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THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY.

A. THE CHURCH.

The church in the widest sense of the term is the whole number of the children of God. These are, collectively considered, *the household of God*,¹⁾ united under the *one God and Father of all*,²⁾ *the whole family in heaven and earth*,³⁾ comprising all *the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven*,⁴⁾ the multitude gathered from out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*,⁵⁾ whom Christ has *made unto God kings and priests*,⁶⁾ the aggregate of the *heirs of salvation*.⁷⁾ In this sense the church has also been defined as the whole number of God's elect. This is, in its full compass in which it shall endure for ever as a perpetual and permanent whole, the church described by St. Peter as *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*.⁸⁾ This is the mystical body of Christ,⁹⁾ *the fulness of him that*

1) Eph. 2, 19.

2) Eph. 4, 6.

3) Eph. 3, 15.

4) Hebr. 12, 23.

5) Rev. 5, 9.

6) Rev. 5, 10.

7) Hebr. 1, 14.

8) 1 Pet. 2, 9.

9) Eph. 4, 12. Col. 1, 18.

*filleth all in all*¹⁾ and *who is the head of the body, the church.*²⁾ This is the church universal in heaven and earth, in time and eternity.

Viewed in the horizon of time, as the church of Christ on earth, the church is the whole number of those who believe in Christ, who are justified by faith and sanctified in faith through the means of grace. This is the bride of Christ, in the world, though not of the world,³⁾ but awaiting the coming of her Lord,⁴⁾ who *loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*⁵⁾ Thus constituted under and about the means of grace the church was in the Savior's mind in his sacerdotal prayer, when he said, *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one.*⁶⁾ This is the flock of Christ of which he says, *There shall be one fold and one shepherd,*⁷⁾ his sheep, who hear his voice, and whom he knows, and who follow him.⁸⁾ To them collectively he has given the charge to disciple all nations, baptizing and teaching them, and the promise, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*⁹⁾ This is the one, holy, catholic church. One, because of its one head,¹⁰⁾ one foundation,¹¹⁾ one Spirit, one Lord and God and Father, one baptism, one faith, one hope,¹²⁾ one inheritance in heaven.¹³⁾ Holy, being sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word,¹⁴⁾ a holy nation.¹⁵⁾ Catholic, as being the whole number of all believers, all the disciples of Christ among all nations taken together, all of them, and no one besides them.

1) Eph. 1, 23.

2) Col. 1, 18; cf. Eph. 5, 23.

3) John 17, 11—16; 15, 19.

4) Rev. 22, 17.

5) Eph. 5, 25 f.

6) John 17, 19—21.

7) John 10, 16.

8) John 10, 27.

9) Matt. 28, 19. 20.

10) Eph. 1, 22; 4, 15; 5, 23. Col. 1, 18.

11) Eph. 2, 20. 1 Cor. 3, 11. 1 Pet. 2, 6.

12) Eph. 4, 3—6.

13) Col. 1, 12. 1 Pet. 1, 4.

14) Eph. 5, 26.

15) 1 Pet. 2, 9.

In a more restricted sense the word ἐκκλησία, *church*, is used to denote the local congregation. In this sense also the church is the whole number of believers, but restricted to a certain place. Thus we read of the church at Jerusalem as of *all that believed*.¹⁾ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πιστευόντων, *the multitude of them that believed*,²⁾ St. Paul writes to the *saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse*,³⁾ to the *saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus*,⁴⁾ and to *all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi*.⁵⁾ In this sense the word may be used in the plural, as when Paul mentions *the care of all the churches*⁶⁾ and writes to *the churches of Galatia*.⁷⁾ Each of these local congregations of saints is a part of the church universal, which is one, the holy catholic church.

The church being the whole number of all believers, the aggregate of the regenerate, every one who believes in Christ is a member of the church, and no one who does not truly believe in Christ is a member of the church. The church being the family of God, and we being *all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*,⁸⁾ the members of the church are simply described as οἰκεῖοι τῆς πίστεως, *they who are of the household of faith*.⁹⁾ Who are they? *The Lord knoweth them that are his*.¹⁰⁾ They are his by faith, and faith is in the heart and mind. *What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?*¹¹⁾ Elias knew of but one man in Israel who had kept the covenant of God, and that was himself. But God knew of seven thousand faithful who had remained true to him.¹²⁾ Thus every Christian, *examining himself, whether he be in the faith*,¹³⁾ may and should know that he is a member of the church; but of no other man can he know whether he be

1) Acts 2, 44; cf. 4, 4.

4) Eph. 1, 1.

7) Gal. 1, 2.

10) 2 Tim. 2, 19.

12) 1 Kings 19, 14. 18.

2) Acts 4, 32.

5) Phil. 1, 1.

8) Gal. 3, 26.

11) 1 Cor. 2, 11.

13) 2 Cor. 13, 5.

3) Col. 1, 2.

6) 2 Cor. 11, 28.

9) Gal. 6, 10.

or only seem to be in the faith and a member of the church. *The kingdom of God is within you*, says Christ.¹⁾ The church, the aggregate of believers, is not discernible by human eyes, or, in other words, is invisible, not an object of perception through the senses, but an object of faith. According to the creed of all Christendom we *believe* in the church just as we believe in the forgiveness of sins and the life everlasting. And we believe in the forgiveness of sins not because we see it or feel it, but because we are assured of it by the word of God. Thus, also, we have the Savior's promise that he will build his church and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,²⁾ and we have the promise that the word of God shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it,³⁾ and having these promises we believe what they say, and are confident that wherever the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered, there children of God will be born and Christ will surely have his church. Not on the evidence of the senses, not on arguments of our own, even though they be conclusions drawn from scriptural premises, as, f. ex., from the efficacy of the means of grace, do we base our assurance, but on the explicit, direct statements of Scripture, when we say, "I believe in the holy Christian church."

Such is the church in the proper sense of the word. But *ἐκκλησία*, *church*, is said also in a tropical sense. Of the *church of Pergamos* we read that it had among its members those who held the doctrine of Balaam and them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.⁴⁾ These profligate errorists were certainly not members of the body of Christ, the holy church of children of God. Again we read of Diotrephes, who was prating against the apostles with malicious words, that he *cast out of the church*⁵⁾ those who would receive the brethren against his will, and this was the *church* to which

1) Luke 17, 21.

2) Matt. 16, 18.

3) Is. 55, 11.

4) Rev. 2, 14 f.

5) 3 John 10.

St. John had written.¹⁾ Yet what is here called *the church* cannot be the invisible church, the family of God, from which no man Diotrophes could cast these brethren for doing the will of God. *Church* here denotes a society gathered about the means of grace and professing the Christian faith. Such society may count among its members men as Diotrophes and Balaamites and Nicolaitanes and few or many hypocrites. But because of the children of God, who cannot fail to be where the gospel of Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered, such society is synecdochically called what a part only properly is, a Christian church. In like manner Christ speaks of the kingdom of heaven as comprising both wise and foolish virgins,²⁾ good and bad fishes,³⁾ guests with and others without wedding garments,⁴⁾ that is, men who are and men who are not children of God and properly fellowcitizens with the saints in the kingdom of heaven. Here too the whole is synecdochically named after a part. And while all the children of God hidden in the society named after them are known to God alone and remain an invisible church to us, the visible society of which they are a part is a visible church, a number of persons visibly gathered about the means of grace and concerned in their administration and use.

The correct distinction between the invisible and the visible church is of the utmost importance. The invisible church, whether conceived in a wider or a narrower sense, is always and in its whole compass invisible to mortal eyes, being known to God alone, inasmuch as that which constitutes a person a member of the church on earth, true faith in Christ, is discernible only to him who *knows what is in man*.⁵⁾ Of the true Israelite St. Paul says, *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, . . . but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly*.⁶⁾ Likewise a true Christian is a Christian who is one inwardly, according to *the inward man*, τὸν ἑσω ἀνδρω-

1) 3 John 9.

2) Matt. 25, 1 ff.

3) Matt. 13, 47 f.

4) Matt. 22, 2—11.

5) John 2, 25. Ps. 139, 1 f.

6) Rom. 2, 28 f.

πον,¹⁾ *the hidden man of the heart*, τὸν κρυπτὸν τῆς καρδίας ἀνδρῶπον,²⁾ and the words of king Solomon are true to-day, *Thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men.*³⁾ It is wrong to speak of a visible and an invisible side of the church in the proper sense of the term. A visible thing may in a sense have an invisible side, a side hidden from view for the time being. But a visible side of an invisible thing is nonsensical, a *contradictio in appposito*. We may see a number of people regularly meeting at a certain place to hear the preaching of the gospel and to profess faith in Christ. That is a visible church. But a man's profession may be a pretense, and his conduct may be deceit, even self-deceit. There are those of whom the Lord says, *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*⁴⁾ Even on the day of judgment there will be those who will say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?* etc., but Christ will profess unto them, *I never knew you.*⁵⁾ That there is in an assembly of hearers of the word an assembly of believers, we can only believe, and do believe, because of the divine promise that the word of God shall nowhere remain without effect. And this we believe not only where in an orthodox congregation the gospel is preached in all its purity, but wherever the essentials of the gospel are yet heard, more especially, where the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ Jesus, is inculcated. It is for this very reason, the assurance of the presence of children of God in their midst, that we acknowledge heterodox churches as churches, if they have, in their doctrine, retained the essentials of the gospel, which is everywhere the power of God unto salvation. This is a most comforting assurance in view of the deplorable degeneracy of many visible churches, contaminated as they are with false doctrine and practice. Jesus when cru-

1) Rom. 7, 22.

2) 1 Pet. 3, 4.

3) 1 Kings 8, 39.

4) Matt. 15, 8.

5) Matt. 7, 22. 23.

cified between convict robbers was still the Savior of the world. So Christ, though preached in the synagogue of Antichrist, is even there the head of the church, ruling in the midst of his enemies over his peculiar people.

This distinction is of importance in still another way. It is true that no one has God for a father who has not the church for his mother, that no man will be in the church triumphant in heaven who has not been in the church militant on earth.¹⁾ But this is again the invisible church, the whole number of believers. As it is vain presumption in any visible church to claim the dignity of being the holy catholic church, so it is damnable arrogance in a visible church to pose as *ecclesia extra quam nulla salus*. Christ is the Savior, and by faith in him we are saved, and the church without which there is no salvation is the church whereof we are members by faith in Christ, the invisible church, and none other, be it orthodox or heterodox. When Luther was excommunicated from the church of Rome, he was not thereby separated from the body of Christ, the holy catholic church. On the other hand, mere membership in a visible church, even an orthodox church, a society gathered about the pure gospel, is no more than Judas Iscariot's discipleship was a surety of eternal salvation. A believer who has been put out of a visible church is still a child of God and a true member of the church of Christ. And an unbeliever who has been received into a visible church is still separate from the body of Christ, the holy Christian church. Thus also the spiritual treasures, rights, privileges, and powers of the church were properly given to the invisible church, the royal priesthood, the bride of Jesus Christ.

The treasures of the church are the means of grace and all that they contain and confer, and the rights and powers of the church are the use and administration of these means of grace and the enjoyment and exercise of what they confer.

1) Rev. 7, 14.

Of his *disciples* Christ says, *I have given them thy word.*¹⁾ To his *disciples* he gave the charge, *Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*²⁾ This was a commission to *the eleven disciples*,³⁾ the little flock he had gathered about him; but not to them only. For he continues, *And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*⁴⁾ The eleven disciples did not live to the end of the world, and this promise clearly indicates that, like the charge to which it was attached, it was intended for all those to the end of the world who would, like these eleven, be disciples of Christ. That it was thus understood by the early church and by the church of all times is clear. Never did the apostles claim the right of baptizing or the right of teaching as a prerogative reserved to them and not permitted to others. Philip baptized the eunuch.⁵⁾ Ananias baptized Saul.⁶⁾ Most of those who were baptized in the churches founded by St. Paul were also baptized by such as were not apostles. For Paul expressly says that he baptized but few in Corinth and did not look upon baptizing as his particular or chief task in his apostolate.⁷⁾ Thus also the preaching of the gospel was at no time, either by themselves or by others, considered an exclusive privilege of the eleven. And after the departure of the apostles baptism and preaching did not cease because of a lack of authority to perform these functions. Neither were they continued as by a permission or commission obtained from the eleven; for we nowhere read of such transfer of authority by the apostles. Nor did these rights or duties devolve upon their successors in the apostleship; for in this office they had no successors. Baptism and the preaching

1) John 17, 14.

3) Matt. 28, 16.

5) Acts 8, 38.

7) 1 Cor. 1, 14—17.

2) Matt. 28, 19 f.

4) Matt. 28, 20.

6) Acts 9, 17 f.; 22, 12—16.

of the gospel were practiced throughout the church at all times simply because the church of all times has Christ's command and knows it. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was likewise given to the disciples of Christ. Not to those only who were with him in the upper room at Jerusalem, but to his disciples to the end of the world did he say, *This do in remembrance of me,*¹⁾ that, as often as they eat this bread and drink this cup, they show *the Lord's death, till he come.*²⁾

In and with these means of grace the church has all the benefits and blessings which they confer, forgiveness of sins, the grace of God, peace and hope and life and the inheritance reserved in heaven. Thus Paul writes to *the CHURCH of the Thessalonians: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*³⁾ The same greeting he extends to *the CHURCH of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.*⁴⁾ Of this church the apostle says, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift.*⁵⁾ He tells this church, *All things are your's.*⁶⁾ And the church at Corinth had no prerogative in this respect before other churches. The greeting of Paul to this church and other churches is also the greeting of St. Peter to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,⁷⁾ as he closes the epistle addressed to them, saying, *Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus.*⁸⁾

And the church is not a wealthy infant under a guardian empowered to administer the estate of his ward, but the bride of Jesus Christ holding the keys of the house of God

1) 1 Cor. 11, 24 f.

2) 1 Cor. 11, 26.

3) 1 Thess. 1, 1.

4) 2 Cor. 1, 1 f; cf. 1 Cor. 1, 2 f.

5) 1 Cor. 1, 4—7.

6) 1 Cor. 3, 21.

7) 1 Pet. 1, 1.

8) 1 Pet. 5, 13.

in her own hands. Christ was dealing with his disciples, when he said unto them, *But whom say YE that I am?*¹⁾ When Peter answered this question put to them, he did so as their spokesman, and thus the commission given to him concerned all those for whom he had spoken. 'To him, but not to him alone, did Christ commit the keys of the kingdom of heaven. For the same power of binding and loosing on earth he gave to all of his disciples when he said, *If he neglect to hear the CHURCH, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto YOU, Whatsoever YE shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*²⁾ And after his resurrection, when the *eleven* were gathered together and they that were with them,³⁾ Jesus stood in the midst and said to THEM, *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I YOU. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive YE the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins YE retain, they are retained.*⁴⁾ Not to Peter only, not to the eleven apostles only, but to all his disciples, to the church, did Christ commit the gospel, the sacraments, the keys, the power to bind and to loose on earth what shall be bound and loosed in heaven, to remit and to retain sins in his name. The church has, under her Master's instructions, the disposal and use of the treasures she has received. The gospel is the bread of life with which the children of God's household shall be fed. The gospel is also the means whereby such as are yet without the household of faith may be brought in, called and converted to Christ. The right and the power to preach the gospel at home and abroad, to call preachers, to send missionaries, to baptize, to celebrate the Lord's supper, to exercise discipline, to sit in judgment on teachers and their doctrine, all these powers

1) Matt. 16, 13—15.

3) Luke 24, 33; cf. John 20, 19.

2) Matt. 18, 18 f.

4) John 20, 19. 21—23.

are primarily vested in Christ. But as the Father had sent him, so did he send his disciples, his church.¹⁾ To his church on earth he delegated these functions of his prophetic office, and by his authority the church now performs that which without such authority no man or community of men could validly and without gross arrogance perform. Whatever Christ has not empowered the church to do, the church also can not do as by divine authority. Christ has not endowed the church with legislative power, and hence the church must not presume to enact laws as binding upon the members of the church or upon anybody else. In the kingdom of Christ the word of God is the only law of the realm, the authoritative norm of doctrine and rule of life. The church itself is bound to exercise its delegated powers according to the will of Christ as laid down in his instructions. Christ has for all times determined for his church what to preach, how to administer the sacraments as to their essentials, whom to admit to baptism and the Lord's table, how to exercise church discipline, the qualifications for the ministry, and neither ill-advised charity nor supposed expediency can justify a deviation from the Master's will.

From the instructions laid down in his word for the guidance of his church in the exercise of her rights and powers, Christ is seen to have delegated these rights and powers to every local congregation of his disciples. Where he instructs his disciples in the right use of the keys, he says, *Tell it unto the church.*²⁾ This cannot mean, the church universal, which no man's voice can reach; but the brother who would gain a brother is directed to the church before which they can both appear, which in its assembly may hear the complaint and admonish the offender. It is immaterial whether this church or assembly be large or small. For *where two or three are gathered together in my*

1) John 20, 21.

2) Matt. 18, 17.

name, there am I in the midst of them, says Christ in the context.¹⁾ To the church of God which is at Corinth, Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ says, *Put away from among yourselves that wicked person*,²⁾ and the apostle himself judges concerning the offender as present in spirit where this congregation is gathered together.³⁾ He considers it the business of the congregation at Colosse to provide for ample preaching of the word in its midst⁴⁾ and to admonish Archippus to the faithful performance of the duties of his office.⁵⁾ All the admonitions of Rev. 2 and 3 to watch over and maintain purity of doctrine and holiness of life are addressed to local churches by the Spirit of Christ.⁶⁾ The various churches of Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia were severally called upon to contribute toward the collection for the needy brethren in Judea.⁷⁾ All the tasks of the church and the powers requisite for their valid performance are thus seen to be allotted to local congregations.

But here we should remember that the local church is properly the congregation of believers locally circumscribed. *The church of God which is at Corinth* is the whole number of *them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, who are in Corinth*.⁸⁾ *Of the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ*,⁹⁾ no one can be a member who is not himself in Christ by faith. And the rights and powers of the church are properly vested only in the invisible church. Hypocrites who outwardly join in the worship and work of the church do not really share in the spiritual concerns of the children of God, but come under the word once spoken to Simon the sorcerer, *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*.¹⁰⁾

1) Matt. 18, 20.

2) 1 Cor. 5, 13.

3) 1 Cor. 5, 3 f.

4) Col. 3, 16.

5) Col. 4, 17.

6) Rev. 1, 11; 2, 1. 7. 8. 11. 12. 17. 18. 29; 3, 1. 6. 7. 13. 14. 22.

7) 2 Cor. 8, 1; 9, 2. 1 Cor. 16, 1.

8) 1 Cor. 1, 2.

9) 1 Thess. 1, 1.

10) Acts 8, 21.

They have no share in the prayers of the congregation with which they are assembled, nor in its confession of faith, for they cannot truly say, "Our Father which art in heaven," and, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins," etc. Only by the true disciples of Christ within a visible church or in their name the office of the keys is administered. Not knowing, however, *who* they are, we can deal with them only *where* they are, in the visible church, where we find the marks of the church, the word and the sacraments. The brother who would tell unto the church his grievance against a brother will tell it unto the visible congregation of which both are members,—or in which the offender is a member, if they be of different congregations,—knowing that thus he will have it before those whom the brother should hear, and who have the power to bind and to loose on earth what shall be bound and loosed in heaven. From this tribunal there is no appeal to a superior court on earth as of higher authority. For in the church there is no superior and no inferior, all its members being equal brethren under one master, Christ,¹⁾ and all churches having received the same authority and powers. A number of local congregations may join hands and jointly carry on the work of the Master. But in so doing they meet on an equal footing. Synods are consociations of sister churches, not judicatories whose enactments must be respected as binding upon the several churches thus united in a common cause. In their relation to the several congregations Synods are advisory bodies only, as far as the internal affairs of the congregations are concerned. Civil governments, being endowed with legislative authority, can enact laws which the subjects are bound to obey *for conscience sake*.²⁾ But churches are not endowed with such power, and in the church there are no subjects

1) Matt. 23, 8.

2) Rom. 13, 5—7.

but unto Christ. The church shall use those powers which Christ has delegated to the church, and when one church exercises such powers according to Christ's instructions, such action should be respected by all other churches. Thus, when a sinner has, after due admonition, been excommunicated by a congregation, he should be held excommunicate by all other congregations. Of course, the right to use does not imply the right to abuse, and when one congregation finds that another congregation has abused the power of the keys, it is not bound by such tyrannous action any more than one is held to honor the unlawful acts of an agent who openly disregards the will and instructions of his principal. But when a church thus sets aside the judgment of a sister church, it does not exercise a superiority over the sister church, but an inferiority to the common head of the church, whose will the sister church has not performed but violated. Thus, also, every congregation is charged to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. But no church, no apostle, no angel from heaven, is empowered to alter the gospel or a sacrament,¹⁾ and when a church harbors or disseminates false doctrine, it becomes the duty of every other church to reprimand the erring church by correction and reproof, not because of any superior dignity or authority of its own, but because of the superior dignity and authority of Christ and his word. When a synod expels a congregation which has drifted or fallen away into heterodoxy or other open and persistent disobedience to the word of God, this is not properly excommunication, an act of compliance with Matt. 18, 17. One church cannot unchurch another. But Christ would have an orthodox church. He says, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*²⁾ Of the first congregation gathered at Jerusalem we read, *They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in*

1) Gal. 1, 8 f.

2) John 8, 31.

*breaking of bread, and in prayers.*¹⁾ And these things should go together to the end of time. To those whom he promised, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*, he also said, *Teach them to observe ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you.*²⁾ And if there be those who will not continue in Christ's word, and refuse to teach and to observe what Christ has commanded us, their fellowship must not be sought but avoided. *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject,*³⁾ *neither be partaker of other men's sins.*⁴⁾ Membership in or fellowship with a church is *prima facie* evidence of agreement with and approval of its doctrine and practice. It therefore behooves every Christian to unite with an orthodox body, a congregation in which the doctrine of Christ is preached and professed in all its purity and the sacraments are administered according to Christ's ordinance.⁵⁾ It is his duty to extend the hand of fellowship to all other orthodox bodies within his reach or to accept such hand when it is offered. All this, because it is his duty to bear testimony to the truth of Christ in word and deed and to promote the cause of truth in every way consistent therewith, and because of the unity of the Spirit and of faith which we should endeavor to keep.⁶⁾ For the same reasons an orthodox Christian must keep aloof from every heterodox body and refuse its hand of fellowship when offered.⁷⁾ There can be no conscious compromise with error without a corresponding denial of the truth,⁸⁾ and error must not be defended and promoted, but abandoned and combated. When Christ says, *For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice*, it will not do to say with Pilate, *What is truth?*⁹⁾ A member

1) Acts 2, 42.

3) Tit. 3, 10.

5) Hebr. 10, 25.

7) Matt. 7, 15. 2 Cor. 6, 14—17.

9) John 18, 37 f.

2) Matt. 28, 20.

4) 1 Tim. 5, 22.

6) Eph. 4, 3.

8) Matt. 12, 30.

of an erring church who has been led to understand the truth and has become aware of the heterodoxy of his church, is bound to bear witness to the truth and against the error at variance therewith, and, if his testimony be unheeded, to part with the church which will not part with its error. This is his duty, even vows and pledges to the contrary notwithstanding. For a promise to do what is wrong is itself a wrong, and to keep such promise is another wrong. False doctrine is sin, and adherence to false doctrine and its abettors is sin, and no one can ever be bound to sin either as a principal or as an accessory. Even in temporal affairs a witness is charged to say the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and Christ certainly demands as much of his witnesses.

This is by no means unchurching all heterodox churches or any one of them. On the contrary, it must be with equal earnestness and consistency maintained that a church contaminated with false doctrine, but still giving voice to the essential truths of the gospel, is certainly a church because of the children of God who cannot fail to be where the means of grace are in continued use. And being a church, it certainly has all the rights and powers of the church. The children of God in such erring church are as truly a royal priesthood as those in the orthodox church. They hold the same keys of heaven and have the same power to use them according to the same instructions of the Head of the church over all, and when they so use them, their action is valid and should be respected by all churches. Those who were baptized in one church should not be rebaptized in another. Proselyting in other churches is not Christian mission. But where the doctrine of the gospel is no longer heard, where the divine trinity in unity, the divinity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, justification by faith, are denied, we know of no Christian church, no believers in Christ, no gospel, no sacrament, no power of the keys, no Christian ministry.

B. THE MINISTRY.

The rights and powers of the church are vested in each local congregation of believers. The church universal, though by no means a mere abstraction or idea, but a concrete quantity, an aggregate of concrete persons, in fact, the church which alone has the promise of perpetual existence, the church without which there is no salvation, is by its very universality incapable of conjoint action, the conscious performance of concurrent will. The universal church cannot convene, deliberate, decree, not even by representatives. There never was a truly ecumenical council. But even the local church is not so constituted that it can act in plenary congregation. Baptized infants, while surely members of the church, are physically and mentally incapable of active cooperation in the business of the church. Women are expressly barred from public speech in the presence of the men, when the apostle says, *Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak.*¹⁾ We have no instance conflicting with this rule in apostolic times. And the rule refers not only to teaching in public, but also to taking part in public deliberations for mutual instruction or understanding. For Paul further says, *If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home,* and gives the reason, *For it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*²⁾ Then there may be sick and feeble members in the congregation, unable to be with the brethren in their deliberative and executive assembly. All these, however, are not ignored but represented in the meeting of the men who transact the business of the church, publicly exercising for themselves and for those whom they represent, what is incumbent upon all. Their enactments are not absolutely final. A woman's protest properly brought before the congregation must be heard and, if well founded, must be heeded. But if they go unchallenged, the actions of the

1) 1 Cor. 14, 34; cf. 1 Tim. 2, 11—14.

2) 1 Cor. 14, 35.

convened representatives are the actions of the entire congregation. Paul calls upon the entire *church of God which is at Corinth*¹⁾ to discipline an offender, appealing to the congregation *gathered together*,²⁾ in the same epistle in which he declares it a shame for women to speak in the church.³⁾

There are, however, some tasks enjoined upon the church which are of such a kind that they cannot be properly performed even by the entire assembly of the men in a congregation. Assemblies may deliberate, investigate, decree, impart admonition or reproof; but they cannot preach a sermon, or baptize a child, or administer the Lord's supper to a communicant. Neither are all the men in a congregation individually capable of preaching. And even if in an exceptional case a congregation were composed of men every one of whom had the natural talents and the acquired accomplishments requisite for preaching, or for administering the sacraments decently and in order,⁴⁾ this would not entitle every one of them to the public performance of these functions. All Christians are priests, and therefore every Christian has the right and duty to bring the sacrifices of his heart and lips and hands before his God. But his spiritual priesthood does not empower him to offer up his neighbor's sacrifices or the sacrifices of an entire community of such as are like himself priests before God. The police power of the state is shared by all the members of the state. But not every citizen is empowered to exercise this power by restraining his neighbor's private rights or punishing him for a disregard of his restraint. Thus even on general principles it would appear that the exercise of the powers of the church is not at the arbitrary disposal of every member of the church. But Christ has not left it to the church to adjust this matter on general principles; he has himself established an order of things which his apostles

1) 1 Cor. 1, 2.

3) 1 Cor. 14, 35.

2) 1 Cor. 5, 3—5. 13.

4) 1 Cor. 14, 40.

and the early church have put into practice from the beginning, and which he has ordained for all time.

*God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation,*¹⁾ says Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ. A minister is one who labors in the service of another, performing the task committed to him by him who would otherwise have to perform it himself. One who gives a ministry to another makes him his agent to do the work of his principal. Paul and others to whom God has given a ministry are θεοῦ διδασκοί, *ministers of God*,²⁾ or *ministers of Christ*,³⁾ who put them *into the ministry*.⁴⁾ This διακονία was given also to such as were not apostles. Paul speaks of himself and Apollos as of *ministers*,⁵⁾ and of Tychicus as of a *minister and fellow servant*.⁶⁾ Timothy was a *minister of God*, διδασκὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,⁷⁾ a *minister of Jesus Christ*.⁸⁾ Epaphras was a *minister of Christ*.⁹⁾ This ministry, then, was not simply identical with the apostleship. Paul describes it as *the ministry of reconciliation*.¹⁰⁾ That which is to be achieved by the work entrusted to these servants of God is reconciliation, and this is to be accomplished by the *word of reconciliation*.¹¹⁾ We find him in the actual performance of his ministry as we read on, *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*.¹²⁾ This is the work of the ministry *in nuce*. In God's service, in Christ's stead, God, Christ, really working by them, they pray and beseech men to be reconciled to God. The preaching of the gospel in Christ's name is the work of the Christian ministry. Thus Paul speaks of *the ministry* which he has *received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God*.¹³⁾ He repeatedly states that he was made a *minister of the gospel*.¹⁴⁾

1) 2 Cor. 5, 18.

2) 2 Cor. 6, 4; cf. 1 Tim. 3, 2.

3) 1 Tim. 4, 6.

4) 1 Tim. 1, 12.

5) 1 Cor. 3, 5.

6) Col. 4, 7.

7) 1 Thess. 3, 2.

8) 1 Tim. 4, 6.

9) Col. 1, 7.

10) 2 Cor. 5, 18.

11) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

12) 2 Cor. 5, 20.

13) Acts 20, 24.

14) Eph. 3, 6. 7. Col. 1 23.

The work of preaching the gospel is properly the official work of Christ himself, whose ministers the preachers of the gospel are. He was anointed and sent *to preach the gospel to the poor*,¹⁾ and when he taught and preached in the cities, *the poor had the gospel preached to them*.²⁾ And his prophetic office was not to cease when he ascended into heaven. He had made provision for the continuation of his work. There were those to whom he said, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*.³⁾ As he had been an official spokesman of the Father, preaching the gospel, so it was his will that there should be those whose office it should be to continue his work, preaching the gospel in his name.⁴⁾ When he charged his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature,⁵⁾ and to disciple all nations, baptizing and teaching them,⁶⁾ it was his will that there should be a ministry of reconciliation, wherein those whom he would make his ministers should know it to be their *διακονία*, the particular service of their office, to preach the gospel in Christ's stead. In this wise all the counsel of God should be declared⁷⁾ not only to those who were to be gathered into congregations by missionary labors of apostles and evangelists, but also to those churches of Christ which were the fruits of such labors and in whose midst the work of the ministry must be carried on for the edifying of the body of Christ by pastors and teachers. For these purposes Christ from the earliest days of the new testament gave the various *διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης*, *ministers of the new testament*,⁸⁾ some, *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, *evangelists*; and some, *pastors and teachers*.⁹⁾ All these he gave *εἰς ἔργον διακονίας*, *for the work of the ministry*.¹⁰⁾ All of them being *ministers of Christ*,¹¹⁾ the work of their ministry was properly Christ's

1) Luke 4, 18.

2) Matt. 11, 1—5.

3) John 20, 21.

4) Luke 24, 47.

5) Mark 16, 15.

6) Matt. 28, 19 f.

7) Acts 20, 27.

8) 2 Cor. 3, 6.

9) Eph. 4, 11; cf. 1 Cor. 12, 28.

10) Eph. 1, 12.

11) 1 Cor. 4, 1.

work, *the edifying of his body*,¹⁾ who is himself *the Savior of his body*,²⁾ who promised that he himself would build his church.³⁾ They were to be *stewards*⁴⁾ of him who himself *nourishes and cherishes the church*.⁵⁾ And Christ will not suffer his work to be taken from his hands. It is only by his will, appointment and commission, that a man can truly be his minister to perform his work. The Christian ministry is where it is and what it is by the will and ordinance of Christ. It is not, like civil government, a ministry of the sword and of wrath,⁶⁾ but a *ministry of the word*,⁷⁾ the *word of reconciliation*,⁸⁾ and those who are in the ministry are ambassadors for Christ and preach and pray in Christ's stead, *Be ye reconciled to God*.⁹⁾ The ministry in the church is not a means of grace, but an office for the administration of the means of grace, God's means of grace, whereby God gives and works. The ministers of Christ are *stewards of the mysteries of God*.¹⁰⁾ A steward is an officer of the household. What he does in his stewardship, he does not by his own but by the housefather's authority, and what he dispenses is not his own but the housefather's substance, and to him the steward is ultimately responsible. A stewardship as every other office is not what the steward or other officer makes it, nor what those make it to whom he ministers, but what that power makes it from which his official authority comes. *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*.¹¹⁾ And the official faithfulness of a steward consists in the careful and punctual execution of his charge, within the limits of his authority. To dispense what was not entrusted to him, or to give where he was instructed to withhold, is not liberality but usurpation, and to withhold where he should give is not strictness but tyranny, in a steward. In all this the ministry in the church is an

1) Eph. 1, 12.

4) 1 Cor. 4, 1 f.

7) Acts 6, 4.

10) 1 Cor. 4, 1.

2) Eph. 5, 23.

5) Eph. 5, 29.

8) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

11) 1 Cor. 4, 2.

3) Matt. 16, 18.

6) Rom. 13, 4.

9) 2 Cor. 5, 20.

office, a ministerial office, a charge or trust of service with the authority of the creator of the trust.

The ministers of Christ in the primitive church were of various kinds. Paul, Peter, John, and others, were apostles of Christ, his messengers directly called and commissioned to carry the gospel to Jews and Gentiles in all lands, planting the church of Christ throughout the nations. They were in a peculiar manner and measure endowed with spiritual gifts for their peculiar office. They were to be for all times the infallible teachers of Christendom. Paul lays particular stress upon his apostleship, not only announcing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ,¹⁾ but also vindicating his apostolic character against those who called it into question or even denied it.²⁾ He was an apostle, not of men, neither by man, *οὐκ ἀνθρώπου*, but *by Jesus Christ*.³⁾ And the apostolate is expressly termed a *ministry*, *διακονία*,⁴⁾ being in fact the earliest form of the ministry of the new testament. While the apostles were in Jerusalem, they also served as the pastors and teachers of the local congregation which they had gathered by the preaching of the gospel, administering the *ministry of the word*⁵⁾ by teaching and preaching Jesus Christ in the temple and *κατ' οἶκον*,⁶⁾ in the various houses in which, for want of special meeting houses, the various groups of disciples would meet for worship, to hear the word, celebrate the sacrament, and unite in prayer. One of these houses belonged to Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered together praying.⁷⁾ As the number of disciples increased, other ministers were added. They were termed *πρεσβύτεροι*, *elders*. These presbyters were not the successors of the apostles; for we find them side by side with these earliest ministers of the earliest church,⁸⁾ which sent a letter to the churches among the Gentiles as addressed

1) Rom. 1, 1. 1 Cor. 1, 1. Eph. 1, 1 al.

2) 2 Cor. 11, 5; 12, 11 f. Gal. 1, 1 ff.

3) Gal. 1, 1.

4) Acts 1, 17. 25.

5) Acts 6, 4.

6) Acts 5, 41.

7) Acts 12, 12.

8) Acts 15, 2. 4. 6. 22. 23.

to them by *the apostles and elders and brethren*.¹⁾ Peter, writing to the churches in distant lands, terms himself *συμπρεσβύτερος*, *fellow presbyter* of the presbyters among them.²⁾ While the apostles were still active in their ministry, the churches throughout Christendom had their elders. They were also known as bishops.³⁾ St. Paul applies the terms *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος* to the same persons.⁴⁾ How had these persons been made bishops, presbyters, or, as Paul also calls them, pastors and teachers?

The apostles had been singled out and called to the apostleship directly by Christ himself. Having thus been made ministers of Christ, they were also the first pastors of a church which had been gathered by their ministerial work and accepted their ministerial labors while they were with it, as Peter was at Jerusalem and Paul was at Corinth and Ephesus. The elders were not chosen and called by immediate acts of Christ. Yet Epaphras was a minister of Christ,⁵⁾ and Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that the Holy Ghost has made them bishops, to feed the church of God.⁶⁾ St. Peter likewise exhorts the elders of the churches to feed the flock of God as pastors or bishops under the *ἀρχιεπίμην*, the chief pastor or archbishop of his flock,⁷⁾ thereby recognizing them as ministers of Christ, who as such can hold their office only from Christ, whose work they perform. How the elders at Jerusalem were called to their office we are not told by St. Luke. But we learn that certain assistants to the apostles, the seven deacons, were chosen by the congregation,⁸⁾ and even without further light on the subject it would seem probable by analogy that the elders too were not appointed by the apostles, but likewise chosen by the congregation under the guidance and cooperation of the ministers already in office. Now, this is precisely how, as

1) Acts 15, 23.

3) Phil. 1, 1. 1 Tim. 3, 1. 2.

5) Col. 1, 7.

7) 1 Pet. 5, 1—4.

2) 1 Pet. 5, 1.

4) Tit. 1, 5. 7. Acts 20, 17.

6) Acts 20, 28; cf. v. 17.

8) Acts 6, 1 ff.

St. Luke tells us, the churches in Galatia were provided with elders. Paul and Barnabas, who had gathered these congregations, visited them on their return journey and organized the churches which they would now have to leave to God and the word of his grace, and they caused them to choose elders for themselves. This is what *χειροτονήσαντες αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους*¹⁾ says. The verb *χειροτονεῖν* is simply the word for voting by lifting up the hand to signify assent. It is used in the same sense by Paul,²⁾ where he says that Titus was chosen by the churches for a certain task. The usage of the word may be further substantiated from the *Teaching of the twelve apostles*, where we read, *Χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους.*³⁾ Here again the churches are called upon to elect for themselves their bishops and deacons. And it was highly proper that they should. To the churches Christ himself has given the charge to preach the gospel, and the church must see to it that the gospel be preached. Where the ministers already at work are not sufficient, or where they are called away to other fields or to their eternal rest, the churches carry out the will of Christ and their peculiar task, when they call others to the ministry of the word. Preach the gospel, Teach the people to observe what I have commanded you, is Christ's commission to the churches of Christendom. This is the work of the ministry entrusted to the church, the body of Christ. But as the human body performs certain functions through certain organs, the digestive functions through the digestive organs, other functions through the organs of respiration, still others through the organs of circulation, others through the eye, and others through the ear, so the body of Christ is to perform the work of the ministry through ministerial organs. And the apostle, having discussed this analogy at great length,⁴⁾ makes the application, saying, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and mem-*

1) Acts 14, 23.

2) 2 Cor. 8, 19.

3) Cap. XV.

4) 1 Cor. 12, 1 ff.

*bers in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.... Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?*¹⁾ Though Christ has given to his church the ministry of reconciliation, he would not have the work of the ministry performed by all the members of the church promiscuously. It is the church that preaches, but through its organs. It is the church that teaches; yet not all are teachers. Even if they would be, they could not, and if they could be, they should not. The first teachers of the church were given to the church directly and fitted out miraculously for their official work, and the church, as was meet and right, accepted the gift, and the apostles performed the work of the ministry. God gave other miraculous gifts, of prophesying, of healing, diversities of tongues, and the church accepted these gifts for aid in its work of the ministry. And as the wants of the church demanded still other men for the work of the ministry, the churches looked out among them men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and chose them for elders, pastors, and teachers, according to the Lord's will, who in this wise gave those whom by the church he called to be his ministers.

The ministers thus mediately called and appointed to the ministry stand in a twofold relation. They are ministers of Christ, performing Christ's work on earth, and they are responsible to Christ for the faithful execution of his instructions. As ministers of the church, performing the work primarily entrusted to the church, the royal priesthood, they are also responsible to the church for the faithful discharge of their ministerial duties, while, on the other hand, the congregation is responsible for the official life of its minister, who is in charge of work entrusted to the church. The maxim, *Delegata potestas delegari nequit*, is true, but not without restriction, the restriction, without

1) 1 Cor. 12, 27—29.

authority from the principal. When an agent has with the sanction or by order of his principal appointed a subagent, the latter also is the agent of the principal. Thus also the minister appointed by the church is the minister of Christ, being called by authority from the Head over all, from whom the church also holds her commission. What the minister does in his ministry by his deputed power is as valid as if it had been done directly by the Head of the church, whose own acts the ministerial acts of his stewards really are. What Paul had done, *God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.*¹⁾ Having by the call of the congregation become a minister of Christ, as by the will of Christ, he must be considered in the service of Christ, and must not go or be put out of the stewardship, unless he can or must say, "My Lord taketh away from me the stewardship."²⁾ This can again be done through the congregation, in accordance with the will of the Master.

The minister's twofold relation, furthermore, appears in the authority he exercises and the obedience to which he is entitled in his ministry. As a servant of the church the minister subordinates his will to that of the congregation and holds his faculties and endeavors at the service of his people jointly and severally, feeding the sheep and feeding the lambs,³⁾ teaching them publicly and from house to house,⁴⁾ making himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more, and being made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.⁵⁾ As a servant of Christ he comes as an ambassador for Christ, bearing a message of his king, officially carrying on the work of the great Prophet sent of God, demanding in Christ's name ready acceptance of the doctrine, full confidence in the promises, willing obedience to the precepts, hearing and heed to the admonition, correction and reproof, whereof he is made the bearer. This is his official authority. His is the ministry of the word,⁶⁾

1) Acts 21, 19.

2) Luke 16, 3.

3) John 21, 15—17.

4) Acts 20, 20.

5) 1 Cor. 9, 19. 22.

6) Acts 6, 4.

and this word is the word of God.¹⁾ This is the extent and the limit of his authority. If he exceed this limit and demand obedience beyond where he can say, "Thus says the Lord," he must be rebuked, and his demand repudiated, and obedience denied. To yield to such demands would not be meekness but weakness, not godliness but idolatry. Even if what the minister demanded were not in itself evil, his demand, as with a claim of authority where his authority is at an end, must be for conscience sake discountenanced. Where, however, the minister of Christ comes with the word of Christ, and in his Lord and Master's name demands obedience to the word and will of the Lord of lords as set forth in his word, there the minister can make no concession, be it to high or low, wise or unwise, many or few, majorities or minorities, friends or enemies, but is bound to stand as a faithful minister by his Master's word and persist in his demand of uncurtailed and unconditional obedience and submission, repudiating every semblance even of connivance or compromise as treason and a breach of the most sacred trust under heaven. For this reason he must preach the truth, the law and the gospel, he must testify against false doctrine, censure Pharisees and Sadducees, and in every way keep that which is committed to his trust.²⁾

In all this there is no difference between the ministers of orthodox churches and those of heterodox churches. Being a church, a heterodox church has the ministry, and those whom it calls to perform the work of the ministry are by such call made ministers of Christ and do Christ's own work, inasmuch as they administer the means of grace. As the scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, though the Jewish church was in the days of Christ contaminated with false doctrine, so to-day the teachers of all churches, by virtue of the essentials of the gospel which they have and set into operation, sit in Christ's seat. The ministers

1) Rom. 15, 18. 1 Thess. 2, 13. 1 Pet. 4, 11.

2) 1 Timi. 6, 20.

and members of an orthodox church, while they keep aloof from erring churches and their teachers, must not set aside, ignore, or override the ministry of the sectarian pastor. He is in charge of a flock of God, and the souls committed to his care must not be fed by other shepherds. His ministry as well as his heterodoxy must be recognized. What damage he may do to his hearers by his false doctrine, will be for him to answer and for those who commissioned him to teach and defend their and his errors. As an errorist society they are not a church and have no ministry of the church, and their chosen preacher is not a minister of Christ, but an enemy of Christ and of his church, who does not promote but retard and endanger the spiritual life of those who by the saving truth preached by him may have been led to Christ. But while the orthodox minister will warn his own people against the dangerous errors of his heterodox neighbors, it is not his duty or business to warn his neighbor's flock against their shepherd, into whose charge that flock has been given, and who shall have to answer for every soul which has been entrusted to his care.

This restriction of ministerial responsibility to the particular charge entrusted to the individual minister is of importance also to orthodox ministers in their relation to each other. As the ministry is conferred upon its incumbents by the call of the local congregation, every minister is the pastor and teacher of the congregation or congregations by whom he was called and of none other. To the elders of the church at *Ephesus* the apostle said, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.*¹⁾ In their organization of the congregations in Galatia Paul and Barnabas had elders chosen, *κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, from church to church,*²⁾ so that the elders of the church at Derbe were not those of the church at Lystra, nor those of Lystra those of the church of Iconium. Each church be-

1) Acts 20, 28; cf. v. 17.

2) Acts 14, 23.

ing itself commissioned to provide for the administration of the means of grace in its midst and, therefore, to enjoin the work of the ministry upon some worthy incumbent, the ministerial office is that of a particular shepherd for a particular flock. How many persons may or should have a minister to themselves must be ultimately determined by those persons themselves, according as the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, the purpose of the ministry, can be best achieved under prevailing circumstances. But when a number of persons have called a man for their minister, and he has accepted such call, then he is the minister of that congregation, be it large or small, and his whole flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer, is the whole number of souls in that congregation, neither more nor less. His parish is not the world. Other ministers have their parishes, the congregations by whom they were called, and the flock of one shepherd ends where that of another shepherd begins, no sheep or lamb being a member of both. The right of determining of which congregation he will be a member rests with the individual Christian, and it is proper that he should keep himself to where, according to his judgment, he and his household may be most richly provided with the word of Christ¹⁾ and most fully enjoy the benefits of the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, till all the members come unto the measure of the full stature of Christ, growing up into him in all things.²⁾

In this connection it should, however, be remembered that the work of the ministry does not concern those only who are already members of the church, the body of Christ, that the promises of the gospel are not only to them and to their children, but also to such as *are yet afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*,³⁾ and that this call is to be voiced forth by the church through the organs of the

1) Col. 3, 16.

2) Eph. 3, 12—16.

3) Acts 2, 39.

church. It is the task of the church, of every church, to disciple all nations, and this task has not been limited to the early days of Christianity, but remains a sacred duty of the church to the end of time.¹⁾ The church is *God's building*,²⁾ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone*,³⁾ in whom all believers are *builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*.⁴⁾ To carry this building onward to completion, the builders must add stone after stone taken from the quarries of Jews and Gentiles by the means of grace. This is the work of Christian mission at home and abroad. The minister who, as a fisher of men,⁵⁾ casts his net into the world, or as a commissioned builder draws material from the wildernesses round about him, is active in his proper sphere and commits no encroachment on another's rights. But he must not fish in his neighbor's fish-car, nor quarry stone from the wall of another man's house. The members of other Christian churches are not material for missionary endeavors as a part of the work of the ministry.

When Peter and Andrew and the sons of Zebedee were fishers on the lake of Gennesaret, they were familiar with the rules and manipulations of their craft,⁶⁾ and when Christ would make them fishers of men, he made them his disciples and took them into training to prepare them for the work of the ministry. The proper performance of this work as that of any other work requires certain natural or acquired abilities, and an incompetent workman may do more harm than good. A principal who employs an agent becomes liable for the shortcomings of his agent. When the church appoints those who by such call shall be the ministers of Christ, the church must also see that these men be properly qualified for the important office they are to fill. Of the deacons in the church Paul says, *Let these also first be proved; then let*

1) Matt. 28, 19. 20.

2) 1 Cor. 3, 9.

3) Eph. 2, 20.

4) Eph. 2, 22; cf. 1 Pet. 2, 5.

5) Matt. 4, 19.

6) Matt. 4, 18—21. Luke 5, 1 ff.

them use the office of a deacon.¹⁾ Thus the first deacons at Jerusalem were not picked at random, but deliberately and carefully chosen.²⁾ Of the qualifications for the ministry four and a fifth one are paramount, soundness of doctrine, aptness to teach, blamelessness of life, and a good and honest report of them that are without.³⁾ A man cannot teach what he does not know, nor teach correctly what he does not know correctly. A minister of the church should be orthodox; for in whatever is unsound in his doctrine he cannot be a minister of Christ, who is the Truth and came into the world to bear witness to the truth. He must also be διδακτικός, *apt to teach*,⁴⁾ ἡκανὸς καὶ ἐξέτερος διδάσκειν, *able to teach others also*.⁵⁾ He must be able to communicate to others what he knows himself. Profound and correct knowledge alone does not make a teacher. The teacher must be able and willing to adjust his teaching to the mind of the learner without sacrificing the truth to the ignorance or perverseness of his hearer. He must be able to distinguish between weakness and malice. The minister must not only be sound of doctrine and know the difference between the law and the gospel, but also apt to teach both, each in its proper place, not teaching the law as and where he should preach the gospel, and *vice versa*, or, as the apostle says, he must be able *rightly to divide the word of truth*.⁶⁾ As a teacher he must also be able to vindicate the truth against its assailants, and this not as a philosopher with arguments of human reason, but as a servant of Christ with the sword of the Spirit,⁷⁾ that the gainsayer and those who might side with him may be not only fought down in argument, but made to yield to the truth. This is the true spirit of Christian polemics as practiced by the Christian minister, using the word in the defence of the word with a view of making

1) 1 Tim. 3, 10.

2) Acts 6, 1 ff.

3) 1 Tim. 3, 2. 3; 3, 4—7. Tit. 1, 6—9. 2 Tim. 2, 2. Acts 6, 3.

4) 1 Tim. 3, 2.

5) 2 Tim. 2, 2.

6) 2 Tim. 2, 15.

7) Eph. 6, 17.

conquests for the word and for him whose word it is. Thus as a teacher of the word the minister of Christ must *hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*¹⁾ Blamelessness of life²⁾ during his ministry is requisite for the successful administration of the minister's office inasmuch as without it he will tear down by the offenses of his conduct what he may build up by his preaching. Those who feed the flock of God are also to be *ensamples to the flock,*³⁾ so that with Paul they may say, *Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*⁴⁾ Moreover the minister must have a good report of them which are without.⁵⁾ If in his life there be a stain of a nature to make his name infamous before the world, he is not or no longer available for the ministry in the church, though by due penitence he have obtained the forgiveness of the church and may be received as a brother in Christ. The reason for this is obvious. A pastor who is notorious for some shameful offense, though in some other calling he might find the condonation of the world, may be sure to bring disgrace on the church and the name of Christ, as, falling into reproach,⁶⁾ he will be unable to defend and justify himself. And, besides and beyond this, the devil may take occasion at the minister's disgrace and ensnare him in recklessness or despair to his own ruin and the detriment of the church and its interests.

All these qualifications for the ministry are such that the church can and should look for them in those whom the congregation would call or has called to the ministry. There is still another requisite for the proper and faithful performance of the duties of this office. It is *faith and a good conscience.*⁷⁾ As a minister of the church, the invisible church, he should certainly be a member of that church. A man

1) Tit. 1, 9.

2) 1 Tim. 3, 2. Tit. 1, 6.

3) 1 Pet. 5, 2, 3.

4) Phil. 3, 17.

5) 1 Tim. 3, 7.

6) 1 Tim. 3, 7.

7) 1 Tim. 1, 19; cf. 3, 9; 6, 11.

who would or could not even profess the Christian faith, or who gave his profession the lie by an ungodly life, would thereby show himself unqualified for the ministry. Without true, living faith in Christ a minister is a faithless wretch, though he may *for filthy lucre's sake*,¹⁾ or from other selfish motives, devote himself to the work of the ministry. As a believing minister is not by his faith a minister, but by the call of the congregation, so an unbelieving minister duly called is by such call truly a minister of the church and of Christ, and as the means of grace which he administers have their power inherent in themselves and are not made or unmade by the faith or unbelief of the person by whom or to whom they are administered, his ministerial acts are valid and efficacious. But while a godly pastor, taking heed unto himself and unto the doctrine, will be intent upon saving himself and them that hear him,²⁾ a hireling who does not even care for his own soul's salvation will be even less concerned about the spiritual welfare of the flock of Christ. Paul admonished the elders of Ephesus to *take heed to all the flock*, but first of all to *themselves*.³⁾ And as the Lord Jesus was about to repeat his commission to Peter to feed his sheep and lambs, he emphasized his question, *Lovest thou me?* by putting it again and again.⁴⁾ It is therefore meet and right that the church, while unable to know with a certainty whether a certain man be a believer or a hypocrite, should pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth faithful laborers into his harvest, and all should heed such admonitions as these: *We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*.⁵⁾ *Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that*

1) Tit. 1, 11. 1 Pet. 5, 2.

2) 1 Tim. 4, 16.

3) Acts 20, 28.

4) John 21, 15—17.

5) 1 Thess. 5, 12 f.

*they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*¹⁾

The profit which is to accrue from the ministry, and which is in danger of being curtailed, is, as appears from several texts already quoted,²⁾ the salvation of souls. As the means of salvation are the means of grace, the word and the sacraments, the work of the ministry can and must be carried on by these means, by which men are called to Christ, regenerated,³⁾ strengthened and confirmed in faith and knowledge and holiness of life,⁴⁾ and preserved unto life everlasting.⁵⁾ In this sense ministers are spiritual fathers in Christ, as Paul says, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel,*⁶⁾ and, *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*⁷⁾ In the faithful discharge of his duties the pastor will also perform functions which, while not directly in the line of the administration of the means of grace, are subservient thereto. The apostles did not consider it below themselves, but a matter of course, that the distribution of alms in daily ministration should be their business⁸⁾ in the ministry. Being charged to *take heed to all the flock,*⁹⁾ the pastor is the official teacher of the old and the young, the teacher of his whole congregation jointly and severally, not only in the pulpit, but also in the deliberative and executive meetings of the representative congregation, in public catechization, in the parochial school, in the meetings of committees and boards, or where and when any of his parishioners may be in need of instruction on any point of doctrine concerning Christian faith and life. Paul says, *We preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*¹⁰⁾ Where it is

1) Hebr. 13, 17.

3) 1 Cor. 4, 15. Gal. 4, 19.

5) 1 Tim. 4, 16. 1 Cor. 1, 21.

7) Gal. 4, 19.

9) Acts 20, 28.

2) 1 Cor. 9, 19—22. 1 Tim. 4, 16.

4) Eph. 4, 13—16.

6) 1 Cor. 4, 15.

8) Acts 6, 1; 4, 35. 37; 5, 1 ff.

10) Col. 1, 28.

apparent that this cannot be approximately achieved by the labor of one man, the congregation will do well to give him help by committing certain functions of the one ministerial office to an assistant functionary or, if necessary, to several assistants in the service of the congregation. When at Jerusalem a *want*, *χρεῖα*, had arisen, that want was promptly met and, with the consent and advice of those already holding the ministerial office, a number of men were chosen and appointed to take upon themselves a part of the work of the ministry.¹⁾ The propriety and wisdom of this measure was evident to other churches of apostolic days; the church at Philippi and other churches had bishops, or elders, and deacons.²⁾ We hear of different kinds of elders, some only of whom labored in the word and doctrine.³⁾ And to this day churches of all lands have followed the example of the apostolic age, having, besides their regular pastors, assistant pastors in their pulpits, teachers in parochial schools, deacons, lectors, precentors, sextons, or other assistants to the one ministry, all of them either occupied in teaching the word or in functions subservient to the teaching of the word. That whereby the establishment and maintenance of such branch-offices should be determined is still the *χρεῖα*, *want*, which is thus satisfied for the benefit of the church and its members, the achievement of the end and aim of the ministry.

A rite also handed down from the days of the apostles, though not of divine institution, is that of Ordination. It is a solemn public acknowledgment of the call of the congregation, of its willing acceptance by the person so appointed, and of his fitness for the proper performance of the duties enjoined upon him by the call,⁴⁾ as also an occasion for prayer and supplication in behalf of the newly appointed

1) Acts 6, 1—6.

2) Phil. 1, 1. 1 Tim. 3, 1—8.

3) 1 Tim. 5, 17; cf. Acts 6, 2. 4.

4) Acts 1, 1; 13, 3. 1 Tim. 4, 14. 2 Tim. 1, 6. 1 Tim. 5, 22.

officer and his work.¹⁾ As a public ceremony enacted with the word of God and prayer in the name of the church it is performed in the presence of the congregation by whose call the ministerial office is conferred upon the candidate, but is not the conferring of the office itself, but only an inauguration to and solemn acceptance of an office actually conferred by the call of the church. Least of all is it an elevation to holy orders. There is no such thing as holy orders by divine right or institution in the church. All the incumbents of the ministerial office, either in one congregation or in different congregations, are equal in rank or station among themselves, as no degrees in the ministry have been established by the Head of the church.²⁾ The only authority in the church being that of the word, there can be no superior or inferior authority in the church as by divine ordinance. Whatever superiority of station there may be among the officers of any church or confederation of churches is, like the form of church polity which may involve or condition such gradations, merely of human origin and dignity. By divine right Peter was the *συμπρεσβύτερος*, *fellow elder*, of all the elders of all the churches,³⁾ and Epaphras and Tychicus, ministers to the churches, were *σύνδουλοι*, *fellowservants*,⁴⁾ of the great apostle of Christ.

A. G.

1) Acts 6, 6. 2 Tim. 1, 6.

2) Matt. 23, 8. Acts 20, 17. 28. Tit. 1, 5—7. 1 Pet. 5, 1—3.

3) 1 Pet. 5, 1.

4) Col. 1, 7; 4, 7.
