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Doctrinal Theology.

BIBLIOLOGY.

(Concluded.)

The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, the essentials of which have been presented in our last issue, is the cardinal topic of Bibliology. According to this doctrine, the Bible was written by divine inspiration¹⁾ inasmuch as the inspired penmen²⁾ performed their work as the personal organs³⁾ of God,⁴⁾ especially of the Holy Spirit,⁵⁾ who not only prompted and actuated them toward writing what they wrote,⁶⁾ but also suggested to them both the thoughts and the words they uttered as they wrote.⁷⁾

1) 1 Tim. 3, 16.

2) Rom. 15, 15. 1 Cor. 5, 9. 2 Cor. 2, 3. 4. 9. Gal. 1, 20. Phil. 3, 1. 1 Tim. 3, 14. 1 John 1, 4; 2, 1. 13. John 5, 46. 47. Luke 3, 4. Matt. 13, 14; 15, 7. Luke 20, 42.

3) Matt. 2, 5. 17; 8, 17; 12, 17; 13, 35; 24, 15; 27, 9. 35. Acts 2, 16; al.

4) Matt. 1, 22. Acts 4, 24. 25. Hebr. 4, 7. Rom. 9, 25; 1, 2.

5) Acts 1, 16; 28, 25. 2 Sam. 23, 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1, 19—21. 1 Pet. 1, 11. 12. Matt. 13, 11. Luke 12, 12.

6) 2 Pet. 1, 21. 2 Tim. 3, 16. Rom. 15, 18. 19. Gal. 1, 11. Jer. 30, 2.

7) Jer. 30, 2. Rom. 15, 18. 1 Thess. 2, 13. Acts 2, 4. 2 Pet. 1, 19—21. John 10, 34. 35. Matt. 22, 43. 44. Rom. 15, 9—12. Gal. 3, 16. Rom. 10, 16. 1 Pet. 3, 6. Hebr. 12, 26. 27; 8, 8. 13; 7, 20. 21; 4, 7. Rom. 4, 6. 7. 9. Eph. 4, 8. 9. John 7, 42. Luke 16, 17.

THE PROPER FORM OF A LOCAL CONGREGATION OF
THE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH INDEPENDENT
OF THE STATE.¹⁾

By † Dr. C. F. W. Walther.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

§ 1.

An evangelical Lutheran local congregation is a gathering of believing Christians at a definite place, among whom the word of God is preached in its purity according to the Confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church and the holy sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution as recorded in the Gospel, in whose society, however, false Christians and hypocrites will always, and manifest sinners may sometimes, exist.

§ 2.

A congregation is independent of the state when the state leaves it to such congregation in all things to govern itself.

§ 3.

In order to learn what constitutes the proper form of an ev. Luth. congregation independent of the state, it is

1) The paragraphs here translated were originally prepared by Prof. Walther for the doctrinal discussions of a District Synod in 1862, and published by request with extensive notes the following year in a book bearing the title: "Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen evangelisch-lutherischen Ortsgemeinde."

necessary to ascertain from the word of God chiefly *two* things: first, wherein its *rights* and *duties*, and secondly, wherein the proper *exercise* of such rights and duties, consist.

CHAPTER I.

Of the rights of a Lutheran local congregation independent of the State.

§ 4.

All the *rights* to which an ev. Luth. local congregation is entitled, are included in the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which the Lord has originally and immediately given to his entire church, and in such manner, that they belong to each congregation, the smallest as well as the largest, in like measure.

Matt. 16, 15—19; 18, 17—20. John 20, 20. 23.

§ 5.

That with the keys of the kingdom of heaven every ev. Luth. local congregation has the entire church-power which it needs, that is, the power and authority to perform everything that is requisite for its government, is, furthermore, confirmed by the fact that the true members of such congregation, viz., the believing Christians therein contained, are in holy Scripture described as “priests and kings before God,” or, “the royal priesthood,” anointed, Christ’s affianced bride, Christ’s body, in and among whom Christ dwells, equal brethren, they whose all things are; while the preachers are described as its stewards and servants; and that the congregation itself is represented as the supreme tribunal.

1 Pet. 2, 5. 9. Rev. 1, 6.—1 John 2, 20. 27.—2 Cor. 11, 2. cf. Ps. 68, 13.—1 Cor. 12, 27. Matt. 18, 20.—Matt. 23, 8—10.—1 Cor. 3, 21—23.—1 Cor. 4, 1. 2 Cor. 4, 5.—Matt. 18, 15—18.

CHAPTER II.

Of the duties of an ev. Luth. local congregation independent of the state.

§ 6.

It is, in the first place, the duty of the congregation to carefully see to it that the word of God may richly dwell and have full and free scope in its midst.

Col. 3, 16.

§ 7.

It is a second duty of the congregation to care for the purity of doctrine and life in its midst and, therefore, in both these respects to exercise discipline upon its members.

Matt. 18, 15—18. Rom. 16, 17. 1 Cor. 5, 1—13; 6, 1—8. 2 Cor. 2, 6—11. Gal. 6, 1. 1 Thess. 5, 14. 2 Thess. 3, 6. 14. 15. 2 John 10. 11.

§ 8.

It is a third duty of the congregation to have at heart also the temporal welfare of all its members, that they may not suffer want of the necessaries of life, nor be forsaken in any need.

Gal. 6, 10. Deuter. 15, 4. Rom. 12, 13. Gal. 2, 9. 10. Jam. 1, 27. 1 Thess. 4, 11. 12.

§ 9.

It is the duty of the congregation to see that in its midst "all things be done decently and in order," and to "provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

1 Cor. 14, 33. 40. 2 Cor. 8, 20. 21. Col. 2, 5.

§ 10.

It is the duty of the congregation to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love and peace also with other parts of the orthodox church.

Eph. 4, 3. 1 Thess. 4, 9. 10. Rom. 15, 26. 27. 2 Cor. 8, 19.

§ 11.

It is also incumbent upon the congregation to perform its share in the cause of upbuilding and promoting the church at large.

Amos 6, 6. Acts 11, 21—23; 15, 1 ff.

CHAPTER III.

Of the performance of the rights and duties of an ev. Luth. local congregation independent of the state.

A.

SECTION I.

Of the meetings of the congregation.

§ 12.

In order that the rights and duties of every free local congregation may be conscientiously and profitably performed in a manner well-pleasing in God's sight, it is necessary to have public meetings, properly arranged and conducted, for the purpose of deliberating, resolving upon and executing such acts as are requisite for its self-government.

Matt. 18, 17. 1 Cor. 5, 4. Acts 21, 17—22; 6, 2; 15, 30. 1 Tim. 5, 20.

§ 13.

All the adult male members of the congregation are entitled to active participation in the transactions of such meetings by way of speaking, deliberating, voting, and

resolving; but women and the young are excluded from such participation.

Matt. 18, 17. 18. Acts 1, 15. 23—26; 15, 5. 12. 13. 22. 23. 1 Cor. 5, 2; 6, 2; 10, 15; 12, 7. 2 Thess. 3, 15. —1 Cor. 14, 34. 35. 1 Pet. 5, 5.

§ 14.

The external management of the meetings rests with those who in general supervise the congregation or to whom the external government of the congregation has been entrusted as a special office.

Acts 15, 6. 1 Tim. 5, 17. Rom. 12, 8, 1 Cor. 12, 28.

§ 15.

The subjects of deliberation and action in such meetings are matters of doctrine, election or appointment of church officers, church discipline, public offenses, quarrels among members, matters of good order and ceremonial, and others.

Acts 15.—Acts 1, 15—26; 6, 1—6. 2 Cor. 8, 19.—Matt. 18, 17—20. 1 Cor. 5, 1—5. 2 Cor. 2, 6—11. 1 Tim. 5, 20.—Acts 21, 20—22.—1 Cor. 6, 1—8.—1 Cor. 14, 26—40; 16, 1, 2.

§ 16.

Matters of doctrine and conscience must be disposed of unanimously and according to the word of God and the Confessions of the church. If it should occur that anything were decided or determined by the congregation against the word of God, such decision or determination is null and void and must be so declared and revoked.

Is. 8, 20. 1 Cor. 16, 14; 14, 40. Col. 2, 5.

§ 17.

That all things may be done decently and in order, and lest charity be infringed, the meeting must be pre-

viously announced and a time of meeting must be set which should, if possible, be convenient to all the members. Those who thereupon fail to appear, thereby and for such case waive their right of vote. For the sake of love and peace and needful prudence it is advisable that important resolutions concerning matters which admit of postponement should obtain the validity of resolutions of the congregation only when they have been confirmed in the subsequent meeting.

§ 18.

The essentials of the transactions should be put on record by a secretary thereto appointed; at the close of the meeting such record should be read, necessary corrections should be made, and the correctness of the minutes should be finally acknowledged by a vote. These minutes should be again read at the beginning of the subsequent meeting.

Acts 15, 23—31.

§ 19.

The Pastor opens and closes the meeting with prayer; in case of his absence a prayer is read by a person thereto appointed.

Matt. 18, 19. Acts 6, 4.

B.

SECTION II.

Of the performance of the duty of a congregation to see that the word of God may richly dwell and have free scope in its midst.

§ 20.

The performance of this duty consists, first of all, in the establishment and maintenance of the public ministry in the congregation.

Tit. 1, 5. Eph. 4, 11. 14.

§ 21.

Due care for the establishment and maintenance of the public ministry in a congregation comprises, in the first place, the choice and calling of a minister. For the proper performance of this highly important act according to God's word and with united earnest supplication to God, the congregation will, if possible, request the assistance of one or more experienced ministers already in office, avail itself of their advice and, if they can be present, entrust to them the direction of the public election. Every member entitled to vote is permitted to propose a candidate. After due deliberation according to 1 Tim. 3, 2—7; Tit. 1, 6—9; 2 Tim. 2, 15. 24—26, as to the eligibility of each of the men proposed, those who have been found eligible are acknowledged as candidates, and the candidate who receives all or an absolute majority of the votes is recognized and accepted as the person whom God has called through the congregation. Pursuant to this election a written call is drawn up, read to the congregation, and upon its approval signed in the name of the congregation by the church wardens or other persons thereto appointed, and sent to the person called. In this document the person called is to be pledged by the congregation to adherence to the apostolic and prophetic Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the word of God, as also to the public confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church, and to the faithful administration of the holy office in all its parts. In said written call the congregation should at the same time promise to recognize the person called as its shepherd, teacher and overseer, to receive as the word of God the divine word preached by him, to obey him, love him, be at peace with him, honor him and provide for his sustenance. If the person thus called accepts such call, the congregation will, where it is possible, set him before orthodox ministers already in office, in order that they may "prove"

or examine him, if this has not already been done, and by public ordination, according to apostolic usage, declare him duly called, and pledge and confirm him, or publicly and solemnly install him in his office.

Tit. 1, 5. cf. Acts 1, 15—26; 6, 1—6; 14, 23.—Acts 1, 2. 3.—1 Cor. 16, 3.—Col. 4, 17. cf. Acts 15, 23; 26, 22; 20, 20. 21. 26. 27. 2 Tim. 1, 13. 14. 8; 4, 2. 5. 1 Pet. 5, 1—4.—Luke 10, 16. 1 Thess. 5, 12; 2, 13. Heb. 13, 17. 1 Thess. 5, 13. 1 Tim. 5, 17. Luke 10, 7. 1 Cor. 9, 13. 14. Gal. 6, 6.—Acts 6, 6.—1 Tim. 3, 10.—1 Tim. 4, 14.—Acts 13, 2. 3.

§ 22.

In order that the word of God may have free scope in a congregation, public services on Sundays and customary festivals, as also on certain weekdays, especially during advent and lent, annual days of humiliation and prayer, harvest-feasts, thanksgiving-days, and other holydays, and public catechization of the young, should be introduced and earnestly, though not as under legal constraint, observed.

Luke 11, 28. Acts 2, 46. Hebr. 10, 24. 25. Acts 2, 11. —2 Tim. 3, 15.—Gal. 4, 10. 11. Col. 2, 16. 17.

§ 23.

In order that the word of God may have full scope in a congregation, it is, furthermore, incumbent upon the congregation that its members have their children baptized without delay by their minister as the steward of the mysteries of God; that they have their young people prepared by him for the full enjoyment of the means of grace and in due time publicly confirmed; that they frequently ask and receive of him the comfort of absolution and the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and that after previous ex-

ploration and confession; that they have him publicly solemnize and bless by the word of God and prayer the marriage of their betrothed; that in sickness and death and other afflictions and tribulations they avail themselves of his instruction and consolation from the word of God, and, finally, that they give their dead a Christian burial.

1 Cor. 4, 1. Mark 10, 13 ff.—Matt. 21, 15. 16.—John 20, 23. 2 Cor. 2, 10. 1 Cor. 11, 20. 26.—Heb. 13, 17. cf. 1 Cor. 4, 1. Matt. 7, 6.—1 Cor. 7, 39. 1 Tim. 4, 3—5.—Jam. 5, 14. 15.—Acts 8, 2.

§ 24.

In order that the word of God may richly dwell in a congregation, the congregation should, furthermore, if possible, establish an evangelical Lutheran school for children, and for this purpose in Christian order call and employ an orthodox, godly, and otherwise competent teacher, pledge him also to adherence to the divine word of the Old and the New Testaments and the Confessions of the Lutheran church, and place him under the supervision of the public ministry.

Matt. 18, 10. Eph. 6, 4. Gen. 18, 19. Deuter. 6, 6. 7. 2 Tim. 3, 15. Rom. 2, 20.—1 John 2, 13. Heb. 13, 17. Acts 20, 28.

§ 25.

In order that the word of God may have full scope in a congregation, the congregation should, lastly, tolerate no divisions by way of conventicles, that is, of meetings for instruction and prayer aside from the divinely ordained public ministry.

1 Cor. 11, 18. Jam. 3, 1. 1 Cor. 12, 29; 14, 28. Acts 6, 4. Rom. 10, 15.

C.

SECTION III.

Of the performance of the duty of a congregation to see to the purity of doctrine and life and in both these respects to exercise church discipline upon its members.

§ 26.

It is the duty of all the members of a congregation to strive that they may grow and be enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge, that they may not continue to be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but try and judge by the word of God the doctrine preached to them.

2 Pet. 3, 18. 1 Cor. 1, 5.—Eph. 4, 14. Heb. 5, 12.—Acts 17, 11. Matt. 7, 15. 16. 1 John 4, 1. 1 Cor. 10, 15.

§ 27.

The congregation should establish in its midst also the office of such elders as do not labor in the word and doctrine, but assist the minister, who has the office of the word, in the government and the maintenance of discipline and good order in the congregation. The requisites for eligibility must be determined according to Acts 6, 3; 1 Tim. 3, 8—12.¹⁾

1 Tim. 5, 17.—Rom. 12, 8. 1 Cor. 12, 28.

§ 28.

The congregation must see that none but pure church- and school-books, recognized by the orthodox church, be

1) Although these apostolic precepts do not primarily refer to ruling elders or wardens, but to deacons or almoners, yet, if the apostles made these demands on those who were occupied merely with the disbursement of the alms of the congregation, they should doubtless be made in even a higher degree upon ruling elders.

introduced and tolerated in its midst, and that the confessional ceremonies be retained.

1 Thess. 5, 21. 2 Tim. 1, 13.—Gal. 2, 4. 5.

§ 29.

Such only are to be admitted to membership by the congregation as 1, are baptized; 2, if adults, make profession of their faith that the holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are the word of God, and that the doctrine contained in the Confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church, especially in Luther's Small Catechism and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, is the pure Christian doctrine; and, 3, lead an unoffensive Christian life.

Eph. 5, 25. 26. 1 Cor. 12, 13.—Gal. 2, 4. 2 Cor. 6, 14. 15. 17. 2 John 10. 11. Eph. 4, 3—6.—1 Cor. 5, 9—13; 10, 21. Matt. 7, 6.

§ 30.

It is the duty of the congregation to investigate in public meeting according to the word of God and with hearing of witnesses the causes of such of its members as are reported as having been in doctrine or life disobedient to the word of God and unsuccessfully admonished according to Matt. 18, 15. 16, in private as well as in the presence of witnesses, or whose false doctrine or sin is open and known to everyone; to convince of their error or sin, admonish and reprove those who have been found guilty; to publicly expel from the congregation or excommunicate through the minister of the word pursuant to a unanimous resolution those who will not hear the congregation and impenitently and obstinately persist in fundamental error or manifest mortal sin; to deny further fraternal recognition to such excommunicates, but hold them as heathen men and publicans, deny them the rights of a brother and put an end to fraternal intercourse with them; to proceed with Christian

discipline against such as refuse to consent to such excommunication; but to publicly absolve and readmit those in whom the excommunication has achieved its purpose and who have, therefore, penitently returned.

Matt. 18, 15. 16.—2 Cor. 13, 1.—2 Cor. 2, 6. 2 Thess. 3, 14. 15. 1 Tim. 5, 20. Gal. 2, 14.—Matt. 18, 17—20. 1 Cor. 5, 1—5. Rom. 16, 17. Tit. 3, 10. 11. 2 Tim. 2, 17—21.—1 Cor. 5, 1. 2.—2 Cor. 2, 6—11.

§ 31.

The congregation must not be so arrogant as to proceed with arbitrary deposition against its minister and others who hold an ecclesiastical office in its midst. But if such men fall away into pernicious error and, having been by due process of investigation found guilty, will not submit to the admonition either of the congregation or of the orthodox ministers whose assistance has been sought, or if they have manifested themselves as obstinately impenitent sinners, or if they have fallen in a manner whereby they have lost their good report of them which are without and have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme: the congregation will in Christian order (which may under certain circumstances be that of preliminary suspension) remove them from office as such whom God himself has deposed.

1 Tim. 5, 19.—Matt. 7, 15. Hos. 4, 6. John 10, 5. 1 Tim. 3, 7.

§ 32.

Lastly, the congregation will see to it that neither the congregation nor any individual member thereof may become guilty of syncretism by entering into ecclesiastical union or fraternal fellowship with unbelievers or such as adhere to false doctrine.

2 Cor. 6, 14—18. 2 John 10, 11. cf. Rev. 14, 9—11.

D.

SECTION IV.

Of the performance of the duty of a congregation to have at heart the temporal welfare of its members.

§ 33.

In the first place, it is the duty of the congregation to provide according to its ability for the maintenance of the Pastor, that he may have food, raiment, and a dwelling (which includes a room for study and uninterrupted intercourse with those who are committed to his spiritual care) for himself and his family; that he may have the means of exercising hospitality; that he may be able to live of the gospel exclusively, that he may not be prevented from giving attendance to reading, nor from practicing fellowship, and that he may not be under necessity of entangling himself with the affairs of this life.—This applies also in due measure to the teachers of the young.

Matt. 10, 9. 10.—1 Tim. 3, 2. Tit. 1, 8.—1 Cor. 9, 14.—1 Tim. 4, 13. 2 Tim. 2, 3. 4. Sir. 38, 26. 27.

§ 34.

It is, likewise, the duty of the congregation to provide food, raiment, and dwelling, and other necessaries for the poor, the widows and orphans, the aged and infirm, who are unable to procure these things for themselves, and have no relatives, whose special duty it is to make such provision. The congregation should also concern itself about such as may have been stricken with distress in consequence of special calamities, such as fire, famine, robbery, etc., so that no brother or sister may be tempted to bring disgrace upon the gospel by appealing to the mercy of them that are without, or even connect themselves with secret societies which pretend benevolence as their object.

—For these purposes the congregation should appoint special almoners.

2 Thess. 3, 11. 12. 1 Tim. 5, 16. 1 John 3, 17. Matt. 25, 35. 36. 40. 42. 43. 45. Jam. 1, 27.—2 Cor. 8, 13. 14. Rom. 12, 15. 1 Cor. 12, 26.—1 Thess. 4, 11. 12.—Acts 6, 1—7.

§ 35.

The congregation should not permit any of its members, when sick, to be without the necessary aid, care and attention by day and night, and refreshments.

Matt. 25, 36. 1 Tim. 5, 10.

§ 36.

The congregation should make provision for the decent, honorable and Christian burial of each, even the poorest, of its deceased members.

Matt. 14, 12. Acts 8, 2. Jer. 22, 18. 19. Tob. 1, 20.

E.

SECTION V.

Of the performance of the duty of a congregation to see that all its things be done decently and in order.

§ 37.

Beside those already incidentally mentioned the following points come under this head:—

The Pastor should keep and have in his custody two books, in one of which, the personal register, he should record all the members of the congregation, those who are, and those who are not, entitled to vote, while in the other, the church record, he should enter the ministerial acts, baptisms, confirmations, proclamations of bans, marriages,

burials, and communions, stating persons, dates, places, and other important circumstances. Both books should be procured by and be the property of the congregation.

§ 38.

All the writings and documents which concern the congregation, or have been directed to or have proceeded from the same, should, together with the minute book, be preserved, in the originals, if possible, or in certified copies, by the stated secretary of the congregation.

§ 39.

The proper management of the money matters of the congregation, the collection and payment of salaries, etc., should be entrusted to the treasurer of the congregation. For this office a competent person of good Christian character should be appointed. The treasurer should submit monthly or quarterly reports in public meeting, and his accounts should from time to time, at regular and at extraordinary times, be carefully examined by a committee appointed for such purpose.

2 Cor. 8, 20. 21.

§ 40.

For the proper care of the poor, the widows and orphans, the aged, infirm, sick, etc., of the congregation, one or more persons should be set apart, who should serve as almoners and see that no one be neglected in the ministration and aid required in each case.

Rom. 12, 8. Acts 6, 1—7. 1 Tim. 3, 8—13.

§ 41.

The congregation should, if its means will permit, endeavor to procure realty appropriate and sufficient for the purposes of the congregation, as, a well equipped church of

sufficient size, a schoolhouse, parsonage, burial ground, etc., and choose men who shall not only represent the congregation as trustees in its dealings with the state in matters of property, but also have the supervision of such property and see that it may not be damaged, but kept in good condition, and that the necessary improvements and additions, etc., be carried out.

§ 42.

The congregation should procure all the requisites for public service, such as a church bible, hymnbook, liturgy, baptismal and communion vessels, official vestments, etc., and appoint a sexton who is to have them in custody, keep the church clean and in proper order, conscientiously provide the elements for baptism and communion, and render similar services to the Pastor during public worship. The pews should not be rented, but special seats should be assigned to those who hold an office in the congregation, and a sacristy should be provided for the Pastor.

§ 43.

The time of opening for all the meetings of the congregation should be stately fixed and closely observed.

§ 44.

In the meetings of the congregation no important matter should be put to a vote at once, without previous discussion, explanation and deliberation.

§ 45.

As a rule, all matters not determined, enjoined or prohibited, by the word of God, should be decided by a majority of votes, such being the mode of decision recommended by nature. But if, because of the infirmity of many,

danger of division or other damage should accrue from the forcing of such decision by the majority, the majority should, for the sake of love and peace, yield to the minority.

1 Cor. 11, 14. — 2 Cor. 10, 8.

§ 46.

The chairman of the assembly should insist that but one speaker should speak at a time, and not before the previous speaker has finished, in order that every one may have an opportunity of expressing his opinion, if necessary, and lest the discussion be turned into a quarrel.

1 Cor. 14, 30. — 1 Cor. 11, 16.

§ 47.

Before taking the votes at an election, the names of those who are entitled to vote should be read aloud, and those whose names are called should signify their presence by responding to the call and cast their vote, absent voters being permitted to vote by ballot only.

§ 48.

All citations to appear in the meeting of the congregation should be in writing and delivered by a responsible person.

§ 49.

All those who hold an office in the congregation should be under a written instruction drawn up by the congregation and precisely determining the extent and limits of their powers. But every member should, if able, be willing to accept an office for which he has been chosen.

1 Pet. 4, 10. 11.

§ 50.

If the congregation adopt a written Constitution, the latter should contain only what is most necessary and has already stood the test of congregational life, and no provision therein embodied concerning things neither enjoined nor prohibited in the word of God should be unalterable, but all such provisions should be liable to alteration or rescission at any time, in due order, and by a considerable majority.

§ 51.

While every member of the congregation must acknowledge his duty to contribute his proportional share to the maintenance of church and school and the support of the needy members, it must be left to the conscience and voluntary charity of every one to determine how much he should give in proportion.

Matt. 10, 10. 1 Cor. 9, 14. 2 Cor. 8, 12. — 2 Cor. 9, 7.

F.

SECTION VI.

Of the performance of the duty of a congregation to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love also with other parts of the orthodox church.

§ 52.

The congregation should be diligent in jointly offering prayer for all saints.

Eph. 6, 18.

§ 53.

As every true ev. Luth. local congregation has the same public confessions of faith with the entire ev. Luth. church, so it should also give all diligence to be one with the same in point of life and to speak the same thing in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Cor. 1, 10.

§ 54.

Each congregation should come to an agreement with adjacent congregations concerning the local limits of their respective territories, and no congregation should receive as members those who reside in the territory of other congregations.

Tit. 1, 5. Gal. 2, 9.—1 Pet. 4, 15. 1 Pet. 5, 2. Heb. 10, 25.

§ 55.

Congregations should demand from those who come to them from other orthodox congregations a testimonial issued by the latter, and grant recognition to such testimonial. On the other hand, congregations should give such testimonials to those who leave them and remove to other congregations.

Acts 18, 27. 3 John 8. 9. 10.

§ 56.

A congregation should not receive as members such as have been rightfully excommunicated by orthodox congregations.

1 Tim. 1, 20. cf. 2 Tim. 4, 14. 15.

§ 57.

Congregations should receive as their brethren such as have been forced away or wrongfully excommunicated, or come as guests from other congregations, and care for them as for their own members.

1 Pet. 4, 9. Heb. 13, 2. Rom. 16, 1. 2. 1 Cor. 16, 10. 11. John 16, 2; 9, 22—39. Matt. 25, 35.

§ 58.

If a congregation would call the minister of another congregation, it should ask the latter's consent and the dismissal of its minister and endeavor to bring about a mu-

tual agreement as to the divine origin of such call; or, if its pastor be called to another congregation; it should examine such call according to the word of God and willingly dismiss the minister, if the call appear as being of God.

1 Tim. 3, 13.

§ 59.

In grave cases a congregation should seek the advice of one or several sister congregations, or, when asked for such advice, be ready to give it according to its ability.

Acts 15.

§ 60.

The congregation should look upon the distress of sister congregations as its own and according to its ability lend them a helping hand.

1 Cor. 16, 12. 2 Cor. 8, 1—14; 9, 1—15.

§ 61.

The congregation should be willing to permit its minister to serve as an affiliated charge, if possible, a neighboring congregation which cannot either by itself establish the ministry in its midst or be made a part of the main congregation.

G.

SECTION VII.

Of the performance of the duty of a congregation to do its share in the cause of upbuilding and promoting the church at large.

§ 62.

The congregation should see that gifted boys and young men be consecrated to the service of the church and that they be enabled to prepare for the same.

1 Cor. 12, 7.

§ 63.

The congregation should make provision that the bread of life be broken to such of its fellows in the faith as suffer spiritual want, and should, therefore, extend aid to those who are willing to perform this work of charity.

Acts 11, 21. 22.

§ 64.

The congregation should be zealous for the dissemination of the written word of God.

1 Thess. 5, 27. Col. 4, 16. 1 Thess. 1, 8.

§ 65.

The congregation should join in the endeavors to have the gospel brought to the poor heathen and Jews who still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Matt. 28, 18—20. 1 Pet. 2, 9. 2 Cor. 11, 8. Acts 13, 1—5.

§ 66.

The congregation should be ready to unite with the evangelical Lutheran congregations of this country, when there is opportunity for such union and the same tends to serve and promote the glory of God and the upbuilding of his kingdom.

Eph. 4, 3—6. 1 Cor. 12, 7. Acts 15. A. G.
