leading ones] (Acts 15:22; Heb 13:7, 17, 24). When both groups were united at the same time, Paul calls that holy assembled group *the body of elders* (1 Tim 4:14): 'Do not neglect the gift which is in you, which was given to you through a prophecy together with the laying on of hands by the body of elders.'" (Locus on the Church's Ministry, § 232)<sup>a</sup>

GERHARD: "It happens that the name 'church' is ascribed through a figure of synecdoche 1) to the body of elders or church council (Matt 18:17): 'If he will not listen to them, tell it to the church.' Although it is not absurd to understand by the name 'church' the entire congregation of believers also in this passage, since Doctor Paul seems to explain it in this way (1 Tim 5:20): 'Rebuke sinners before everyone, so that the others may have fear.' And this latter meaning is to be preferred to the first because of the tricks of the papalists, who on the basis of this passage assign authority to the prelates to establish anything whatsoever, and they claim the name 'church' for them alone, which is called the representative church, just as Aristotle says (*Ethics* bk. 9, ch. 9): 'The state is especially that group which is principal in it.'" (Locus on the Church, § 14)

CALOV: If you consider the material cause (of excommunication), it must not be carried out either by ministers of the Word alone or by the church alone, but by the ministry and assembly of the church at the same time. In just the same way, the apostle calls himself certainly absent in body, but present in spirit, and he calls the church gathered in the name of Jesus Christ one with his spirit. . . . Although the apostle unites himself to the church assembly in this action, he is not regarded as an apostle here, but as a servant of the church (1 Cor 4:1) . . . The church not only pours out prayers to God, but it reports a judiciary sentence passed in heaven." (*Biblia Illustrata* on 1 Cor 5:5)

**g)** Certainly *lest holy things be thrown to the dogs, etc.* according to Matthew 7:6. They call this the *lesser excommunication* and they teach that a church's minister should not undertake it alone without the consent of the church council or consistory.

ECKHARD: "If they happen to be unworthy in the matter of the Lord's body and blood and eat and drink judgment on themselves, it follows that the minister who knowingly admits such people is a

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<sup>a</sup>Note the further reference to different forms of ministry.



cause of this sin, makes himself a partaker of it, and gravely offends God, yes, makes himself a liar judged by the Word of God. For he promises the grace of God to someone upon whom he knows God's wrath remains (Jn 3:36). He offers eternal life to someone to whom, according to his conscience, death, the wages of sin, is owed (Rom 6:23). For that reason it is not without cause that the "Cynos. Arrangement of the church of Württemberg" says (p. 40): 'In the examination ministers may advise against Holy Communion, forbid it, or suspend it by request, but no minister should exercise the public ban on his own authority.'" (*The Conscientious Pastor*, p. 177)

**h)** They call this the *greater excommunication*. With this they have in view 1 Corinthians 5:3ff. where Paul gives the command that an incestuous man, in a solemn act, in a gathering of the entire church, from which he is *absent in body but present in spirit, in the name and with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ*, should be expelled from the fellowship of the church and *handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus*. For we should certainly not seek the damnation of the excommunicated, but their eternal salvation.

J. MEISNER: "As far as the reality of the promise is concerned, the power of binding and loosing at one point was granted to Peter alone (Matt 16:19) and elsewhere to all the apostles at the same time (Jn 20:23). Although this is true, nevertheless the exercise of it is here particularly granted for the sake of a more certain judgment to the church, as opposed to one or even to many ministers. This exercise entails that someone is declared worthy of being regarded as a heathen (which we call the greater excommunication). The church elsewhere will indeed take possession of the universal rights of her bridegroom, but she conducts the act of the assembly through the ministry." (*Exercises of Theology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Wittenberg 1664, chapter 18)

**i)** For the very application of legal threats puts a heavy weight on the accused persons. However, sinners, who *have sinned* not only against God but also *against the church*, surely can also be bound by the church. They will not obtain grace before God, unless they have returned into favor with the church and been absolved by her. But there is another understanding for those unjustly excommunicated.

**k)** Ministers of the church alone are not sufficient to restore church discipline once it has collapsed. They require the help of those who hold the *episcopal rights*, which they are not able to assume for themselves. Meanwhile, there is no lack of work for the church's ministers, because it is possible to work toward the conversion of sinners or that they are shown to be without excuse. See the sainted Musaeus, his preface to the "Tract concerning Repentance against Stenger" as far as d. 3. a. b.

LUTHER: "The laws rightly say that doing and *conspiring* must be punished with equal punishments. Thus if a bishop sees errors, heresies, wicked morals in the church, and does not reprove and does not excommunicate the impenitent, he has made himself a party to all of those sinners." (See the exegetical works on Gen 19:15, Erlangen Edition, Vol. IV, 295ff.) [LW 3:279-280]

LUTHER: "At present we have no other ban in place than this: Those who live in public vices and who will not desist are not admitted to the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. This practice can be maintained, if none of us is offered the holy Sacrament unless he is first examined by a pastor or deacon. We also cannot imagine how another ban could be put in place at this time, for many cases come up that first require a *Cognitio* [inquiry or trial]. Now we cannot see how arranging and organizing the *Cognitio* could be done at present, since secular authorities do not want to have anything to do with this *Cognitio*. Therefore let the matter remain as it stands, namely that those who still remain in public vices are not offered the holy Sacrament." ("To the Regents and Councilors," 1532 de Wette IV, 388ff.) [LW 50:64]

WALCH: "If a church finds herself in a natural situation where she is made up of such persons who live outside of a civil society, then the entire congregation has the power of government. The congregation can govern herself by collecting votes or charge a few with oversight or appoint some church officials." (Lexicon Article on Church Government, p. 1556)<sup>8</sup>

WALCH: "From what has already explicitly been said, what the method of governing was in the apostolic church must be easily decided. It was nothing other than the power of establishing in the external parts of religion those things which sought to preserve an appropriate order and to maintain more easily the goal of the church. The power had been arranged in such a way that it belonged to the teachers and hearers of the community and was removed from every dominion. In the books of the New Testament we read that not only the apostles and ministers of the church were endowed with this power, although these had influence before others because of their authority, but also the listeners were endowed. From those things we recognize that if something had to be deliberated and decided, the people also gave their votes." (*Church History*, p. 431)

GERHARD: "(The papalists teach): 'Paul writes (1 Cor 11:34), when I come, I will arrange others, without a doubt given by power from heaven (2 Cor 10:8). Therefore the apostle appropriated for

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<sup>8</sup>In these two statements Walch recognizes that state involvement in the affairs of the church was not the norm for the early church. This existence of the church independent of the state was, of course, exactly the situation Walther had to deal with in America.

himself the absolute power to arrange in the church at will.' We respond: the apostle did not arrange that very thing by a certain αὐτοκρατορικῆ [absolute] power; but with the assenting consensus of the church (2 Cor 8:8, οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω, I speak not as if I am commanding this)." (Locus on the Church's Ministry, § 201)

FECHT: "The entire edifice of Christ's church rests upon two pillars, so to speak: the proclamation of sound doctrine and the administration of church discipline. As the former maintains the internal life of the church, so the latter rules and governs the external . . . The more rigid the ancients were in this, the more negligent we have become in this world's final age. This failure to discipline is the chief cause for our corrupt churches." (*Pastoral Instruction*, Ed. 2, p. 164)

## § 12. The Duties in External Ceremonies

Finally, ministers of the church also occupy themselves with the **a)** *external* things, or **b)** rites and *ceremonies*, which in and of themselves **c)** certainly are *adiaphora*, but nevertheless are established **d)** to edify the church **e)** by the public authority of the church. These, however, are not to be **i)** instituted or observed for the reason of giving **f)** *worship* or **g)** rendering *merit* before God, but **h)** for external *education*. They are not to be changed or **l)** abrogated unless such a thing is done **k)** wisely and by the practice of the church.

**a)** From this also the term "*external jurisdiction*" originates. Nevertheless, some assign to that term "*excommunication*," *suspension* from participating in the sacred things, and even sanctions of ecclesiastical *law* and *constitution*, church [disciplinary] *visitations*, etc., which ought to be assigned to the *bishop's duties*. We will see more concerning these things in the locus concerning the Magistracy.

**b)** To this belong certain standards for *singing*, the use of musical *instruments*, certain *festivals*, *fasting days*, *the wedding rite*, *baptismal rites* (among which is *exorcism*), the *Holy Supper*, *funeral rites*, etc.

**c)** Because, of course, they are not asserted in the Scriptures, but are eventually sanctioned by an *agreed upon* human law.

**d)** For example, because they are useful for good *order*, for arousing *attention* and *devotion* in holy matters, and certainly for *representing spiritual* things. However, the useless, unprofitable, and offensive ceremonies do not even deserve the term "the church's things."

**e)** For these things do not *absolutely* belong to the ministry *as much as* the office of teaching and administering the sacraments, but rather they belong *per se* to the *whole church* or to those who hold the church's *rights* (which they call *episcopal rights*). Accordingly, in our churches they have been granted to the *civil magistrate* through the

Passau Agreement and Religious Peace.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, they are granted in such way that the *church's ministers* themselves ought to take part in their care, to carry them out in some way, or to regulate them in practice. The ministers also ought to inform the people concerning the reasoning and practice of them.

AUGSBURG CONFESSION: "What then should one think about Sunday and other church orders and ceremonies of this kind? Our teachers reply that the bishops or pastors may make arrangement so that things in the church take place in an orderly way . . . It is fitting for the Christian assembly to keep such arrangements *for the sake of love and peace* and to obey the bishops and pastors in these cases." (*Triglotta*, p. 91. Art. XXVIII, para. 55)

In order to explain these words CARPZOV adds: "When the Augsburg Confession in this place concedes the right of arranging ceremonies to bishops, we must observe that it is done 1) *with consideration for that particular time*, when it is also proper for the bishops *on the basis of human right*, just as also the §: "If they have anything" had related (cf. p. 64, §29). We must also watch that 2) nothing is taken away from the *right of the whole church*, just as the Augsburg Confession clearly declares at the same time. Finally, we observe that 3) this is done with no other thinking than under the *moderation* owed to method and purpose § 'Such Arrangements' (p. 67, § 55,56)." (*Isagogics on the Symbolical Books*, p. 750)

f) For it is necessary that those things belonging *per se* to the worship of God are commanded by God, if not expressly, at least through a necessary consequence. From this we must watch out lest consciences are burdened, according to the warning of the Augsburg Confession, article XV. And thus they guard the *fourth* step of our *Christian liberty*, certainly, *from human traditions in the church, because they do not consider these things as worship or absolutely necessary, but outside a case of offense they can be neglected or omitted without sin.*

g) Whether *de condigno* [full merit, an act deserving God's grace] or *de congruo* [half merit or an act not truly deserving of grace, but nevertheless receiving grace from the divine generosity<sup>4</sup>].

h) According to those which we have mentioned in note d.

i) Namely, *where, when, and as long as* the church's use endures.

k) Therefore, *without* fickleness or offense, *without* commotion and carelessness, and *not except* on account of serious causes, and *so that*

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<sup>7</sup>Here again the political ecclesiastical arrangements of Baier's day are recognized as human arrangements, somewhat reluctantly followed by the church.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), p. 191.

at the same time the people are sufficiently informed about the reasons for the change and about the very change of ceremonies.

1) In particular we must watch out, *lest we yield at the wrong time* in the cause of religion to *adversaries*, who demand the changing of rites. For in a case of confession *adiaphora* change their nature, so to speak, and from indifferent things they become necessary. See the Formula of Concord, Article X.

### § 13. The Beneficiary of the Ministry

The **a)** group associated with the church's ministers, and also **b)** the *beneficiary* for which the ministry exists, is the **c)** assembly. This gathering consists of those who **d)** hear the ministers' teaching and are rendered as sharers in their ministry and the dispensing **e)** of the sacraments.

**a)** For the term "minister" *refers to a relationship* and considers any whom the minister serves.

**b)** [This is to say] those for whose good or advantage the ministry was instituted.

**c)** Scripture calls it *the flock* with regard held for the term *pastor*, which ministers of the church are called (Acts 20:28,29; 1 Pet 5:2,3). Otherwise it is called *the church* (Acts 20:28), although the church *strictly* speaking includes in its concept *both* teachers *and* hearers. See Musaeus "On the Church," part 2, disputation 1, sections 36-37, p. 16-17.

LUTHER: "The apostles first went into strangers' houses and preached. This was something which they received the command to do and they were ordained, called, and sent to preach in all places, as Christ spoke in Mark 16:15: 'Go into all the world and preach to every creature.' But since then, no one any longer has such a general apostolic command. Rather, every bishop or pastor has his distinct parish or pastorate, whom St. Peter in 1 Pet 5:3 for that reason also calls *cleros* [κλήρους], that is, parts. One part of the people is entrusted to each, as St. Paul also writes to Titus when he says that no other stranger should be so bold as to teach his parishioners either privately or in public without his knowledge and consent. And no one should listen to that preacher wholeheartedly but should bring word of it to the pastor or authorities. . . . If something has not been commanded, a person should let it be. We have enough to do in carrying out the commands given to us. It also doesn't help that they advance the idea that all Christians are *priests*. It is true that all Christians are priests, but they are not all *pastors*. For a person to be a Christian and a priest, he would have to have a ministry and a congregation entrusted to him. The call and command makes pastors and preachers." (Explanation of Psalm 82, 1530. V, p. 1060ff.) [LW 13:65-66]

d) From this the assembly is sometimes called the *audience*, certainly in reference to the obligation to listen.

e) And the administering of absolution itself, as it is fitting when confession is given. Germans use the words "penitent" and "parishioners."

### § 14. The Intended Outcome of the Ministry

The *intermediate goal a)* of this ministry of the church is **b)** the reconciliation of human beings with God through faith in Christ and the increase in faith and **c)** other Christian virtues. The *ultimate goal* is the **d)** eternal salvation of the same persons.

**a)** What the Author of this sacred ministry intends can only be obtained through the carrying out of this office and can only be produced by his divine power. From this it is also rightly called an *effect*. Compare 1 Corinthians 3:5 where the Corinthians are said to have believed through ministers (consider also v. 6 and following). Nevertheless, the efficacy of the Word does not depend on the legitimate *sending* of the person who preaches or teaches it. See Musaeus "On the Church," part I, disputation VII, p. 383ff.

Compare the notes of § 1, *a*.

Chemnitz: "There is no doubt that God is effective through the word which is proclaimed, by whomever it is proclaimed. Why then does this chapter from Trent cause such a great tumult over this question? I answer: because they have decided that the integrity, truth, and efficacy of the sacraments is not simply and completely in the words of Christ, but partly also in the character which they imagine to be impressed on the priests at their ordination. In this way, then, they desire to have the consolation of absolution depend not so much on the word of the gospel as on the person doing the absolving." (*Examination of the Council of Trent*, Geneva Edition, p. 395) [CPH Kramer vol. 2, p. 621]

**b)** Just as it is called the ministry of reconciliation, because reconciliation depends on it and reconciliation proceeds from it (2 Cor 5:18). Compare with verses 19 and 20.

**c)** See Ephesians 4:12ff. where it says that *ministers of the church are given for the joining* (καταρτισμόν or arranged as in a determined proportion, or συμμετρία organized) *of the saints in the building up of the body of Christ*, in which *individual members who agree with one another attain growth of the body through love*.

**d)** Thus when Paul commands Timothy to pay attention to himself and to doctrine, adds at the end of 1 Timothy 4: *For if you do, you will save* (σώσεις) *both yourself and those who hear you*.

### § 15. A Definition of the Church's Ministry

The church's ministry is defined in this way: **a)** it is a public office, **b)** arranged by God, in which certain persons who are legitimately called and ordained **c)** teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, bind and loose sins, and attend and direct other things which pertain to the church **d)** for the conversion, sanctification, and eternal life of human beings.

**a)** This is common to it with the office of the magistrate, and it rightly suggests a locus of the same kind.

**b)** Thus the efficient cause is designated. See § 2.

**c)** In what the office itself essentially consists. See § 7.

**d)** The *beneficiary* and *intended outcome* of the ministry are stated. See § 13, 14.