

The Doctrines Of The Church And Ministry -- An Historical Survey Of The Controversy Concerning Them In Our Midst

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Books, essays, articles, and comments on the closely related doctrines of Church and Ministry have been written without number. Proportionately the members of the former Synodical Conference have certainly produced their share.

As is well known, the wealth of material on these doctrines in our circles is due to a number of causes. One is the constant need for studying and making our own any and all doctrines of Holy Scriptures. Another is the fact that Dr. Walther, the first great theologian in the synods which comprised the Synodical Conference, was instrumental in formulating these doctrines very early in the history of the Missouri Synod. His book on this subject was written a few years later, in 1852, called *The Voice of Our Church in the Question of Church and Ministry*. A third cause for the controversy which has produced many of the writings on this subject is the constant threat of a Romanizing tendency in the church.

Already in 1913 no new ideas were being developed in the writings, so that Prof. Pieper could write an article for the *Quartalschrift* (Jan. 1913) titled: "Close of the Discussion, etc."

(Parenthetically I should like to note here that Prof. Adolph Hoenecke lived only a few years ((he died 1/3/08)) during the time when the objections against the then current way of presenting these doctrines in the Synodical Conference were formally presented. And while he in his *Dogmatics*, published posthumously, still supported the generally accepted way of presenting these doctrines, he did on at least two occasions when individual thoughts were presented from the exegetical-historical approach, receive them with the remark that they were interesting and worthwhile looking into. One gets the impression that had he lived during the years when the Wauwatosa faculty thoroughly worked through these doctrines from an exegetical-historical viewpoint, he being an excellent exegete could well have stood with his co-workers in the Seminary. I make this clarifying historical observation because Pastor Romoser makes a big point of the fact that Hoenecke's *Dogmatics* takes the position current at that time.)

In the succeeding discussions between members the St. Louis and the Wauwatosa faculties up to the adoption of the Thiensville Theses in 1932, there was no united approach to the doctrines. But neither did the Missouri representatives accuse the WELS of false doctrine. Now, however, the LCR and its administrator Pastor Romoser contradict this position of former Missouri professors and its president and accuse WELS of false doctrine on Church and Ministry. Incidentally, they also accuse the WELS of false doctrine concerning God's wrath, justification, church discipline, the Law, and in the matter of devising new doctrines. Five mimeographed sheets, "The Difference," from Kenneth R. Miller.

Our teaching concerning the Church and the Ministry is laid down in the "Theses on the Church and Ministry," by our Commission on Doctrine. These have been before the Synod in its 1967 and 1969 conventions, and have been printed in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* and in 1970 in a pamphlet sent to all pastors. Also a direct answer to the charge by Pastor Romoser and the LCR that we are teaching false doctrine concerning Church and Ministry has been published by Pastor Harold E. Wicke in the *Quarterly*, April 1971. For these two reasons I believe it will be most profitable to present an historical sketch outlining the discussions of these doctrines during the last century and a quarter, particularly those in our midst. This has not been done in the essays on this subject with which I am acquainted.

Already Luther and his co-workers had to consider especially the doctrines of the Church and the Ministry because of the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church that the visible church, specifically the pope and his hierarchy are the church which alone can save. And of course, the dogmaticians of the Lutheran Church have included these doctrines in their works since then.

But in the 19th Century the Lutheran Church in Germany initiated a new discussion of these doctrines,

prompted in part by the Prussian Union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. This was really the beginning of the present-day discussions of these doctrines. Cp. Koehler, *Kirchen Geschichte*, p. 658-659. The ideas and events referred to by the following summary statements give us the cause for these discussions: "Freedom of all Protestants in the sciences and religion," "Propaganda for church union," "Strong agitation against the unionistic Prussian Union," . . . "the position taken in the doctrine of the ministry was pronounced high church." Koehler gives us some details, *Kirchen Geschichte*, p. 659: "In the years shortly after 1848 a doctrinal dispute arose about the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry. Kliefoth, Vilmar, Muenchmeyer, and Loehe had high church conceptions of the office of the minister and of the Church similar to those of Grabau in America. Against them stood probably most of the Lutherans of other circles, especially the Erlangen University professors. Completely uninhibited and correct (in this matter) according to the Scripture stood only Hoefling with a few supporting companions. (Note given in class summarizing his position: "Not the visible church with its regulations is divine institution only the administration of Word and Sacraments. All else has its moral justification (*sittliche Begrueundung*) in the nature of the organization.") This dispute was waged also in the Free Church. Huschkel took the position that the office is *juris divini*, only the outer form in *juris humani*. (In a class note Professor Koehler corrected the above printed statement as follows: "The visible church, the unbelievers included, an organization according to office and regulations is divine institution." His (Huschkel's) chief opponent was Pastor Dietrich, who in 1861 left to found the Immanuel Synod. (His position according to a class note was: "The visibility of the Church lies solely in the use of the Word and Sacraments, and that by divine institution. The structure according to offices and regulations is a human, social institution, not a divine institution." With all three, Hoefling, Huschkel, Dietrich, the concept 'divine institution' remains unclear.)

In America the first doctrinal dispute of the Missouri Synod was that concerning the doctrine of the Church (Eckhardt, *Reallexikon*, p. 700, under Kirche). This resulted from the separation of their first leader and pastor (Bishop), Stephan, from the group. The question was whether the colonists constituted congregations with the authority to call ministers. There were also doubts about the rights of their other pastors to hold their office here after having left their charges beyond the sea. (*Concordia Cyclopedia*, 1927, p. 486). Though Walther, too, was tossed about with doubts and fears for a time, he rallied the colonists, particularly through the discussion in Altenburg, Mo. (1841), and the Altenburg Theses which he presented there. The doctrinal discussions in Germany induced Walther in 1852 to publish his "Die Stimme Unsrer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt." (The Voice of Our Church in the Question of Church and Ministry.) As he states in the forward, he is doing this "also to let the voice of our church in its official confessions and the private writings of its teachers be heard and appreciated." Third ed., p. 7.

Up to 1910 Eckhardt's *Reallexikon* lists 28 essays on the Church in the Missouri Synod, some of which were continued in many issues of *Lehre und Wehre* and the *Lutheraner*, plus 24 columns of shorter references. He also lists 23 essays on the Ministry, plus 14 columns of shorter references, and 8 essays on the ministry of the Keys and hundreds of shorter references.

The comment of Wicke (*Wis. Luth. Quarterly*, April 1971, p. 114) points up the lack of clarity and sometimes contradictions in these writings when he speaks of the LCR position for which they claim support there, "Nor do they (LCR) agree with what Luther and the early dogmaticians of the Lutheran Church taught. In teaching thus the LCR follows in the footsteps of those who in this particular item misread their great teacher, Dr. C. F. W. Walther. This is not surprising, since Walther himself in this matter did not speak consistently. Their position involves transferring a contemporary situation into the past contrary to what is presented in Holy Scriptures. This is eisegesis, not exegesis. It involves both rejecting that which Luther and the Lutheran fathers found taught in Scripture, and rejecting that which Scripture reveals as the actual situation in the apostolic church."

In the history of our Synod the discussions on Church and Ministry began with discussions about the divineness of the teacher's call. They were indecisively carried on in the late 70s in conferences around Watertown, Oshkosh, Manitowoc and Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

In the middle of the 80s a mixed conference of Synodical Conference pastors and teachers in the Manitowoc-Sheboygan area "at least broke away from the usual line of dogmatizing." The then young pastor J.

P. Koehler was instrumental in this by quoting the rule of logic in Latin: "From mere incidental instances and negative observations you can't draw general conclusions." (Koehler, *History WELS*, p. 231.) "The discussion led to general agreement on the following position: Because the Christian teacher's whole work of teaching is governed by the Word of God, his work in the school merits the same appreciation of being 'divine' as that of the pastor in the congregation. Such was the half-hearted progress at the Manitowoc Conference... But it may be said that the discussion at Manitowoc signalled the beginning of a real exegetical and historical analysis of such questions in Wisconsin and beyond, that was destined to have its repercussions." (Koehler, *History WELS*, p. 231.)

"The same background of ideas was involved at the deliberations in Milwaukee in 1892 which led to the consolidation of the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan Synods."

"The essayist treated the doctrine of the divine call of a Christian preacher in the traditional way." Prof. Koehler (?) questioned the unexegetical way in which he made it appear that isolated statements of Scripture were distinct positive statutes (things) that are not part and parcel of the preacher's calling but have been attached to it because of its uniquely divine character." (*History WELS*, p. 231.)

"Also in 1892 at a general pastoral conference of the Wisconsin Synod in Milwaukee, the question of the teacher's call was ventilated again . . . The paper was read by Director Hoenecke of the Seminary. He attached the teacher's call to the pastorate in the usual way, along these lines: Since the public administration of the Word and Sacrament is delegated to the pastorate of the congregational body, the parochial teacher, however, also is appointed for public teaching, it becomes necessary, since the Word of God does not specifically mention the parochial school teacher, to incorporate his office in some way with the pastorate. The teacher then should receive a regular call from the congregation, in accordance with the Augsburg Confession's demand that no one is to teach publicly in the church without a regular call. And the teacher's work is to be subject, of course, to the pastor's supervision. Thus the call of the teacher is to be considered divine, like that of the pastor.

"This was questioned (evidently by J.P.K.) even as at Manitowoc: Why detour through the office of the pastor in order to establish the divine character of the teacher's call? That which distinguishes the pastor's call and exalts it above the others is the fact that he 'labors in the Word and doctrine.' That is what the Twelve asserted of themselves (Acts 6:2-4: 'Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.'). and Paul says the same of the elders (1 Tim. 5:17: 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.'). It is likewise true of the parochial school teacher; and he is called thereto by the congregation. Why then should not Acts 20:28: 'The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers over the flock' apply to teachers as well as to pastors, and to the other church officers whose work does not constitute laboring in the Word in its specific sense, but who are to be classed with the elders and bishops (the elders of Ephesus are called 'bishops' Acts 20, and there were elders who did not labor in the Word, 1 Tim. 5:17). Professor Hoenecke acknowledged the comment as novel and worthy of careful study.

"It would now have been in place to investigate what the functions of the various offices in the apostolic church were, of which Paul, Peter and Luke make mention; when and how the offices came into being - for that had evidently never been given any thought by most of the conference members. The discussion, however, went off at a tangent owing to a question...

"Prof. Hoenecke's statement (in answer to the above question) did not clarify the meaning of the word 'public' in the Augsburg Confession; so the writer (J.P.K.) now enlarged on the Latin term *publice* in the original version of the Confession which was submitted to the emperor . . . *Publice* refers to what is connected with the public, people, state, community, congregation and is done by their authority, officially. It hasn't anything to do with numbers but was aimed at the enthusiasts and radicals who set themselves up as teachers in opposition to church and state . . . (and whose nuisance) the Romanists laid at the door of Protestantism . . . At the same time the Confession's statement countered Romish hierarchical arrogance . . . So it was a matter of order which on earth is governed by the changes of time and circumstances just so it is sensible and serves the

Gospel. It is not a matter of Scriptural ordinance, and a congregation may very well, for a common sense reason, make different arrangements than we have at present regarding the relationship between pastor and teacher and other officers. The Bible itself, indeed, reports on changes, not only between the Old and New Testament institutions, but in the organization of the apostolic church during the short space of fifty years. The same may be noted in the Lutheran church between Luther's time and later and even here in America since the time of Lutheran immigration and the present set-up in the Synodical Conference." (Koehler, *History WELS*, p. 232.)

After a longer interval Prof. Schaller in 1909 on becoming the director of the Seminary read a paper on the ministry at a mixed conference of the Milwaukee pastors and teachers, in which he (not having taken part in the former discussions) still presented the subject following the old lines there as they were established in the Synodical Conference: Only the pastorate is divinely ordained, "it embodies every service that is necessary for the building of the kingdom of God, the ministry of Word and Sacrament; all other offices that have been created in the course of church history are diaconate offices, that is auxiliary offices, not ordained by God but branched off from the pastoral office by the church in the exercise of its Christian liberty. Such offices are those of the parochial school teacher, the church council, the high school, college and seminary professors, the synod presidents, visitors, missionaries, etc. The basis offered for this presentation was the organization of the diaconate, Acts 6."

This presentation also was challenged by Prof. Koehler "as contrary to what had been gained by the previous discussions, to which Schaller had not been a party. Koehler showed that this procedure was a falsely so-called dogmatical method of determining a doctrine by citing doctrinal statements of the Scripture without paying attention to the historical context and its way of presenting things. The very texts cited to substantiate the divine institution of the pastorate in distinction from other offices are thereby given a wrong slant. The dogmatician must be at home in history and the historical method, and the historian has more to do than merely to set down the so-called facts ... the hisotrian must follow up the development, growth and decline that goes on in the church on earth as well as in the world and constitutes the real 'factum.' *Panta rei*, all things undergo change, said the Greek sage Heraclitus, and Holy Scripture has demonstrated that with much greater force. So here too.

"In the statements about prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, miracle workers, healers, rulers, those gifted with tongues, elders, bishops, they are mentioned alongside of the apostles and deacons in that order, so their successive appearance in order of time is indicated thereby; and all these activities are of divine origin, so the: 'God hath set some in the church' ... (1 Cor. 12:28), is not simply identical with the institution of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments Matt. 28:19. 'The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers' (Acts 20:28) is figurative expression for divine providence in the propagation of the Gospel, which may differ according to time, place and circumstances and pertains to the ministry (diakonia, both as to commission and execution; translated by Luther with 'Amt') which Paul claims for himself, Gal. 1:2, 1 Cor. 3:5. The 'elders' of Ephesus, some of whom may not at all have 'labored in the word and doctrine,' according to 1 Tim. 5:17, are called 'bishops' (overseers) Acts 20:28, which would go to show that pastors have no monopoly on that title; in fact, however, it is no title here at all but descriptive of their shepherding of the flock as the English translation well reveals. And as to the diaconate, all the Greek commentators of the early church identify the 'helpers' of 1 Cor. 12:28 with the deacons whom the Apostles asked to have appointed for serving at the table (Acts 6). About the development, organization and functioning of all the other offices or institutions nothing has been delivered to us, except the simple record that St. Paul made the arrangement or instructed Titus to that effect, and the mention twice of congregational election (by the raising of hands, *cheirotonein*, which the AV unfortunately in the first instant translates with 'ordain' and the reader of today therefore is apt to invest with the confused notions of present-day ordination of pastors).

"As we have seen, these views did not meet with vigorous denial; they were tolerantly received, but not followed up. Alongside, there were other discussions that evidently had their bearing on the question of the Church and Office and its practical application and finally led to drastic opposition." (Koehler, *History WELS*, p. 232-233)

But the Wisconsin Synod involvement in the Cincinnati Case (1904-1908) together with the well-founded objections to the current viewpoint in the Synodical Conference which has been voiced in the discussions since the late 70s, showed the need for a thorough Biblical study of the doctrine of the Church and Ministry. This became the work of the Wauwatosa Seminary professors working independently but in harmony of ideas, Professors John Schaller, August Pieper and John Phillip Koehler.

Highlights in this work are the following. Prof. Pieper began the work with the essay: "Lording It Over Others in the Church," in the first two issues of the *Quartalschrift* 1911. He ended with a discussion of suspension by a synodical president. His point was that while suspension from synodical fellowship is not identical with excommunication from a congregation, yet to all intents and purposes it is. This especially was questioned in communications to Prof. Pieper. He answered in the July issue with the essay: "Suspension Once Again."

But instead of subsiding, the dissension increased. The first result was a synod-wide pastoral conference in Manitowoc (9/27-28/1911), in which Prof. Pieper presented a paper on the doctrine of the Church, of Synodical Discipline and especially Doctrinal Discipline. The second event was the publication of sixteen theses by Prof. Aug. F. Ernst defending the customary viewpoint. It was printed by resolution of the general pastoral conference of the Synod.

"The objections to the Wauwatosa faculty's teaching were refuted in the *Quartalschrift* and at conferences and some of the misunderstood proof matter, adduced in support of the (Ernst) theses, placed in the right light." Prof. Pieper wrote an article on Walther's "Church and Ministry" for the *Quartalschrift*, Jan, 1912. This was written for the 100th Anniversary of Walther's birth in 1811. It offered a "testimonial to the great appreciation of the book all over the Lutheran world." But "concerning Walther's presentation, it is indicated that owing to Walther's style of mainly submitting quotations from the fathers there is much room for misunderstanding the fathers or Walther himself, and that even Walther himself misunderstands at times." Prof. Schaller wrote on the "Release from a Local Congregation" and Prof. Pieper on the "Tokens of the Church." "At the mixed conference Pastor Boerger of Racine and Editor Kahler of the *Rundschau* had been the principal Missouri speakers and they were sympathetic to the Wauwatosa views. The Seminary catalog featured a treatise by Prof. Schaller on the "Origin and Shaping (Entstehung and Gestaltung) of the New Testament Ministry," and in January 1913 Pieper closed the discussion with the article, "Close of the Discussion, etc." Prof. Koehler's written contributions on Church and Ministry at the time consisted of two book reviews in the *Quartalschrift* in 1913 (p. 62 and p. 292).

The final stages of the pro and con discussion (with Missouri) extended over a long period of time. Meetings were held between the St. Louis and Wauwatosa faculties in 1914. "There was no agreement, both in regard to the formulation of the doctrine and of the method, as well, by which it is to be derived from Scriptures." In 1915 the Wauwatosa faculty answered a written protest against various statements of the three older Wauwatosa professors. Two other meetings of like futility took place, one in Chicago and one in the 20s in Milwaukee with St. Louis professors. "The real issue was the definition of the term 'institution' as applied to the church and to the office of the ministry in their concrete form." "The disagreement was not such that the opponents accused each other of false doctrine" (Koehler, *History WELS*, p, 238).

In 1932 representatives of the St. Louis and Thiensville faculties together with the presidents of both synods agreed to the 'Thiensville Theses.' They are evidently "an intersynodical *modus vivendi*, whether intended or not." And finally, discussions on Church and Ministry were carried on in final meetings which our Synod's Commission on Doctrinal Matters attended in the Synodical Conference 1957-60. Our position in these discussions is laid down in "Theses on Church and Ministry," published in the *Quarterly* and in pamphlet form in 1970. They have been used in discussion with various church bodies including the Lutheran Church of the Reformation.

For the sake of the record here I would like to bring you an extended quotation from Koehler's *History of WELS*, p. 236-237, in which he (in connection with the Synod-wide pastoral conference in 1911) records the chief points for a current understanding of the Biblical doctrine for Church and Ministry.

"The present writer now remembers only what he said on the one occasion when he had the floor. He

spoke on the Lord's threefold statement concerning the Keys of the Kingdom (Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:28) and his twice-reported institution of the New Testament Office of the Ministry (Matt. 28:19f.; and Mark 16:15).

"This 'institution' means that the Lord has commissioned His disciples with the ministry of the Word and Sacraments to the whole world, with the promise that He would endue their work with His Spirit, to the end that all believers will be saved. The latter are 'His Church' Matt. 16:18, which He has built on a rock, the communion of those who eventually will enter into life eternal with Him. The solemn character of His speech, the rock foundation of this church (from which Simon receives his name 'Peter'), the whole tenor of the Lord's farewell speeches, John 14-17, and then Paul's saying of the 'sure foundation,' 2 Tim. 2:19, indicate the nature of the communion with Christ. The same applies to 'the church' which the Lord has in mind, Matt. 18:17. There it is a part of the so-called visible church on earth. The use of The Keys here depends on the specific circumstances of time and place, here of course the congregation or body of those that are immediately concerned.

"To elucidate: Christ has only one concept of the church, but at Matt. 18, He, of course, speaks of the (in time and space) localized church as a part of the whole, the congregation of those Christians directly concerned in the matter of the brother's sinning. That may mean a synod as well as a so-called Ortsgemeinde (local congregation). Matt. 18:17 refers to all the believers affected by the sin that is under consideration. They are affected in two respects: the sin is an offence to them, and they want to help the erring brother. As a matter of Christian course, the larger body will consider the smaller group that is involved by further ties with the erring brother. But that cannot mean that righteous judgment pronounced by the larger body, say a synod, is not honored in heaven until the smaller has had its say. And it is the effectiveness in heaven around which Matt. 18 revolves, not outward organization membership here on earth. Excommunication, finally, rightly understood is not an enforcement of damnation, but should serve the sinner's ultimate salvation, by bringing him around, and failing that, serve the sanctification of the church. It is a part of the preaching of the Law and as much a part of the individual Christian's function, as a witness of Christ, as of the individual congregation; and again: as much a part of a synod's function as of the individual local congregation.

"The present-day distinction between the local congregation (Ortsgemeinde) and the synod has no place in the Lord's discourse at Matt. 18. Even though the distinction between *ekklesia* (congregation) *ekklesia megalae* (large congregation) may be found in the Old Testament, that is not the same distinction as between our local congregation and the synod. Nor is the distinction between the 'churches' of Matt. 16 and Matt. 18. At Matt. 16 'His church' is the entire communion of saints that inherit the Kingdom, at Matt. 18 'the church' is the body of believers here on earth immediately concerned, whether local congregation or synod.

"Moreover, the contention regarding the present distinction between local congregation and synod, to wit: that the former has the purpose of spiritual edification, the latter that of outward business, is a fallacy, notwithstanding what synodical constitutions and quotations from the fathers, early and later, may say. As far as the Holy Spirit is concerned a local congregation and a synod as well are called into being by the same promptings of fellowship and of the purpose to promote the Kingdom. And doctrinally, the only criterion for determining what is meant by 'church' is the way the Lord uses the term according to the Gospel of St. Matthew. There is no objection to the use of the term 'Ortsgemeinde' (local congregation) if it is rightly understood as meaning the congregation of believers at a given time and place concerned with a given matter, and that applies to a synod as well as to the smaller group. To assume that, in keeping with the Jewish synagog organization, the Lord in Matt. 18 anticipated the founding of local congregations (and that this, in distinction from the synod for instance, was of divine ordinance) is poor exegesis, to say the least.

"The Savior nowhere betokens an interest in concrete forms of church organization, nor does He, at Matt. 18, lay down or even recognize a certain church administrative order. He is concerned about warning the individual, who either may self-righteously be inclined to omit employing all possible means of bringing a sinner around or by unconcerned fraternizing with a stubborn sinner may interfere with the efforts of his brethren. In both cases, the distinction between local congregation and synod, and their competence in such matters, is calculated to offer an alibi to the individual or whole congregations and synods who have pursued the wrong course.

"The same mode of interpretation must be applied in explaining the Lord's parting statements instituting the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, Matt. 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16. It is just that and not the creation of a certain office, attached to certain ordained persons, or a distinct order, or of any specified forms of carrying out that ministry to the entire world. It comprehends the entire work of the New Testament church, and the Keys are again alluded to in the words: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' This ministry, in its human forms, is no longer, as a matter of the New Testament liberty, tied to Old Testament ceremonial law, though that doesn't spell freedom to do things contrary to the will of God or without the prompting of the Holy Ghost; it means that Christians are free to organize and carry on their ministry according to the moral values that are inherent in the concept of the fellowship that is sanctified by communion with our Lord and Savior.

"The expression 'keys of the kingdom of heaven' is a figure of speech and simply denotes the testimony over against the sinner. Its purpose is to save the brother, and it is incumbent on every believer regardless of station and office (Matt. 18:18-19); its means is brotherly admonition and witness of the truth, where each succeeding step is prompted by love and truth. The Lord's mentioning three steps is not mathematical but indicates the cumulative concern for the erring brother and for the whole communion or community, the congregation or synod, or whatever group directly concerned it may be. Likewise, the hardened state of the sinner who will listen to no admonishment is thereby characterized. The testimony derives its virtue not from the fact that certain ordained persons, or even the entire communion of believers are officiating, but that it is the Word of God by which the Holy Ghost speaks and acts. The sinner who rejects such testimony of the whole body of his brethren, *eo ipso* no longer belongs to the fellowship. To voice this fact on behalf of the church or congregation, is not necessarily the pastor's function but naturally his who has led the proceedings, or of any one whom the body may appoint."

The discussion was and still is caused chiefly by a difference in the method of interpreting the Scripture. On the side of the Wauwatosa men it was the method of linguistic-historical research to establish the meaning of the Scripture and to formulate that dogmatically. This has nothing to do with the modern-day vicious and destructive historical-critical approach to Scripture. The linguistic-historical approach to Scripture can indeed degenerate into the latter, if the heart is not a truly believing heart, a heart which stands in awe of every word which the Lord caused to be written in the Bible. On the other side we find too often an interpretation of the terms of Scripture according to a pre-conceived dogmatic notion. Mainly these are, that present conditions of church and pastorate are ascribed to the terms used in Scriptures, and that the human reason wants so dearly to cling to the idea that hierarchy is beneficial and necessary for the benefit of the church.

I close with a quotation from Luther in regard to Jonah, which turned up in my file under exegesis: "This I say for this reason: For where a person may have it, it is exceedingly good that a person knows at what time and in what country a prophet lived and was present. Because it helps much for a person to understand his book, if he knows time, place, persons and the history which took place at that time." It sounds as though Luther also was interested in "linguistic-historical" research to understand Scriptures.

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