

# On the Duties of Ministers of the Church

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By Johann Gerhard



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*Theological Commonplaces*  
Locus 23, Chapter 6, Section 2

By Johann Gerhard

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## PREFACE

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“Ministers of the church should not think that what is related to the care of the poor is foreign to them.” This brief statement by Johann Gerhard is rather provocative. It is our sincere desire that this little publication, taken from Locus 23 of Gerhard’s great *Theological Commonplaces*, will provide provocation, especially for those clergymen and laypersons who treasure voices from the great period of 17th century Lutheran Orthodoxy.

Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) was, after Luther and Chemnitz, “the third after which there is no fourth.” His *Loci* or *Theological Commonplaces*, while often forcing doctrinal topics into categories of Aristotelian logic, still breathe with Scripture and the writings of the church fathers. Gerhard was known both for his erudite orthodoxy and his deep piety. His *Sacred Meditations* are the greatest devotional literature ever produced. For all of these reasons, we have sought to give voice to Gerhard, especially with respect to pastoral concern for the poor and ill.

As the reader will discover, Gerhard finds evidence that care for the poor and sick is a matter of pastoral concern, based upon Christology and apostolic practice (Acts 6). It is our deep conviction that orthodox Lutheran pastors and parishes will concern themselves with right preaching and administration of the Sacraments and all that this involves. For from Gospel and Sacraments our life in Christ flows. And where such concern for, and belief in, the precious Gospel in Word and Sacrament resides, there cannot but also be concern for those who are in need.

Such was the conviction of Luther. The Reformer defined the Lord’s Supper, in 1519, as the “sacrament of love,” and

drew important ethical conclusions from it for the life of the congregation. He retained these views throughout his life:

*There your heart must go out in love and devotion and learn that this sacrament is a sacrament of love, and that love and service are given you and you again must render love and service to Christ and His needy ones . . . . You must feel with sorrow all the dishonor done to Christ in His holy Word, all the misery of Christendom, all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is ever filled to overflowing; you must fight, work, pray, and if you cannot do more, have heartfelt sympathy . . . (Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament, Luther's Works, Phil. Ed. Vol 35, p 54).*

While love for the needy is no “mark” of the church as are Word and Sacraments (Augustana VII), nevertheless, where Word and Sacraments are received in faith, love flows to the neighbor. It was Gerhard's conviction that the clergy have a part in demonstrating and organizing this concern for the needy in the life of the congregation. We trust this entire treatise will be a blessing to the reader, though this “seventh duty of ministers — care of the poor and visitation of the sick” — occupies only a small portion of the work. Moreover, we pray that Gerhard's work may provide the impetus for pastors and congregations to consider their own lives of mercy toward those in need.

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**T**he priesthood “is not leisure but the task of tasks,” Bernard writes somewhere, and “the name ‘bishopric’ is a word of work, not of honor,” according to Augustine (Bk.19, *de civ. Dei*, c.19). Now that we have explained the reasons for the ministry of the church and the necessity thereof, as well as the utility and dignity depending on it, it remains for us to speak about the duties of ministers of the church.

Various writers list those duties in different ways. “Every administration of the church consists in three things: in the sacraments, in the holy orders and in precepts” (Hugh of St. Victor, Bk.2, *de sacr.*, part 2, c.5). “The duties of the priest are to learn something from God, or to teach the people, or to pray for the people, etc.” (Jerome, on Leviticus 8). For our list to be quite complete, however, we say that the duties of the ministry are most accurately evaluated on the basis of the end, because the church was divinely instituted and is still being preserved. In earlier sections we said that that end was dual: namely, a principal purpose, the glory of God; and an intermediate goal, the conversion and salvation of people. The intermediate goal holds the rationale of some means through which one reaches the principal and ultimate end. From this it has even received its name. To achieve the intermediate purpose, God uses the duties and activities of ministers for the effective conversion and salvation of people.

First, the people who are to be converted and saved are born in the darkness of ignorance (**Is. 9:2, LUKE 1:79, JOHN 1:5, ACTS 26:18, EPH. 5:8**). They are “alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them” (**EPH. 4:18**). The Holy Spirit wants to dispel that naive darkness through the light of the heavenly Word

(PS. 19:8, PS. 119:105, 2 PETER 1:19). Therefore, **the most important duty of ministers of the church is to preach the Word**, through which the Holy Spirit provides an inner illumination of the heart. “I shall appoint you to serve ... the gentiles, to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light” (ACTS 26:17-18).

Second, to the Word are added the Sacraments, the signs of divine grace and of the promise of the Gospel, so that the ancients call them the “*horaton*” or “visible” Word. Therefore, **the second duty of ministers is to administer the Sacraments**. “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 COR. 4:1). “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them” (MATT. 28:19). Here, preaching the Word and administering Baptism are connected. Third, every effort of ministers is in vain without the blessing of heaven.

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 COR. 3:6-7). Augustine, sermon 4, on the words of the apostle: “It is we who speak, but God who teaches. He who does the internal teaching has a throne in heaven.”

Therefore, **the third duty of ministers is diligently praying for the flock entrusted to them**. “Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and right way” (1 SAM. 12:23). Here the instruction of hearers and of praying for the fortification of the Word are connected.

It is proper for ministers to lead their hearers with the example of an excellent life. Those who teach sound material but live shamefully take away with the left hand what they gave with the right. At times, they can hurt more by example than they benefit with the Word. **Their fourth duty, then, is the honest control of their life and behavior**. “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works” (TITUS 2:7).

Because in addition to the native darkness of ignorance, a corruption of the will and a proclivity toward every evil adhere to people, the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline (which have been entrusted divinely to the ministry) must be used to keep those things from hindering conversion through the Word or from snatching the converted and putting them at a crossroads. Therefore, **the fifth duty of ministers is to administer church discipline.** “If [the member] refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church” (MATT. 18:17).

In the solemn public exercise of divine worship, certain rituals related to decency and good order were introduced by consent of the entire church and should be preserved. Therefore, ministers should protect those rituals approved by serious consideration and give useful advice about many things in the public assemblies. Furthermore, the ministry should not change them because of some private desire of the mind at the offense of the church. Consequently, **the sixth duty of ministers is to preserve the rituals of the church.**

Finally, because among the hearers are orphans, widows, the poor, the homeless, the ill — duties of charity are especially owed to alleviate their poverty and affliction. Therefore, **the seventh duty of the ministry is the care of the poor and the visitation of the sick.** He should collect and spend faithfully the money destined for use for the poor. If this duty is entrusted to those in charge of the church treasury, he should exhort members diligently to demonstrate their generosity toward the poor. He also should see to it that dispensing the goods is done lawfully and correctly (1 COR. 16:2; 2 COR. 9:1).

All told, therefore, there are seven duties of ministers of the church. We can relate all the rest to those seven: **first**, preaching the Word; **second**, dispensing the Sacraments; **third**, praying for the flock entrusted to them; **fourth**, controlling their own life and behavior; **fifth**, administering church discipline; **sixth**, preserving

the rituals of the church; *seventh*, caring for and visiting the sick. We shall discuss each in greater detail.

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#### PREACHING THE WORD

We say that the first duty of ministers is preaching the Word. The mandates given to the apostles and their successors in the ministry prove this. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them” (**MATT. 28:19-20**). “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel” (**MARK 16:15**). Second, the Holy Spirit has attributed to them both titles and praises. They are called “teachers” (**1 COR. 12:28, EPH. 4:11**). Therefore, they should teach the people of God (**ACTS 20:28**). They are called “shepherds” (**IS. 63:11, EPH. 4:11**), therefore, they should feed the flock entrusted to them with heavenly doctrine. They are called “messengers of the Lord” (**MAL. 2:7, REV. 1:20**) and “ambassadors” (**2 COR. 5:20**); therefore, they should explain the will of God by preaching His heavenly Word. They are called “laborers” (**MATT. 9:38, 2 TIM. 2:15**); therefore, they should labor in the Word (**1 TIM. 5:18**).

Third, we prove this duty by the apostolic rule, according to which we must examine bishops (**1 TIM. 3:2, TITUS 1:9**), which expressly requires that a bishop be “able to teach.” Fourth, we prove this from the goal of the ministry as it has been established. Certainly, God established and still preserves the ministry, especially so His Word is preached, and that through the preaching of His Word, the church be gathered from mankind (**EPH. 4:11**). Fifth, we prove it by the distinction of the ministry of the church from the political regime and from all other orders. After all, it is the minister’s job to use the sword of the Spirit, namely, the Word of God, but not the corporal sword, for that belongs to the political magistracy (**EPH. 6:17, ROM. 13:4, 2 COR. 10:4**, etc.).

Sixth, we prove it from the practice of Christ, and from the apostles and bishops in the early church. After all, they did not



administer or create a political organization, but were busy preaching the Word (MAT. 4:17, ACTS 6:2, etc.). Augustine relates (Bk.6, *confess.*, c.3) in regard to Ambrose that Ambrose delivered sermons to his people every Sunday. Seventh, the testimonies of the fathers prove it. Jerome (Bk.1, *adv. Jovin.*, c.20) comments as follows on the apostle's words that a bishop must be a teacher: "To enjoy a consciousness of virtues benefits none at all unless he can instruct a people who believe him, so that he can exhort them in doctrine and confute those who contradict him." Prosper, Bk.1, *de vita contempl.*, c.2: "Those who have charge over the church should each live a holy life in order to set an example, and should teach for the sake of the performance of his administration."

Eighth, the opinion of canon law proves it. "A bishop must be skilled in the sacred writings. In the Old Testament, therefore, the high priest, among his other ornaments, wore on his breast the breastplate on which was written the manifestation and the truth, for on the breast of the high priest there ought to be a manifest knowledge of the truth. Hence, also the poles with which the ark was carried were always inserted into rings so that, when they had to carry the Ark of the Covenant, there was or occurred no delay in putting in the bars; just so, the preachers by whom the church is carried around ought always to stand on the sacred writings so that they then do not ask to learn because, according to their office, they ought to be teaching others" (*C. Qui ecclesiast.*, dist.36, from epistle 1 of Sozimus, to Hesychius).

"If anyone wishes to be the high priest, let him imitate Moses and Aaron not so much in word as in just deserts. For what is said about them? — that they did not depart from the tabernacle of the Lord. Moses, therefore, was always in the tabernacle of the Lord. What need was there for this? — that he either learn something from God by reading Holy Scriptures and be meditating on them very often; or that he teach the people, but he should teach those things that he has learned from God, not from his own

heart nor from human reason but what the Holy Spirit teaches” (C. *Si quis*, same dist., from Jerome, from Origen, homily 6 on **LEVITICUS 8**).

“Every activity of priests should consist of preaching and doctrine. They should edify all people as well with a knowledge of faith as with discipline of activities” (C. *Ignorantia*, from the Fourth Council of Toledo, c.24). At the beginning of dist. 86: “A bishop must be a teacher lest the faults of lesser people be thrown back upon him who has not received the office of teaching, which he does not know how to perform or which he neglects.”

“In season and out of season, without interruption, a bishop must teach the church, direct it wisely and love it, so that it avoids sins and can attain eternal salvation” (C. *Sicut vir*, case 7, q.1, from epistle 2 of Euaristus). In an epistle of Clement, Peter is related to have said to him: “Be free for this alone — to teach the Word of God in season and without interruption, for through it people can attain eternal salvation.” We also add the civil law (*Bk. Addictos. In c. de epist. aud. imp.*), where they claim that it is the responsibility of bishops to temper Christian people with the publishing of religious teachings.

Ninth, the types of the Old Testament prove it. Among the ornaments of the high priest was a breastplate, which he wore on his breast and on which had been engraved “Urim” and Thummim” (doctrine and truth, **EX. 28:30**). That signified that ministers should teach the people doctrine and truth. The breast and right thigh from the peace offerings belonged to the priest; this signified that “ministers have to have wisdom to teach and fortitude to endure the defects of their hearers” (*Thomas*, p.1, 2, q.102, art.3). “No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord” (**DEUT. 23:1**). That is, whoever does not have the seed of the Word through which to sire spiritual children for the church is not to be tolerated in the

ministry. To this we must relate from the New Testament that the apostles receive bread from the hand of Christ that they distribute to the multitude (MATT. 14:19). Thus, the duty of ministers is to provide for the hearers the bread of life, that is, the Word of the Gospel, which they have received from the hands of Christ. Also, we include the fact that bishops are called “stars” in the hands of Christ (REV. 1:20), because it is their function to illumine others with the light of doctrine (MATT. 5:14).

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#### THE POPE AND HIS PRELATES ARE NOT TRUE BISHOPS

From this we correctly conclude that the pope in Rome, who refrains completely from the office of teaching, and his prelates, who are involved with politics and even with military business at times, and who touch almost no part of the ministry of the church, are not true bishops. The exception that the Jesuits make is not true, that, “even if the pope does not himself teach, he nevertheless teaches through the others to whom he entrusts this duty.” We respond.

First, the arguments and testimonies brought out prove that the pope himself ought to be teaching, and that, if he neglects to do this, he is a bishop only in title and word. Second, to preach the Word and to teach begin the definition of the bishop’s responsibility. Therefore, that cannot and should not be separated from a properly-called bishop. Third, Christ, whose vicar the pope boasts he is, Peter, as whose successor he wished to be regarded, and the rest of the apostles by no means rejected their responsibility of teaching. Rather, they themselves went out into the churches and fed the people with the heavenly Word. Fourth, both to teach and to ordain others to teach are required for the office of a bishop. Including one should not mean excluding the other. Fifth, in kingdoms of this world, ambassadors of kings have their own subdelegates; in the spiritual kingdom, however, ministers of the church themselves should perform the ambassador’s responsibility, which

God has committed to them. “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 COR. 5:20). Sixth, it is not proper for the pope and his bishops to judge as unworthy of their lofty positions the duty of teaching because the entire Holy Trinity performed it: Father (MATT. 3:17 AND 17:5), Son (MATT. 4:17, ACTS 1:3, etc.) and Holy Spirit (2 SAM. 23:2, 2 PETER 1:21). Thus, the apostle says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel” (ROM. 1:16). Seventh, at times, those the pope sends to teach are not skilled in teaching. Almost all of them teach their hearers (in place of the doctrines of the heavenly Word) human superstitions and corruptions.

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### SERMONS

The teaching responsibility is particularly involved with delivering sermons. We explained how these should be organized in great detail in our “Method of Theological Study,” part 3, sect.4, c.2. We showed that there are two primary functions of the ecclesiastical orator: “the interpretation of Scripture and the application thereof to the salutary use of the hearers.”

The interpretation of Scripture includes both “an investigation of the true and genuine meaning” as well as “a clear explanation” thereof. That application we can relate to five general headings according to the apostle’s prescription (ROM. 15:4 AND 2 TIM. 3:16): to teaching, to reproof, to correction, to training and to consolation.

To be sure, the application of Scripture, as it is explained legitimately and with sound meaning, is either theoretical or practical. The theoretical involves a knowledge of the truth (from which comes teaching) and a refutation of what is false (from which comes reproof). The practical is involved with doing good (from which comes training); with fleeing the evil of fault (from which comes correction); and with enduring the evil of punishment (from which comes consolation). We have explained in specific canons in the aforementioned treatise what one must be careful to observe in all this.

With similar rationale, we showed that gathering the sheep through teaching and driving the wolves away from the Lord's sheepfold through reproof are related to the office of teaching. In the preface to our "Theological and Theoretical Aphorisms," from the statement of the apostle (TITUS 1:7-9), we read: "An overseer . . . must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it"; from the type of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, in which they accomplished the work with one hand while carrying their weapons in the other (NEH. 4:17); from the comparison of teachers of the church with shepherds, who not only led their sheep to healthful pasture but also protected them against ambush and the attack of wolves; from their comparison with doctors for whom a double goal is set: to preserve one's present health and to restore it when it has been lost, etc.

Consequently, to discuss the activity here does not seem worthwhile. To these we can add a comparison drawn from a farmer. Just as it is a farmer's responsibility to properly sow the seed, it is also his job to pull out the bad weeds and sterile grasses. So also it is the theologian's responsibility not only to sow the seed of sound doctrine, but also to weed out the tares of error from the Lord's field.

Origen says it beautifully (*homily 2, on Genesis*, part 1, opera, p.14): "The squared timbers in the ark of Noah denote teachers of the church. It is squared so that it does not shake on any side. Whenever you turn it, it lies there with trustworthy and solid stability. They are timbers which bear on the inside the weight of the animals and on the outside the weight of the waves. These I believe are teachers in the church, schoolmasters and examples in the faith who comfort the people within with the power of the Word. With the wisdom of reason they oppose those who attack from outside or the heathen or heretics who stir up floods of questions and storms of controversies."

Jerome (*epistle 83, to Oceanus*): “The madness of the wolves must be kept off by the barking of dogs and the shepherd’s staff.” Augustine (*sermon 89, on the Times*): “Through this figure (NUM. 16:39) the following seems to be shown. Those censers which Scripture calls ‘bronze’ hold the figure of Holy Scripture. Upon this Scripture, heretics place an alien fire, namely, introducing a meaning or error and understanding that is foreign to God and contrary to the truth. Thus, they offer up to the Lord not a fragrant but a foul-smelling incense. If we put those bronze censers, that is, the voices of heretics, on the altar of the Lord where the divine fire, the true preaching of the Word, is; then the better will shine with the very truth, over against the false.”

#### QUESTION 1: WHETHER THE MAGISTRACY CAN FORBID THE REFUTATION OF HERETICS

Can the Christian magistracy prohibit ministers of the church from censuring stubborn and demonstrated heretics by name? And, if such a prohibition be published by authority of the magistracy, can ministers of the church obey it with safe and undisturbed consciences? We respond: Absolutely not! First, this conflicts with the calling of the ministers of the church. In fact, not the last of their duties is to resist corruptions of heavenly doctrine. “If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth” (JER. 15:19). “All Scripture is . . . profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 TIM. 3:16-17). A bishop “must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able . . . to rebuke those who contradict it” (TITUS 1:9).

Second, it conflicts with the general divine commands by which the genuinely devout are ordered to “beware of false prophets, flee idolatry, prove the spirits,” etc. (MATT. 7:15 AND 16:11, ROM. 16:17, EPH. 4:14, PHIL. 3:2, etc.). But, if ministers of the church do not warn the lambs about the wolves, the lambs

cannot recognize and flee from them. It also conflicts with the special divine commands that order teachers of the church to resist the wolves that wish to destroy the Lord's sheepfold. "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards" (Song of Songs 2:15). Augustine comments on those words as follows, (*sermon 107, on the Times*): "Arrest, censure, rebuke, confute them, lest the vineyard of the church be destroyed. What else does it mean to catch the foxes but to refute heretics by the authority of the divine law and to bind and restrict them by the testimonies of Holy Scripture as by some sort of chains?"

When the apostle foretold that there would rise up "wolves ... not sparing the flock and men ... speaking perverse things," he adds, "therefore be alert" (ACTS 20:31). He shows that a divine command keeps ministers of the church under obligation to keep a vigilant eye, watching out for the snares of the wolves and to resist them with all their might. "And the Lord's servant must ... [correct] his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" (2 TIM. 2:24-25). "For there are many ... deceivers ... upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach" (TITUS 1:10-11).

Third, to deny refutation of heretics conflicts with the unique duty of the Holy Spirit in the church, which is to reprove. "He will convict the world concerning sin" (JOHN 16:8), obviously through the ministry of the Word, which office is related not only to the primitive church but in general to the church of all times. This ministry reproves not only sins and sinners but also corruptions and false teachers, as appears from the explanation added (v. 9), where Christ says such that sin is unbelief, which is not only the source of actual sins but also embraces "misplaced belief, the baser unbelief," as Epiphanius warns. Whoever wants that reproving activity removed from the church is doing nothing else but placing a muzzle on the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, it conflicts with the praises given to ministers of the church. They are called “watchmen” and “seers” (EZEK. 3:17 and 33:7). They must watch out, then, lest the church incur any harm from false prophets. They are called “voices crying” (IS. 40:3). They are to lift up their voices, therefore, like a trumpet (IS. 58:1). They are called “shepherds”; therefore, when they see a wolf coming, they should not flee like the hired hand (JOHN 10:12), but raise an outcry against it and drive it away, etc. Augustine, treatise 46 on John: “The wolf grasps the sheep by the throat, the devil persuades a believer into heresy. Do you keep silent? Do you not cry out for fear you will offend? O hired man! You have seen the wolf and run away. Perhaps you answer: ‘Look, I am here. I have not run away!’ You have run away because you kept silent.”

Fifth, it conflicts with the divine threats against those who do not resist false teachers out of negligence or fear of dangers, or because of a perverse desire for the favor of the world. “Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness” (JER. 48:10). “His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark” (IS. 56:10). “If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning ... his blood I will require at your hand” (EZEK. 3:18). “Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth” (REV. 3:15-16).

Sixth, it conflicts with the practical advantages that rise from the refutation of false teachers. However, those cannot be seen better than if those things be considered as disadvantages, which generally come forth if we permit heresies to rage unchecked and create confusion. They are weeds that hinder the growth of the grain (MATT. 13:38). They are the leaven, a tiny bit of which leavens the whole lump (MATT. 16:11-13, 1 COR. 5:6). They are the gangrene that immediately corrupts the neighboring limbs if it is not checked (2 TIM. 2:17). Jerome says it beautifully in Galatians 5: “As soon as they appear a spark must be extinguished, the



leaven removed from near the lump, rotting flesh cut away and an animal with scabies removed from the sheepfold, lest the entire household burn, the lump be spoiled, the body putrefy and the flock perish,” etc.

Seventh, it conflicts with the practice of the church of the Old Testament. Philo writes about Abel in his book that, because a meaner thing generally lies in wait for a better, Abel argued with Cain about his sacrifice and religion. Regarding Moses, Augustine writes, epistle 119, to Januarius, that “he resisted the restless hatred of the heretics such as Jannes and Jambres, Korah, Dathan and Abiram.” As regards Elijah, Jeremiah, Micah, Amos and the rest of the prophets, we agree that they opposed themselves manfully against the Baalites and other false teachers.

Eighth, it conflicts with the practice of Christ, John the Baptist and the apostles in the New Testament. They reproached by name (with very strong language) the adversaries of divine truth. In **MATT. 3:7**, Jesus calls the Pharisees and Sadducees “a brood of vipers” in the presence of the entire multitude. In **MATT. 16:11**, Christ says to the disciples: “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” In **MATT. 23:13** and several times elsewhere He repeats: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees!” In **1 TIM. 1:19B-20**, when the apostle had said in general that “some have made shipwreck of their faith,” he adds by name: “... among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan.”

Ninth, it conflicts with the permanent practice of the primitive church and of those who succeeded the apostles in the office of teaching. Polycarp battled against Marcion, Valentinus and other heretics. When Marcion attacked him, Polycarp called him “the firstborn of Satan,” according to Irenaeus, Bk.3, c.3. Irenaeus debated against the Valentinians, the Gnostics, the followers of Basil and other emissaries of the devil. Tertullian debated against Praxeas and Marcion; Augustine against the Manichaeans, Pelagians, Donatists, Arians, etc. According to Athanasius, when

Antonius was still alive but near death, he addressed his followers: “Avoid the poisons of heretics and schismatics. Follow my hatred against them. You yourselves know that I have had no speech, not even peaceful, with them.” The Fifth Council of Constantinople, anathema 11, Vol.2, concil., p.565: “If anyone does not anathematize Arius, Eunomius, the Macedonian, Apollinarius, Nestorius, Eutyches, along with their wicked conscripts and all other heretics whom the church has condemned, as well as those who have a taste for heresies similar to those mentioned above and have remained and do remain in their wickedness, let such a one be anathema.”

When Luther left Schmalkalden, he besought his colleagues in the ministry that “they be filled with the Holy Spirit and with a hatred of the pope.” Let the devout Christian magistrate be careful, therefore, lest he forbid the condemnation of stubborn and autocratic heretics with violent edicts. Let him beware lest he take away the freedom divinely granted to the ministry to teach and censure. In fact, let him rather listen to that statement of Ambrose, Bk.5, at the beginning of epistle 29, to Theodosius: “It is not characteristic of the emperor to deny the freedom to teach, nor is it characteristic of a priest not to say what he believes. Nothing in kings is so popular and attractive than to love freedom also in those who are subject to them in obedience. In fact, if there is this difference between good and bad princes that the good love liberty while the bad love slavery, then there is nothing in a priest so dangerous before God and so shameful before people than that he not declare freely what he believes.” It is written: “I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame.” Let the ministers of the churches also beware lest because of some perverted desire to please people they agree with those edicts of the magistrates. Nor let them follow the example of Basil Camaterus, who, in order to obtain more easily the patriarchate of Constantinople, bound himself to Emperor Andronicus with a shameful promissory note unworthy of a bishop, saying that he would pursue

all things that pleased the emperor and studiously avoid whatever displeased him (Camerinus, part 3, *oper. succis.*, c.6).

For more about this question, see the Calvinist aulicopolitic of Dr. Hutter opposed to Johann von Münster, in which the consultations of Wigand, Chytraeus and Selnecker about this question are set forth. Also see the debate of Dr. Krakevitz on the necessity of reproof of the Calvinist doctrine, published at Greifswald in 1614.

## 270.2

### WHETHER THE FORMULA OF CONDEMNATION CONFLICTS WITH CHRISTIAN LOVE

One asks the second question: Does that formula of condemnation set down in the symbolical books as antithesis to the articles of faith, “We condemn those who believe . . . ”; I say, does that formula conflict with Christian love and modesty? This is the claim of some politicians who secretly favor the Calvinian heresy, for it affects a praise of moderation and covers up their opinion with an interest in peace. The Calvinians and Photinians applaud those who say: “We must not bring legal action against those as heretics who favor false opinions, so long as they confess Christ with us” (Ostorod, preface to his *Instit.*, p.8, and Schmaltz, *Contra Frantz.*, disp.1, p.9). First, we urge the divine commands about being wary of false prophets and keeping the wolves away from the Lord’s sheepfold, which we brought out earlier. Second, we urge the examples of Christ and the apostles, who were not afraid to hurl their “Cursed be’s” against false teachers. Christ, who has greater love than anyone (JOHN 15:13), and who confesses that He is “gentle and lowly in heart” (MATT. 11:29), denounces the scribes and Pharisees with his “Woe” (MATT. 23:13FF). He also thunders out against the Jews with very serious language (JOHN 8:44): “You are of your father the devil.” And “The reason why you do not hear [the words of God] is that you are not of God” (v. 47). With the general lightning bolt of anathema, the apostle strikes all the

foes of heavenly doctrine: “If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed” (1 COR. 16:22). “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God” (1 JOHN 1:9).

Third, we urge the true nature of true love. You see, because it flows from faith (GAL. 5:6), it therefore does not approve of errors of doctrine, which are repugnant to faith. Because it is a “fruit of the Spirit” (GAL. 5:22), it therefore does not remove the reproofing function of the Holy Spirit (JOHN 16:8). It is felt not only for a neighbor, but also and especially for God. Therefore, such love declares that the glory of God is robbed by corruptions of doctrine, and such love avenges that glory. Nevertheless, we must first warn that with those “accursed,” we are by no means condemning those who, because of a sort of naiveté, are in error without stubbornness and blasphemy against the truth. After all, there must be a distinction between misleaders who stubbornly speak against a truth proven to them again and again, whom Luther calls “*duxios*,” and misleaders who do not understand the depths of Satan lurking in corruptions of doctrine and have been carried off into an alliance with error out of their weakness, but are prepared to embrace a demonstrated truth. Second, we warn that those anathemas much less condemn whole and entire churches whose pastors have been stained with the poison of papist or Calvinian heresies. In fact, even through their corrupt ministry, God can still gather His church even in the midst of the assemblies of the priests of Baal. He can still save some who do not bow their knees before Baal. Experience shows that at times the ears of hearers are purer than the lips of teachers. But, if there are no others, nevertheless baptized infants belong to the fellowship of the true church even if they are baptized by a heretic, provided that the substantial of this sacrament are observed.

Third, with those anathemas, we do not hand over to the executioners for torture and death those who are struck by an

“accursed” because of corruptions of doctrine, nor deny them the blessing of civil peace. You see, we must distinguish between the censures of the church and legal judgments; between the spiritual sword, which cuts off errors but which preserves lives, and the corporal sword; between civil peace and spiritual consensus in doctrine. Note Chrysostom, in his sermon on anathema:

*“We must argue against and anathematize wicked dogmas that proceed from heretics, but we must spare the people and pray for their salvation.”*

Chytraeus is thinking of this when he writes as follows in the preface to his pamphlet on eternal life and death:

*Although I disapprove of and repudiate dogmas which we reject in the publicly declared common confession of our churches; nevertheless, heaven forbid that on that account I should claim that we must condemn, or throw out to the flames and punishment, those churches, princes or peoples who at times differ with us. After all, I see that, although Paul himself refuted and condemned certain errors of the Galatians and Corinthians, yet he did not on that account condemn the churches of Galatia and Corinth and hand them over to be destroyed by heathen persecutors. He still embraced and cherished them with all his love.*

Fourth, with those anathemas we do not at all hand over to the devil and take away all hope of salvation from those whom false teachers afflict with the rash and sores of errors that we condemn. Rather, those anathemas demonstrate, repudiate and condemn erring doctrines, and the stubborn publishers and defenders thereof, if they are not converted to the demonstrated truth. On the other hand, they forewarn the naive to be careful and wary of errors of that kind lest they attract a divine curse to themselves.

Fifth and finally, we must warn that if we must ever deal orally or in writing with those who are committed to a false religion, we must by no means begin with anathemas. Rather, we must make a distinction between the curable and the incurable and deal with the former in peace and modesty from God's Word. We must be careful of scurrility and levity, jeering and wrangling; we must in reproof apply the words of Scripture. Finally, we must work in every way to make clear to all that in our debate against the erring, we seek the salvation of the soul.

### 271.3

#### WHETHER WE SHOULD CONDEMN THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET BEEN HEARD IN COUNCILS

The third question we hear is whether or not we should condemn heresies that have not been heard and convicted in councils. It is the Calvinists' constant complaint that they are being treated unfairly by having the thunderbolts of anathema brandished against them, because they have not yet been heard, much less convicted, in a council. In the preface of the *orthod. consens.*, among other things, they write: "Up to now we have been convicted of no error; we have been condemned in no legitimate synod. In fact, we have never been able to achieve this, that this controversy be acknowledged in a public assembly." Sturm (*antipap*, 4, p.45 and elsewhere) argues: "We must postpone a condemnation of Calvinian dogma until it be debated in a just council established with select men." Jetzler writes (*de diuturn. bell. euchar.*, case 13, f.107): "The omission of synods is not the least cause of the continuation of the Sacramentarian War. We have condemned the Sacramentarians beyond what is just and fair outside of a council."

Hospinian (*concord. discord.*) cooks up a tragic complaint "about that rash and unproved-by-the-heathen-much-less-by-Christians daring of the authors of the Formula of Concord, by which daring those authors have not been afraid partly to strike

with the thunderbolt of anathema, partly to hand over to other nations to be persecuted with fire and sword innocent people who have had no hearing and who have been convicted of either heresy or error.” Paraeus, *Irenicum*, urges this very thing on many. This same argument was written and published in Holsatia in 1611.

Pelargus, in his apologetic antitheses against Dr. Baldwin, thesis 31: “Here we easily agree with others that there be numbered with either schismatics or heretics those brethren whom Baldwin attacks and has taught have been condemned and legitimately proscribed either in general council or by the entire church.” We freely acknowledge with Augustine (epistle 118) that “the authority of councils is very healthy in the church of God.” In fact, provided that they are legitimate and Christian, they are nothing else but sacred and free assemblies of devout teachers and people, where the judgment of Scripture is applied, where the significance of reason is compared and examined. In them something definite is concluded or decreed by the unanimous consent of many in regard to controversies about articles of faith, ceremonies, rituals and even church discipline. All this is done for the sake of the truth and for the tranquility of the church, so that every heterodox teaching is eliminated and condemned.

Thus, what many pious and learned people are seeking they find more easily; errors are brought to a sharper conclusion, which many condemn by unanimous vote according to the norm of Scripture. Things that many decide on the basis of their deliberate consent are considered more carefully and decided more firmly. Nevertheless, we deny that the need for councils is some sort of absolute need, such that one may not at all refute and condemn false doctrines without their previous decision.

In the first place, there is no mandate from Scripture that we must await the decision of a council before we refute heresies. Second, it is the public, perpetual and infallible judgment of Holy Scripture or, what is the same, of the Holy Spirit speaking in and

through Scripture, by which heresies are condemned, even if they never are condemned in councils. Heresies have been started in many councils, but Scripture is always in harmony with itself and is never liable to the danger of error. Third, churches and the Christian faith remained unharmed and many heresies were condemned during the first 300 years of the New Testament before Christian emperors held councils. Paul condemned Hymenaeus, Philetus, Alexander and other heretics; Peter condemned Simon Magus; John condemned the Nicolaites, Ebion and Cerinthus; the teachers of the primitive church condemned the Marcionites, the Valentinians and Gnostics, all without any council.

Fourth, councils declare their condemnation of heresies not of themselves and of their own judgment. They seek that only from Scripture. Actually, all heresies have been condemned in Scripture; first, before councils reprove them and, in fact, before they are born. Fifth, to this we must relate statements of the devout ancients opposed to heretics who kept agitating for councils. When the Arians kept asking for a council, Athanasius kept answering them (*epist. de synod. Arimin. et Seleuc.*, p.673): “They run around in vain and pretend that they are asking for councils for the sake of faith, although Holy Scripture is more powerful than all councils.” When the Pelagians urged the same thing, Augustine answered them (Bk.4, *contra duas epist. Pelag. ad Bonif.*, c.11, p.182): “Why is it that they say that a subscription has been extorted from naive bishops sitting in their own places of residence without assembling a council? As regards those very blessed and excellent men-of-the-faith, Cyprian and Ambrose, was a subscription ever extorted before them against those Pelagians with such manifestation that we can scarcely find anything more obvious to say? But was there need to assemble a council to condemn an obvious pest? As if no heresy has ever been condemned without assembling a council! Actually, we find those heresies are quite rare that demand a council condemn them. Rather, there are incomparably



more heresies that deserve to be censured and condemned right where they have been. Thus, people in other lands have been able to mark them as things to be avoided. However, the Pelagians' pride, which extols itself so much against God that it wishes to glory not in Him but in its own free will, is understood to be trying to capture even this glory that a council of east and west be called because of them. In fact, because they are unable to pervert the Lord, who resists them, they are actually trying to upset the entire world. But, wherever those wolves have appeared, and after sufficient judgment which befits them has been passed, we must with pastoral watchfulness and diligence crush them so that they are either cured and silenced, or are avoided for the salvation and integrity of others."

Sixth, in 1530, when Landgrave Philip of Hesse in the assembly at Augsburg judged that he would have to call a council because of the Zwinglians, Philip Melancthon and Johann Brenz answered him in this way: "If the emperor were to call a council for these reasons, as it was written it could be acknowledged as a council. But, whether or not he calls a council, certainly no one must be gathered to renounce the true and pious doctrine we profess. Furthermore, one must be very careful that we not hinder the course of true and very certain doctrine with an excessive subtlety which has no certainty. This is something we actually are trying to have done in some way even now."

When the landgrave finally argued, "The Zwinglians have not been convicted of any error in a council," Philip and Brenz later wrote this among other things to him: "We are able to reach no definite decision about asking for and urging a council, not because we consider it necessary to draw and seek the certainty of our faith from the decisions and decrees of a council, but in order that we may be able to crush and wipe away the calumnious lies with which we are being represented and burdened so often. But, if one should occur by the act of God, our consciences will

not be overburdened; nor do we believe that a council will be hindered at all by your defense and support of Zwinglian doctrine, which cannot be approved and tolerated anymore than the course of pure doctrine is hindered by the imperial majesty until now.” When the theologians of Jena asked for a council in the Interimistic controversy, the same Philip Melancthon, in letters to his friends, repeats several times that statement of Nazianzen to Procopius (p.329): “In fact, the situation is this, if I must write what is true, that I avoid every meeting of bishops because I have not seen a useful outcome of any council.”

Seventh, if one may not condemn false doctrines that conflict with Scripture before a decision of a council, by what right do they themselves condemn the papists, Anabaptists, Schwenkfeldians, etc.?

Eighth, in fact, by what right do they accuse our confession regarding the person of Christ of Eutychianism, Marcionitism, etc., in the false “Thorough Declaration,” published at Wittenberg in 1571, and in the *apolog. admonit. of Neustadt* (p.14), because we have never been lawfully convicted in any synod?

Ninth, the Calvinists certainly received a hearing in the conference at Marburg in 1529, at Maulbrunn in 1564, at Mumpelgarten in 1586, in the public assemblies of the empire and in the assemblies of the princes, in the hundreds of books freely published by both sides. Thus, in a booklet published in peaceful Neustadt under the title “*Treuherzige Vermahnung*,” they themselves admit that “the controversies which both sides have stirred up so far have been sufficiently distinguished and defined.”

Tenth, one must never or surely barely hope for that synod they still seek and await. That is obvious from the words of Sibrand Lubert, commentary on the 99 errors of Vorst (p.43), where he writes: “When *Vorst* says that he is willing to submit to the judgment of all the Reformed churches, this is just as if he were saying

that he was unwilling to submit to the judgment of the Reformed churches. After all, the prudent fellow is aware that, whether you take the expression ‘Reformed churches’ broadly or the word ‘reformed’ strictly, a council is never going to be called. You see, those princes in whose power the Reformed churches function are occupied with such varied interests that they will never agree upon some one general council.” With these words, Sibrand upsets with one blow the demands of Paraeus and his followers. Before the Calvinists demand a synod, there will be a departure from the world.

272.4

#### **WHETHER ONE MUST APPROVE OF ANONYMOUS OR PSEUDONYMOUS WRITINGS**

The fourth question asked is whether, in reproof, we must approve of anonymous or pseudonymous writings. Some of the Jesuits and Calvinists believe this, as their actual practice testifies. To them we oppose, first, Christ’s statement: “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God” (JOHN 3:20-21). Those light-shunners, therefore, show by that very act that they are not the children of light but tools of the devil, who is the spirit of darkness. After all, they either acknowledge and approve the truth, or they confess it with their mouth but deny it in their heart. If the former is true, they should not be afraid to confirm that with the public statement of their name: “That ink which one does not openly admit is dear if a thousand others subscribe to it with their blood.” If the latter is true, they become vile hypocrites.

Second, we oppose the inconveniences that arise generally from suppressing or changing the name. The weak are provided with a stumbling block when they note that people publish the truth timidly. Enemies become confirmed in their errors because

“the truth fears nothing except to be hidden.” It then happens that they deny such a confession of faith is true and sound whose confessors are ashamed to declare it publicly. Anonymous writers are armed with a license to attack, to accuse falsely and to lie. Just as those who wear disguising clothing take for themselves a license to do whatever they please, so also those who take for themselves the posture of a disguising name think they have the license to cook up whatever they wish and to attack it boldly because they have been relieved of the difficulty of proving it.

Third, we note the example of the prophets, evangelists and apostles who prefixed their names to what they wrote. The fathers of the primitive church as well as the sagacious theologians of our time have observed the same practice. See Luther, Vol.1, German edition of Jena, p.477, in the book titled “*Unterricht der Beichkinder*”; Vol. 4, German edition of Jena, p.508, in the book titled “*Christliche Ermahnung an den Churfürst zu Brandenburg.*” Also, Vol. 5, German edition of Jena, p.551: “The Holy Spirit does not sneak but flies openly. Snakes sneak; doves fly. Thus, such sneaking is the moving principle of the devil — a statement that never lacks for truth.” Vol. 1, p.425: “When I perceive such movement and flight of light, how can I fear the blind moles who shun the light?” And later: “Surely, it is the devil who sneaks about here secretly and insidiously.” Luther says about himself (Vol. 4, p.508): “He may have had to write sharp documents against emperors, kings, popes and other high persons, but each time he has claimed the document and attached his name thereto.”

Fourth, we oppose the practice by noting that civil laws subject changing of a name to penalties if it causes damage to another because of wicked deceit. Law *unic., c. de mutat. nominis*: “You are forbidden to change your name, either first or last, legally without some fraud, even if you are a free person.” Therefore, from a contrary sense, we must consider that changing a name is forbidden if one makes that change to deceive and harm his neighbor. Law *falsi*,

13ff., on the Cornelian Law about false things: “The declaration of a false first or last name is restrained by the punishment for a falsity.” In the decrees of the assembly of Augsburg in 1545, we find the expressed prohibition that “no one may publish writings either without a name or with a changed name.” As far as famous satires are concerned, see Law *unic., c. de famos. libel.* and *Peinliche Hals-Gerichts-Ordnung*, art.110. In the imperial decrees, not only defamatory pamphlets but also anonymous and pseudonymous writings are banned. See *Abschied zu Augsb.*, 1548, p.403; *Abschied zu Speier*, 1570, p.666.

Fifth, we oppose the testimony of their own follower. Boquin (*assert. veri et veter. Christian.*, c.1) writes: “They are not sinning insignificantly who in matters of religion take on names that are not their own.” Bullinger (*contra lib. Polon.*, published in 1566 at Zurich) says:

*“The concealing or changing of names in writings of this sort is done for this purpose that those light-shunners may more freely, as if from a dump truck, pour their heaps of attacks and false accusations upon the guiltless. Thus, they can publish common insults as teachings which are heterodox rather than orthodox along with all wicked insulters.”*

The things they bring up to support the opposite view have an easy explanation, if we distinguish between didactic and refutative writings, between deed and legal right, between political cleverness and theological candor and simplicity.

## 273.2

### THE DISPENSATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

That administering the sacraments ordinarily belongs to the ministers of the church we have shown in our treatises “On the Sacraments” (28) and “On Baptism” (19). However, here we must note that in the sacrament of initiation, as circumcision in the

Old Testament and Baptism in the New, when extreme necessity demands, we must entrust its administration to other members of the church. This we showed in detail in our locus “On Baptism” (23). Regarding the dispensation of the sacraments, the minister should first see to it that he admits no unworthy person to participate. “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs” (MAT. 7:6). Ambrose (Bk.2, *de poenit.*, c.9): “The command is: ‘Do not give dogs what is holy, etc.’ That is, the fellowship of Holy Communion must not be shared with those who are befouled with impurities.” In this vein we have added more in our commonplace “On the Eucharist” (222ff.).

Second, in the dispensation of the sacraments, the minister should carefully observe Christ’s institution and the practice of the apostles. He should reject useless and superfluous ceremonies, and he should administer the sacraments as simply as he can, according to the rule just given.

### 274.3

#### PRAYING FOR THE FLOCK ENTRUSTED TO HIM

That praying for the flock entrusted to him ought to be recommended to the minister of the church we see, first, from general statements that require all the truly devout to pray for each other and even include the salvation of others in their prayers. “Pray for one another” (JAMES 5:16). The form of prayer Christ prescribed to use included the entire mystical body of the church.

Second, we see it from the example of Christ, who in prayers to God, prays for His apostles and for all who would believe in Him through their words (JOHN 17:20). Third, we see it from the examples of Moses, Samuel, the prophets and apostles who prayed to God for their hearers. “Moses implored the Lord his God and said, ‘O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people?’” (EX. 32:11). “Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor

drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord” (DEUT. 9:18). LEV. 5:6 says the priest will pray for the man who has made a rash oath. “This shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel” (LEV. 16:34). In 1 SAM. 12:23, Samuel says to the Israelites: “Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.” (Ministers of the church commit a serious sin, therefore, when they neglect prayers for the flock entrusted to them.) “You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. O Lord, why do you make us wander from your ways?” (IS. 63:16-17). In JER. 23:3, the prophet is commanded to pray to the Lord for his people. In Jeremiah, Zedekiah says to the prophet: “Please pray for us to the Lord our God” (37:3). “Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary” (DAN. 9:17). “We pray to God that you may not do wrong” (2 COR. 13:7). “Your restoration is what we pray for” (v. 9).

“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him” (EPH. 1:15-17). “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit” (EPH. 3:14-16). “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy” (PHIL 1:4). “It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more” (v. 9). “We always thank God ... when we pray for you” (COL. 1:3). “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power” (2 THESS. 1:11). An epistle of the church at Smyrna mentions (Eusebius, Bk.4, *hist.*, c.15) in regard

to Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, that as the time of his martyrdom approached, he did nothing else night and day but continue his prayers in which he humbly asked that all churches throughout the world might have peace.

Fourth, the prayers of the church on behalf of their pastors require that pastors in turn pray for the church entrusted to them. “Earnest prayer for [Peter] was made to God by the church” (ACTS 12:5). “Pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ” (COL. 4:3). “Brothers, pray for us” (1 THESS. 5:25). (See 2 THESS. 3:1; HEB. 3:18, etc.)

Fifth, the greatest necessity requires that praying be connected to the preaching of the Word. In fact, without the grace of the blessing of heaven, the seed of the Word is not effective in producing fruits in the hearts of its hearers (1 COR. 3:6). However, the streams of heavenly blessing do not come down to people except through the channels of pious and devout prayers. The devil snatches up the seed of the Word from the hearts of those who hear but do not understand it (MATT. 13:19). However, those birds of hell are driven away by the sound of prayer. “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith” (1 PETER 5:8-9). Treating the duties of the ministers of the church the apostle asks (2 COR. 2:16): “Who is sufficient for these things?” That “sufficiency is from God” (2 COR. 3:5), from whom one must receive that sufficiency through pious prayers. To those prayers is related also the general blessing of the church, particularly committed to the order of ministers (NUM. 6:23), that an assembly should be dismissed with it.

Also related is the special blessing of the newly married, but that blessing (in a certain respect) we shall be able to relate to the rituals of the church about which we shall speak later. Nevertheless, we observe this because of the probity and dignity of marriage so it is a public testimony of a divine institution. We also observe this for the sake of a distinction between divine and



illicit unions, for we must think that God has joined together only those whom not senseless passion, but the consent of parents and the minister of the church in the name of God have joined together; and also for the sake of the antiquity of this sanction of the church. According to Platina (*vita pontif.*, f.23, *Soter I*), who administered the bishopric of Rome under the authority of Antoninus Commodus, one did not have a lawful wife unless a priest had blessed her according to that institution. This very ancient custom is mentioned in the Fourth Council of Carthage held in 436 and in the *Novel. Leon.*, 89.

275.4

#### THE HONORABLE CONTROL OF LIFE AND BEHAVIOR

We see that honorable control of life and behavior is especially required of a minister of the church, first, from the apostolic canons prescribed for bishops and deacons. “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child ... that ... you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience” (1 TIM. 1:18-19). “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach” (1 TIM. 3:2). “He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive” (v. 4). “He must not be a recent convert” (v. 6). “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (vv. 8-9). And the apostle adds clearly: “I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church” (vv. 14-15). “Train yourself for godliness” (1 TIM. 4:7). “Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (v. 12). “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things [namely, greed and ambition]. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness” (1 TIM. 6:11). “Do your best to present yourself

to God as one approved” (2 TIM. 2:15). “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (v. 22). “For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined” (TITUS 1:7-8). “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity” (TITUS 2:7).

Second, we see this from the inconveniences and scandals that generally result from ministers’ sins. “You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?” (ROM. 2:21). “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (v. 24). The efficacy of the Word and Sacraments certainly does not depend on the dignity or lack thereof of the ministers, as we have shown in our treatise “On the Sacraments” (30). Nevertheless, the situation itself makes it obvious that the wickedness of some ministers has thrown not a little delay and hindrance into the course of heavenly doctrine and the fructification of the Word. One destroys the authority of teaching when the minister’s works do not support his words. Those who teach uprightly but live wickedly destroy with their bad behavior what they build with sincere doctrine. They build heaven with their words, hell with their life. They consecrate their tongue to God, their soul to the devil. They are like the statues of Mercury that show the way to others — a way they themselves do not follow. They are like the carpenters who offered to help Noah build the ark: They prepared an ark so others could escape the flood, while they themselves perished. Augustine (Bk.4, *de doctr. Christ.*, c.27): “He has to be heard submissively. Whatever may be the majesty of his style, the life of the teacher is of greater significance than that style.” Augustine, epistle 112: “The way that a person lives counts more than the way he speaks.” Hilary, canon

5 on Matthew: “It is better to teach by example than by talk.”  
Cyprian, *de dupl. Mart.*, p.362: “The witness of one’s life is more effective than that of his tongue.” Lactantius, Bk.3, *instit.*, c.16, p.159: “It is good to teach upright and honorable things. Unless you also do such things, however, it is a lie. It is out of harmony, and inappropriate, to have goodness on your lips but not in your heart.” Lactantius again, Bk.4, *instit.*, c.23: “People prefer examples to words because it is easy to speak but difficult to act as an example. Would that as many as speak well would do well!” On the other hand, as Bernard says (epistle 28): “The ministry is honored because of the seriousness of its behavior, the maturity of its advice and the integrity of its actions.”

Third, we see this from the divine warnings published against wicked ministers. “But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips?” (Ps. 50:16). “But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you” (v. 21). “Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least [that is, nothing] in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (MATTHEW 5:19). Ignatius comments on these words (epistle 11, *To the Ephesians*, p. 63, Antwerp edition): “It is better to be silent and exist than to speak and not exist. The kingdom of God does not reveal itself in talk but in power. It is worthwhile to teach if the speaker acts, for whoever both acts and teaches is great in the kingdom.” Chrysostom (homily 43, on MATTHEW 23, and also cited in c. *Multi*, dist.40): “He who behaves well on his throne receives the honor of that throne. He who behaves badly does harm to that throne. The wicked priest, therefore, acquires not the dignity of his priesthood but a criminal charge against it, for you are sitting in judgment of yourself. Indeed, if you have lived and taught well, you do instruct your people. But, if you have taught well and lived badly, you will only be your condemner. For

by living and teaching well, you instruct your people as to how they should live. By teaching well and living badly, however, you instruct God as to how He should condemn you.” Prosper, *sent. August.*: “For one to speak well but to live corruptly is nothing else than condemning oneself with his own voice.”

Fourth, we see this from the absurd discrepancy between life and prayer and status. Nazianzen says (*carmin.*): “It is absurd to see a scout who is lost and a doctor of others who himself is covered with running sores.” Ambrose (Bk.10, epistle 82): “Who can bear it if the one who has the responsibility of governing others is unable to control himself? Who can bear it if the one who undertakes the care of another’s soul cannot protect his own?” Bernard says: “It is a monstrosity for one to have a lofty position and a low life, a first seat and a last life, an eloquent tongue and lazy hands, much talk and no fruit, a serious face and insignificant action, great authority and no stability.” Jerome writes, commentary on **MICAH 2**: “Is it not disgraceful for fat cheeks and full mouths to preach Christ crucified, poor and hungry, and the doctrine of fasting to stuffed bodies?”

Fifth, we see this from the example of Christ, the apostles and the pious teachers of the church, who instructed their hearers not only with words, but also with the examples of their lives. The disciples on the way to Emmaus say Christ was “a prophet mighty in deed and word” (**LUKE 24:19**). Luke says about Him: “... all that Jesus began to do and teach” (**ACTS 1:1**). Ignatius (*op. cit.*) applies this to an example of the holy life that he declares all true ministers of the church should follow. About himself Paul says (**1 COR. 9:27**): “I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” As Jerome rightly concludes (*op. cit.*): “If we are in the place of the apostles, therefore, let us imitate not only their speech but also their behavior and self-restraint.”

Sixth, we see it from the types of the Old Testament. Gregory (part 1, *pastoral.*, c.4, and cited in c. *Sit rector*, dist.43): “In Exodus 28 Moses is commanded to enter the tabernacle as the priest and to go around with the tinkling of bells, etc. How else are we to accept these witnesses of the priest than that they are upright works? According to the prophet, he says in Psalms: ‘Your priests shall be clothed in righteousness.’ So the bells will stay attached to his robe if the actual works of the priest call out the way of life along with the sound of his voice.” Gratian, dist.40, at the beginning, from the ancients: “A bishop must be dignified. We take that to refer to the virtues of a bishop, which the Lord continues to promise them when He says: ‘My priests will be clothed with salvation.’ In the Old Testament, consequently, we read that, in accord with God’s command, the priests were dignified with various robes. The life of a priest ought to be resplendent with many kinds of virtues. Thus, that life confers upon his office a comeliness which it does not receive from the person.” Berthor, *allegor.*: “The chief priest had an ephod and a breastplate. That is, ministers of the church ought to have good behavior and teaching. The breastplate had to be attached to the ephod (Ex. 28:22); that is, life should not be out of harmony with doctrine.” Camerarius, part 1, *meditat. succisiv.*, c.22, *ex. veter.*: “In the artwork of the temple of Solomon were engraved not only lions but also oxen and cherubim that he who rules the people may be vigilant and brave in protecting the laws of justice like a lion, that he may be bound carefully to the laws of humility like an ox, and finally that he may be endowed with the light of knowledge like the cherubim.” Isidore of Pelusium, Bk.1, epistle 151, p.39: “Because God’s priest comes close to God, he ought to have in his behavior an eye on every side, knowing everything, like those animals endowed with many eyes of EZEKIAL 1 and 10.” The face of the lion denotes an unbroken spirit against any peril at all; the face of an ox denotes a patience for hardships, whence Paul applies to ministers of the church the Mosaic law: “You shall not muzzle the ox when he is

treading out the grain” (1 TIM. 5:18). The face of a person denotes humanity, because people take care of the weak. The face of an eagle denotes a spirit that is to be carried aloft from earthly to heavenly things.

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#### THE TWOFOLD VIRTUES OF MINISTERS

Furthermore, the virtues that the apostle requires in the minister of the church (1 TIMOTHY 3, TITUS 1) we divided earlier into two classes. Some virtues he has in common with all other devout people, but some he has as his own special virtues. The former especially concern his person, the latter his office; the former his life and behavior; the latter the doctrine of his ministry. We can subdivide the common virtues in this way: we relate some to the First Table and some to the Second Table of the Decalog.

To the First Table of the Decalog is related that a bishop should be devout and holy (TITUS 1:8). Because he must encourage others to piety and holiness as much as possible, he is absolutely required to have a zeal for holy devotion toward God. In this area, Christ shines forth for ministers of the church as the chief Shepherd who is Himself called “uncorrupted” (ACTS 2:27, 13:35; HEB. 7:26). The apostles too, as Paul says, behaved as “holy and righteous and blameless” (1 THESS. 2:10).

Earlier we expressed the virtues that relate to the Second Table of the Decalog: first, by thesis; second, by negation. Here we shall use a different division. Some are expressed with general names that usually involve obedience to the Second Table of the Decalog. This then, is by negation that a bishop must be “above reproach” and blameless (1 TIM. 3:2, TITUS 1:6). By these he must be “upright” (TITUS 1:8), “sober-minded” (1 TIM. 3:2) and “dignified” (1 TIM. 3:8). On the other hand, some demand obedience to some specific command in particular.

He must be “ανεπιληπτος” (**above reproach**).

First, a bishop should be “ανεπιληπτος” (above reproach). Those who suffer from epilepsy are called “επιληπτοι.” They are so convulsed by epilepsy that they cannot move their limbs; and who are liable to a just charge and accusation. “Επιλαμβανεσθαι” is both to grasp and put in place, and to restrain and hold up. Thus, an ανεπιληπτος is a person who cannot be reasonably restrained and who is not subject to arrest. In Thucydides, Bk.5, p.170, we have “και αυτος τοις εχθροις ανεπιληπτος ειναι,” which the scholiast explains as “not liable to provide material for a criminal charge.”

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“Ανεγκληπτος” (**blameless**)

The same denotation is given by the word “ανεγκληπτος” (blameless, without blame). He is a person against whom one can throw up no just charge. “Εγκαλεισωσαι” is to be accused, to be blamed. “Τα εγκεκλημενα” are the objects in trials in place of the reproach or the criminal charge. “Ανεγκλητος” is used in general about all those who are truly devout (1 COR. 1:8, COL. 1:22). Neither word appears in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Thus, a bishop is required to live a guiltless and blameless life and not make himself liable to serious criminal charges. Gregory (part 1, *pastoral.*, c.11, and cited in c. *Ecce*, dist. 49): “One must be concerned and fearful that he who is believed to be capable of placating the wrath of God not earn the same thing for himself because of his own guilt. After all, we are well aware that when a person is displeasing, the spirit of the angered person is provoked to worse things. Each should evaluate himself carefully, therefore, and not dare assume a position of command, if sin still holds damning sway in him, lest he whom his own guilt corrupts seek to become the intercessor for the faults of others.”

Furthermore, there is a question whether those who slip into some serious sin can be placed in charge of or called back to the offices of the church after they have done penance. There are

many decrees about this and contrary ones in canon law, dist. 50. Gregory (Bk.7, epistle 53) correctly urges the example of Peter. He says: “Which is more serious: to commit a sin of the flesh without which few are found or to deny by oath the Son of God, into which sin we know Peter himself fell? Repentance followed his denial and after repentance, mercy was given him. For He who foretold that he would deny Him, did not expel him from apostleship.” Jerome, on **MICAH 3**, brings up the example of David, who, after committing adultery and murder, says: “I will teach transgressors Your ways” (**PSALM 51**). Augustine (epistle 150, to Boniface) distinguishes between the rigidity of the law and its fairness. He says: “That it is established in the church that no one receive a priestly office or return thereto or remain therein after repenting of some legal accusation occurs, not because of a lack of hope of forgiveness but because of the rigidity of the discipline. Otherwise, they will debate against the keys of the church about which it is said: ‘Whatever you loose on earth will also be loosed in heaven.’ Lest a spirit, swollen with pride by the hope of ecclesiastical office repent of other charges, it is the very severe pleasure of the law that no one may be a priest after repenting of a damnable sin so that out of desperation over temporal promotion, the medication of humility may be greater and more genuine, etc.”

Isidore, *ad Massanus*, distinguished between the penitent and impenitent: “The canons command to return to their former positions those who have first made the satisfaction of repentance or a worthy confession of sins. Against those, however, who are not freed of the fault of their corruption and who try by some superstitious rashness to make amends for that very carnal sin they commit, certainly do not receive a grade of honor nor the grace of communion. An opinion must be determined, therefore, so that it may be necessary for those to be restored to their position of honor who through repentance deserve the reconciliation of divine pity. For those who are known to have received a cure for



life through the correction of repentance do not undeservedly achieve again the state of dignity which they had lost.”

Hrabanus, *ad Heribaldum*, distinguishes between public and hidden sins: “Those who have been publicly apprehended in perjury, theft, fornication and other crimes of this sort should fall down from their position according to the institutions of the sacred canons. It is a scandal for the people of God to have such persons placed over them, persons who, we agree, are sinful above measure. Those who admit secretly to the aforementioned sins, who confess their sins by secret confession before the angels of God or even with a priest present who will exact penance for such sins, and who bewail the fact that they indeed have sinned greatly; I say, for these we must preserve their position and promise them the hope of forgiveness from the mercy of God.” A careful and diligent consideration of the circumstances will make clear what we must do in cases like this. Especially, must we distinguish the case of necessity from the ordinary rule? If we can find other suitable ministers of the church, we must by no means select or call back those who have fallen into some quite serious sin, even after they have repented. If there are no others, however, it is agreed that we do admit such people rather than have the church deprived of necessary ministers.

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“Δίκαιος” (**upright**)

These are the virtues related to the Second Table of the Decalog and expressed with general names, which generally require obedience to the Law according to the thesis: a bishop ought to be upright, dignified and serious. First, this uprightness of **ΤΙΤΟΥ 1:8** could be taken to mean specifically a particular righteousness, which is the virtue of the Seventh Commandment to be opposed to the “greediness for gain” mentioned in the preceding verse. Because it is connected with the word “holy,” which is general and expresses an obedience to the First Table of the Law; we, therefore, seem to

take it more correctly for a universal righteousness, just as elsewhere “holy and righteous” are connected (LUKE 1:75, EPH. 4:24, 1 THESS. 2:10). A bishop, therefore, is required to behave uprightly toward his neighbor, just as he ought to conduct himself with reverence and holiness toward God.

“Κοσμιος” (well-ordered)

Second, “κοσμιος” signifies the man of settled behavior, one who does all things decently and in order. Luther translates it “sittig” (well-bred) and also “ornatus” (equipped). The Vulgate edition has “ornatum” (equipped). That is not an absurd choice, because settled behavior is a person’s greatest equipment. Thus, in canon law, bishops and churchmen are required to be equipped within and without. *C. Nos qui*, dist. 40, from Gregory: “We who are charged should be renowned not for the dignity of our positions or kind but for the nobility of our behavior.” Dist. 41, at the beginning: “A bishop must be equipped on the outside also, namely, in garb and walk; in garb, that he not wear flashy or dirty clothes.” As Jerome says: “Neither the affectation of dirt nor exquisite style will bring praise.” This we must take to mean clothes as much as foods. *C. Episcopus*, same dist., from the Fourth Council of Carthage, canon 17: “A bishop should have inexpensive furniture and table as well as the food of the poor. He should seek the authority of his dignity in the merits of his faith and life.” Here a gloss adds: “We do not have this today.”

“σεμνος” (serious)

Third, “σεμνος” (serious) is sometimes taken negatively so that it means puffed up, hateful, overly serious. Here, however, it is praiseworthy and refers to one who is serious with authority and modesty, a man who behaves himself in his words, deeds, life and behavior in such a way that he gains a sort of reverence toward himself in the minds of those who listen to and watch him. Luther renders it “ehrbar” (sober). The Septuagint uses it for “*na`em* — he was pleasing or acceptable” (PROV. 15:27). You see, seriousness cou-

pled in a sort of union with very gentle modesty and friendliness makes a person pleasing and acceptable. The Vulgate translates this as “*pudicus*” (modest).

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“ ... WHO MANAGES WELL HIS OWN HOUSHOLD”

We can distinguish the virtues relating to the Second Table of the Law and which specifically require obedience to some specific Commandment as follows: We relate some to each of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Commandments. To the Fourth Commandment of the Decalog, we relate that a bishop should “manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive” (1 TIM. 3:4) and be one whose “children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination” (TITUS 1:6). This very thing is also required of deacons, that they should manage “their children and their own households well” (1 TIM. 3:12).

We must consider as a man who is rightly in charge of his own household and children, not someone who sits inside his house and rakes together his riches and looks out for the liberal support of his own family, but someone who brings up his children and servants “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” as the apostle explains (EPH. 6:4). This is a man who has children who are not insubordinate wastrels but who are subject in all integrity, as the apostle explains in these passages.

On the other hand, the apostle explains parenthetically why a bishop is required to rule his household well and reasonably: For “how will he care for God’s church?” (1 TIM. 3:5). This is an argument from the lesser to the greater. If a person does not know how to manage his own household, how will he be able to manage the church, which is “the household of God”? (1 TIM. 3:15 and 5:17). If a man does not know how to keep his children and servants in their places, how will he keep the entire assembly of the church in its place?

Chrysostom, homily 10, on **1 TIMOTHY 3**: “It is necessary that a bishop provide evidences of his virtue, both from his neighborhood and from his household. After all, who would believe that a man who has not kept his children subject is going to keep some strangers subject? This is something that even worldly authors say, that the man who manages his own household well also can manage the business of the state well. You see, the church is like a certain household, etc.”

The sins of children and servants argue the negligence of parents and householders in the correct controlling of their stewardship. If a man is negligent in the management of his private stewardship, how will he be concerned over the right management of the church? Consider the example of the priest Eli, about whom the Lord says (**1 SAM. 3:13**): “I declare to [Eli] that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.”

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“Μη πληκτης” (**not violent**)

To the Fifth Commandment of the Decalog is related that a bishop should be “not violent” (**1 TIM. 3:3**), “not arrogant or quick-tempered” (**TITUS 1:7**); but “hospitable” (**1 TIM. 3:2**); “gentle, not quarrelsome” (v. 3); “a lover of good” (**TITUS 1:8**). First, a man is called “violent” who is quick to give a beating. Plutarch, *Fab.*, calls it “being quick from the hand” from “πληττειν” (to strike, to beat).

Chrysostom (commentary on **1 TIMOTHY 3**) relates this to tongue-lashing or to censuring. For he writes (homily 10): “As he speaks here he does not mean a man who hits with his hands. What then does ‘not violent’ mean? Now that there are some who are beating the consciences of their brothers at the wrong time, I believe that he is hinting at these.” He also writes, commentary on **TITUS 1**, homily 2: “‘Not violent’ here refers to a violent person, for it is necessary that everyone who admonishes or rebukes does

not mistreat.” Jerome has the same opinion. He relates this to a sharpness of tongue, namely, that “a bishop should not be a savage and wicked rebuker,” as it says in **1 TIM. 5:1**: “Do not rebuke an older man.”

However, it is taken more accurately in regard to striking the body. “Πληκτιζεσθαι,” which comes from our word, means to contend all the way to blows, to come to blows in an altercation. Eustathius, *Iliad*, φθτ, notes that πληκτιζεσθαι is used for “μαχεσθαι” (do battle) or for “εριχειν εως πληγης” (to quarrel to the point of blows).

This is the way Chrysostom himself takes it when he adds etiologically that beautiful statement: “A doctor is a teacher of souls. Certainly, a doctor does not strike a person; but, even if he happens to have struck a sick person, he is correcting, improving and curing him.” Luther says: “Ein Bischof soll nicht pochen” (A bishop should not beat another person).

“Μη αυθαδης” (**not arrogant**)

Second, “αυθαδης” is self-pleasing, arrogant, proud; a person who pleases himself in such a way that he holds others in contempt before himself. It comes from “αυτος” (self) and “αδειν,” which is “to please,” as Aristotle explains (Bk.1, *magn. ethic*). We commonly explain it as unyielding and stubborn, because pertinacity generally stems from haughtiness. Cicero translates “αυθαδειαν” as “obstinate.”

Consider this: Luther here translates it as “*eigensinnig*” (capricious). In the margin Luther writes this note: “A person who is his own man yields only if it is absolutely necessary, and plunges headlong into anything.”

In **2 PETER 2:1**, “αυθαδες” (willful) is connected with “bold.” There the Vulgate translates it as “self-pleasing,” but here as “arrogant.” The Septuagint translators use “obstinate” or “stubborn”

for “a`z” in **GEN. 49:7**. The sense then is that a bishop should not please himself in such a way that he clings stubbornly to his own opinion, listens to no one with opposing ideas and forces all people to be obedient to his own ideas.

“Οργιλος” (**quick-tempered**)

Third, “οργιλος” is “quick to anger,” a person who allows himself to be angered. Aristotle (Bk.4, ethic., c.5): “Hot-tempered people get angry quickly and with the wrong persons and at the wrong times and more than is right, but their anger ceases quickly.”

Elsewhere they are called “οξυχολοι” or “πικροχολοι,” quick to anger and bitter-tongued, “people easily rubbed the wrong way.” Luther translates it “*zornig*” (wrathful). Instead of the “hasty in his words” of **PROV. 29:20**, the Septuagint translators use “a man of the nostrils,” that is, a man who is prone to anger, which causes his nostrils to swell. They also translate “*ish hemah*” (**PROV. 29:24**) as “a man of heat” and irascibility.

The sense, then, is that a bishop should not be prone to anger, become angry for insignificant reason, etc. Chrysostom adds an excellent reason in his commentary on **TITUS 1**: “By what logic will he who has not first taught himself teach others to control this sin of wrath? Leadership of that sort every day produces more criminal activities and creates a displeasing bother. For even if it is very modest, its quickness to anger produces countless and daily crises. If each person does not meditate long over this and does not attain it, he will become very upsetting, he will corrupt many things and will destroy much of what his responsibility includes.”

“Φιλοξενος” (**hospitable**)

Fourth, “φιλοξενος” is hospitable, a person who is happy to receive others as their host. Luther calls it “*gastfrei*” (hospitable). In **1 PETER 4:9** Peter requires that all Christians “show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” Here it is specifically and especially required of bishops. Because of persecutions at that time, there

were more frequent banishments and public hospices had not yet been established. Therefore, the apostle requires hospitality from a bishop so that his home becomes a refuge and receiving place for exiles.

Dist. 42, at the beginning: “A priest must be hospitable lest he belong to the number of those to whom it will be said in judgment: ‘I was a stranger, and you did not take me in.’ He who follows the apostle should invite others into his hospitality. If he closes his own home to guests, how will he be able to be an encourager of hospitality? You see, if a priest should demand first from himself and from his own domestic church what he later demands of his own people and if in imitation of Christ he himself should first do what he later teaches his people; then he must receive the poor into his hospitality so that he thereby may attract his subjects more easily to hospitality by his own examples. One who is about to be ordained as a priest, therefore, ought to remember how Abraham and Lot pleased God with their works of hospitality and deserved to receive angels into their hospitality; how the angels who entered a hospitable household of Sodom freed Lot and his family; how fire touched off and destroyed closed homes along with the residents therein; and how a person who is proved to keep more than the necessities for himself is guilty of stealing another’s property, etc., according to Jerome, *regul. monarch.*”

If we forbid from being received by the church a widow who does not receive the poor into her hospitality, who does not wash the feet of the saints, who does not perform every good work; all the more must we keep from the priesthood those who prove to be strangers to the works of piety. Ministers of the church must not be hospitable in a passive way, happy to live by the arrangement of others nor to let their hospitality degenerate into frequent feasts.

In this regard we have a precept in the church constitution of the Elector of Saxony, *art. general.16*, p.337: “Pastors should avoid taverns and bars. Even in their parsonages they should not do much partying nor often have guests, etc.” Jerome, epistle to Demetrius: “You are praised by the stomachs of the hungry who are not vomiting up rich foods.”

“Ἐπιεικής” (**gentle**)

He is called “ἐπιεικής” who prefers justness to the strict law, who yields or concedes by his own right for the sake of peace. Aristotle, *Bk.5, ethic.*, c.10: “The man who is no stickler for his rights in a bad sense but tends to take less than his share although he has the law on his side is ‘ἐπιεικής’ (equitable).”

Also: “We say that a gentle man is especially a man who makes concessions, for gentleness concedes some things. Here Budaeus says a gentle man is a “kind grantor of forgiveness.” In lexicons “ἐπιεικής” is defined as “gentle, mild, modest,” and this is the way the Vulgate translates it here. Luther renders it “*gelinde*” (gentle).

In **1 PETER 2:18** they are called “gentle masters,” masters who are mild-mannered and moderate, to whom are opposed the overbearing. In **2 COR. 10:1** “meekness and gentleness” are paired. The Septuagint translators render the “sallach” of **Ps. 85:4** as “kindly-disposed, giving way.” The sense, then, is that a bishop, after the example of Christ the chief Shepherd, ought to be “gentle” (**MATT. 11:29**). He should not demand his strict due in all things. Rather he should pursue equity and moderation.

Consequently, it is added that he ought to be sixth:

“Ἀμαχος” (**not quarrelsome**)

A person who is “ἀμαχος” is a stranger to fighting. You see, those who rigidly pursue their own legal right frequently fall into brawls and fights. Those who pursue gentleness cannot be quarrelsome. Thus, in **JAMES 3:17** “peaceable” and “gentle” are paired. In Suidas those who “are not quarrelsome” are those who abstain from



fighting, coming from “α” and “μαχομαι” (to fight). In **TITUS 3:2**, the not-quarrelsome and gentle are said to be those who “show perfect courtesy toward all men.” Luther gives consideration to fighting with words and translates it here as “*nicht haderhaftig*” (not inclined to chopping).

**“Φιλαγαθος” (a lover of good)**

Seventh, “φιλαγαθος” is a person who loves good people and goodness. We could take it generally to mean a zeal for virtue; but, because it is connected with the word “hospitable,” we seem to take it more accurately as meaning especially the person who willingly does good for others. Luther translates it “*gütig*” (good). For the Greeks “αγαθα ποιειν” is to do kindnesses toward someone. For the Greeks “αγαθαποιοι” are those who are generous and open-handed. The Septuagint translators use it only once in the Wisdom of **SOLOMON 7:22**, where they say that in wisdom there is a “πνευμα φιλαγαθον” (a spirit that loves the good). The sense, then, is that a bishop should be obliging, happy to be generous to another.

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**“THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE”**

To the Sixth Commandment of the Decalog is related that a bishop should be, first, “the husband of one wife” (**1 TIM. 3:2, TITUS 1:6**). About what these words mean, we gave information earlier. We shall say more later about the marriage of ministers.

**“Εγκρατης” (self-controlled)**

Second, a bishop should be “εγκρατης” (self-controlled) (**TITUS 1:8**). Someone who cannot control himself is said to be “ακρατης.” Thus, “ακρατης αφοδισιων” is one who is uncontrolled in regard to venereal pleasure, lustful; and “ακρατης τιμης” is a man who cannot control and bridle his desire for glory.

Aristotle, Bk.7, *ethic.*, c.1, writes that “ακρατης” and “ακολαστον” (incontinent) are used interchangeably. To that we oppose the “εγκρατης,” the person who knows how to bridle

his desires, especially in regard to food, drink and sex. Budaeus translates these three: controlled in regard to food, drink and sexual intercourse with one word: “continent.” Luther rendered it “*keusch*” (chaste), giving consideration to the most important kind of self-control. However, the word is a general one, that a bishop should control himself in food, drink, emotions, sex, etc.

Erasmus, notes on **TITUS 1**: “As Jerome indicates, some people by no means accurately relate ‘εγκρατη’ to lust alone because it refers to all emotions: anger, greed, ambition, envy, fear.”

Chrysostom, homily 2 on **TITUS 1**: “Εγκρατη: ‘Here he did not mean one who fasts but instead one who takes control of his emotion, tongue, hand and wandering eyes, for self-control consists in not being dragged down by passion.’ Athanasius and Oecumenius take this word to mean a person “who commands his tongue, eyes, hands,” etc. Furthermore, as is virginal and conjugal chastity, so also is “εγκρατεια” when it is taken in a special sense so that it is attributed only to virgins living chastely without being married. “If they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry” (**1 COR. 7:9**).

On the other hand, it is sometimes taken generally so that it also befits devout married people (**GAL. 5:23**). In **2 PETER 1:6** self-control is listed among the fruits and virtues of the Spirit required in all the devout. In **Ecclus 26:15** self-control is especially attributed to married people: “A self-controlled spirit no scales can weigh.” Here it is apparently speaking of a married woman, as we see from v. 16: “The favor of a wife delights her husband.” However, we shall say more about this in the question about the marriage of ministers.

“Μη παροινος” (**no drunkard**)

“Μη παροινος” means “not a drunkard” (**1 TIM. 3:3, TITUS 1:7**). The apostle himself explains what he means by παροινος, namely, “one who is given to wine” (**1 TIM. 3:8**). In the *Athenaeum*, Bk.10, he is called an “ανθρωπος παροινος,” whom the Latins call “*vinosus*,”

that is to say, sitting down to drink wine heavily or to “play the Greek” with wine.

The “παροιμία” is the petulance, harm, insulting behavior, etc., that accompanies drunkenness, from which Chrysostom’s statement undoubtedly started. He takes the “drunkard” to mean a wanton person, homily 10, on **1 ΤΙΜΟΤΗΥ 3**: “It does not say here ‘the drunkard,’ but the wanton, the stubborn.” In canon law there are some very clear canons about this. At the beginning of dist. 35: “That bishops should not be given over to wine was introduced on the basis of the authority of the Old Testament. Ministers of the church are forbidden to drink wine and liquor so that drunkenness does not burden their hearts, so that their good sense always flourishes, or because a belly bloated with wine easily foams up into lust.”

C. *Episcopus*, etc., same dist., from the *Apostolic Canons*: “A bishop or elder or deacon who is in service to dice and drunkenness either should cease or certainly must be condemned.” C. *Ante omnia*, same dist., from the Council of Agatha: “Above all, drunkenness is forbidden to clergymen. It is the nurse and kindler of all sins. He who is established to have been intoxicated should be removed from the communion for thirty days or should undergo physical punishment.” At the beginning of dist. 44: “When a bishop is forbidden to be a drunkard, he is not permitted to have an intemperance of the throat. It is not that drunkenness is forbidden and gluttony allowed, for the apostle lists both among the works of darkness” (**ROM. 13:13**).

*“The insatiable belly easily provokes one to luxurious living and dissolves every good work. That is why Jerome writes to Amandus: ‘The stomach and genitals are chains for themselves, so that because of the proximity of these parts of the body they are known as an alliance for sins.’ Hence, Nabuzarda, prince of cooks, is said to have*

*destroyed the walls of Jerusalem because the stomach, which the multitude of cooks serves, reduced the structures of virtues to dust. A priest, therefore, should seek to live about the altar, not luxuriate therein.”*

V. *Non oportet*, same dist, from the Council of Laodicea, c.24: “Serving clerics from elders to deacons and, in fact, all members of the order of the church, etc., should not enter taverns except in the case of necessity.”

This same constitution is repeated in the church constitutions of Saxony, (*gen. art.* 16, p.337). C. *Clerici*, same dist., from the Third Council of Carthage, c.27: “Clergymen should not enter taverns to eat or drink unless compelled by the necessity of their travels.” C. *Pro reverentia*, same dist., from the Fourth Council of Toledo, c.7: “On behalf of reverence to God and to priests, the whole council establishes this, that (because useless tales generally come up with frequency at the tables) the reading of Holy Scripture be interspersed at every meal of priests. Through this, souls are edified for good, and unnecessary tales are forbidden.”

“**Νηφαλιος**” (**sober**)

Fourth, a bishop must be “νηφαλιος” (sober) (1 TIM. 3:2). Among Latin speakers *sobrius* is used to refer not only to sobriety of body but also to sobriety of the mind, namely, to vigilance, prudence and attention. So also among the Greeks this word is used in both senses. Just as “νηφειν” is opposed to “μεθυειν,” so also that is said about him who is watchful, prudent and circumspect.

Epicharmus, in Lucian and Cicero: “Be sober and watchful for unbelief, for the sober and prudent soul dwells in temperance.” Thus, it is coupled with “being wakeful” (1 THESS. 5:6; 1 PETER 5:8). Thinking of this, Chrysostom, homily 10, on 1 TIMOTHY 3, and in *de sacerd.* takes “sober” to mean prudent and circumspect. He says: “The sober person has been endowed with a very keen edge of mind and has countless eyes looking in every direction and

with those he sees all things very sharply.” And later: “He must be wakeful who not only has the care of himself but also the care of the rest. It befits him to be very vigilant who is of such a type that he glows with enthusiasm and shows the fire of his emotion with his works and surpasses all his leaders with his concerned industry. Day and night he will review his army and camp; he will work and fulfill very diligently the responsibility of his office he will manage a care and concern for everyone.” According to this explanation, “sober” should have to do with the office of the ministry, but because “prudent” is added, it is taken more conveniently about sobriety of body. Luther too renders it “*nüchtern*” (sober). For this reason it is a virtue of the Sixth Commandment and is opposed to the fault of drunkenness.

“Σωφρων” (**prudent**)

Fifth, he must be “σωφρων” or, as it were, “σοφρων.” That is, he must be a prudent person. The Vulgate renders it as “prudent, sober.” It is used to describe a person of moderation and temperance. Demosthenes and Aeschines have paired “prudent” and “restrained.” Luther translates it here as “*mäßig*” (moderate). “Σωφοσύνη” is not only prudence but also temperance and moderation, according to Aristotle, Bk.6, ethic., c.5, as if it came from “σωζουσα την φωνησιν” (maintaining judgment). Stephanus does not approve of this etymology.

Aristotle, Bk.1, *rhetor.*, writes: “Prudence is a virtue because of which people hold firm against the pleasures of the body as the law commands.” To this he opposes “intemperance.” Jerome renders it as “*castus*” (chaste), and Euripides also uses it in this sense. Erasmus, *annot.*, remarks that “σωφρων” to the Greeks sounds not so much like “prudent” as “sober” and “of a sound mind,” so we may take it to mean a spirit that is collected and intoxicated with no desire.

Furthermore, from the fact that a bishop is forbidden to be given to wine, the constitution of the church of the Elector of Saxony rightly concludes, gen. art.16, p.338: “Pastors should refrain from selling wine and beer so that they do not retail, put out signs, or seat paying guests in their home. From such activity comes great scandal to the church, and to them, the pastors, comes often great rebuke, scorn, danger, inconvenience and injury. For this reason such selling is to be allowed to no official of the church. They should all diligently refrain from that.”

This constitution is in harmony with the decree of the Sixth Synod cited in c. *Nulli*, dist. 44: “No clergyman is allowed to have a tavern or brewery of this sort, so much the more does he minister to others in it. On the other hand, if any clergyman has been doing this, he should stop it or be removed from his ministry.”

This is supported with very good reason. First, “ζυθησις” that is, the business of cooking up and brewing beer, ill befits the authority of the ministry. It is not proper for a preacher of the Word and teacher of the church to be a wine seller and brewer of beer. “No soldier on service gets tangled in civilian pursuits” (2 TIM. 2:4). Second, it erodes his freedom to rebuke the wastefulness of his hearers. In fact, for the sake of his own profit, he will invite them to drink. Third, it provides an opportunity for excess to the children and servants of ministers (although the apostle quite clearly commands [TRUS 1:6] that a bishop should keep his children “not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination”), for experience is the witness that the children of such brewers very often degenerate into prodigals and drunkards.

Fourth, it draws the interest of the pastor into many areas foreign to his ministry and gives him an effective reason to be forced to hear, see and endure many things that are much more worthy of rebuke. Fifth, it is repugnant to the honor of the parish buildings and, secondarily, even to the sanctity of the church, to which the

buildings of the church generally are quite close. After all, what can be more shameful than to erect a tavern close to a temple? Surely we read that Christ twice drove the buyers and sellers from the courtyard of the temple (JOHN 2:15 and LUKE 19:45).

Sixth, it is opposed to the apostle's faithfulness to the responsibility of teaching. However, their imitators ought to be sincere pastors. In ACTS 6:2 they say: "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." Because by municipal law with respect for one's own buildings, it seems that we must allow such "cooking of beer" to some pastors, the church constitution therefore in the aforementioned paragraph applies this gentle restraint:

*"Church officials might produce their own wine or might be given the tithe in wine. They could brew beer in the parish, or they had other rights to brew beer. All this they could do for more than their own needs. Or they had their own homes where they had the right to brew beer. Thus, what we say about selling wine and beer one should understand to mean that they should be allowed to sell to others in barrels, buckets and kegs."*

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**"Μη αισχροκερδης" (not greedy for gain)**

For the Seventh Commandment of the Decalog is related that a bishop should be, first, "not greedy of filthy lucre, no pursuer of disgraceful gain" (1 TIM. 3:3, TITUS 1:7). "αισχροκερδης" comes from "αισχρος και κερδος." To some this means given over to greedy gain, making a filthy profit. To others it means not given over shamefully to profit. We must prefer the first explanation, for one could be said to be given over shamefully to profit who is zealous and eager for profit above the normal, although the profit itself may not be filthy. The word "αισχροκερδεια" occurs in Demosthenes, *adv. Aeschin.*: "They preferred private profit and shame to that of the public good." Budaeus warns that "greediness

for gain” denotes a sin related to “avarice,” for the avaricious generally are “greedy for gain.” In fact, to them the fragrance of profit from anything at all is good. Peter also advises elders that they should carry out the areas of their duty “not for shameful gain, but eagerly” (1 PETER 5:2).

Chrysostom, homily 2, on TITUS 1: “Not greedy for filthy lucre, that is to say, showing great disdain for property.” Luther translates it: “*der nicht unehrliche Handthirung treibt.*” From this apostolic canon is taken that statement of the church constitution of the Elector of Saxony, in the aforementioned place: “Ministers should abstain completely from all dishonorable work like selling wine and beer, merchandising, selling at excessive profit and similar commercial ventures.”

Examples of “greediness for gain” we shall occasionally meet if we wish to consider the marketing of masses and indulgences, jubilees, the Roman curia’s assessment of penance in which they demand a certain price for each and every sin. Thus, we take that statement of 2 PETER 2:3 to refer to papal clergymen: “And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.” Would that examples of “greediness for gain” would be totally banished from the pastors of our churches! About some we must use the words of the poet: “They sin within and without the walls of Troy.”

“Αφιλαργυρος” (**no lover of money**)

Second, he must be “αφιλαργυρος” (a stranger to greed)

(1 TIM. 3:3). “Φιλαργυρια” is a lover of silver, a desire for money.

Hesychius explains it as “a love of property, the acquisition of which is worth good silver.” The apostle says that this is “the root of all evil”

(1 TIM. 6:10). Therefore, “no lover of money” is a person who is not

liable to this fault, who is not a lover of money. Luther translates

it “*nichts geizig*” (not covetous). “Keep your life free from love

of money, and be content with what you have” (HEB. 13:5). Here,

“being a money-lover” is opposed to “αυταρκεια” (self-sufficiency)

with which one is content with his lot and present circumstances.



### Μη διλογος (not double-tongued)

To the Eighth Commandment of the Law is related that ministers of the church should not be “διλογοι” (double-tongued) (1 TIM. 3:8). This is required especially in deacons, but in general we relate it correctly to all ministers of the church. They are said to be “double-tongued” who declare one thing with their mouth and hide another beneath their breast. Elsewhere, Scripture says they “speak by and with their heart.” Luther translates it “*zweizüngig*” (double-tongued).

Chrysostom, homily 11 on 1 TIMOTHY: “Not ‘double-tongued,’ that is to say, not false nor deceitful.” This hypocritical fault concealed by the disguise of political prudence is common to many people today, but it ought to be as far away as possible from ministers of the church. Chrysostom adds the reason, *ibid.*: “For nothing is so base a habit to practice as treachery; nothing is so useless in the church as deception.” The minister who in civilian society is double-tongued or deceitful loses his people’s confidence in him when he preaches the Word.

These now are the virtues of a bishop that concern his person, life and behavior. In these virtues, he should try very hard to surpass the others by as great a distance as the summit of the dignity of his office is from them. The characteristic virtues of a bishop that concern his office and doctrine are these: he should be apt to teach, “able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it” (TITUS 1:9). We discussed this in greater detail in another section.

### 285.5

#### THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Up to this point we have addressed ourselves to the fourth duty of ministers, which is the honorable control of life and behavior. We now go on with the fifth: the administration of discipline within the church. Just as in the political and economic spheres,

so also in the church we must have discipline. Without it, subjects and servants on one hand and hearers on the other cannot be restrained in their duty. The object of church discipline are the people received into the household of God and family of Christ who have sinned (MATT. 18:15 “If your brother sins against you”); those who have been preoccupied with falling away (GAL. 5:1); and those who are to be rebuked, reprovved and corrected so they return to the way and perform their duty according to the prescription of the Word.

Such falls are twofold, having to do with doctrine and behavior. A fall in doctrine is an error in dogmas, which arises out of simple ignorance and has no stubbornness connected with it. It also may begin from malice and wickedness and is defended stubbornly as it holds the judgment of the church, as taken from the Scripture, in contempt. For this reason it degenerates into heresy.

A fall in behavior is a sin committed either by words or actions and is either public or private. A public sin is either committed openly or is known publicly; it is paired with obvious scandal. A private one is committed in secret. Only one person or a few are conscious of it. It is not paired with public or infamous scandal. One commits both out of ignorance, weakness or wickedness. Correction is arranged either publicly before all or privately. It is related either to one person who sins or in general to the common assembly of hearers or to correction.

There are three levels of correction: first, “νουθεσια” (admonition) and “επιτιμια” or “επιτιμησις” (censuring or rebuking); second, lesser excommunication, which is a temporary suspension from partaking of the Lord’s Supper; third, greater excommunication, by which a person is rejected from the fellowship of the church.

Just as lepers and the unclean were ordered to be removed from the Israelites’ camp (NUM. 5:2), so also those who were infected

with notorious public sins (as with leprosy and persevere in those sins without repenting) should be rejected from the fellowship of the church by excommunication. There are some who add a fourth level, anathema, the Hebrew “cherem” by which the incorrigible person is cursed with eternal damnation (GAL. 1:8, 1 COR. 16:22). However, this is not so much a part of the discipline of the church as it is a terrible curse made in accordance with the prophetic spirit. In the primitive church, especially presbyters or elders were in charge of this church discipline (church consistories have succeeded them today).

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#### THE RULES RELATING TO CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Here are the rules relating to the administration of church discipline.

First, with private sins, one must begin with a private admonition before progressing to public censure. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone . . . But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church” (MATT. 18:15-17).

Here you should not think that Christ speaks only about those private offenses with which we plague each other in our daily life. Note that the Greek phrase “εις σε” (against you) can be translated “before you, in your presence” or “and you are aware of it.” Thus, we understand that Christ is speaking in general of any sins committed that are known to one’s neighbor. Second, in this private admonition, one must use prudence. You see, if a person has sinned because of ignorance or weakness, it is enough to admonish him gently and to encourage him to be careful about slipping in the future.

On the other hand, if the person sinned out of wickedness, we must have a more severe rebuke. Ambrose, Bk.8, on Luke: “A friendly reproof is more beneficial than a stormy accusation. The

former indicates a sense of shame; the latter arouses indignation. In this administration of church discipline, one must not indulge his personal emotions (1 TIM. 5:21), but must rather direct all things to the single target of the conversion and salvation of the erring brother. Third, those who sin publicly and provide a public scandal because of their fall we must also correct publicly. “As for those who persist in sin (clearly along with public scandal), rebuke them in the presence of all so that the rest may attend in fear” (1 TIM. 5:20).

In GAL. 2:14, when Paul saw that Peter was sinning in public, he rebuked him “before them all.” Therefore, when rebuking sins, we should not always use the same method. Some we must show openly so that they encourage no one to imitate them. Some we must deal with gently; others more sharply. We can scarcely place all of this within definite rules. Rather, we must leave them to the prudence of the faithful pastor as to a doctor of souls. He should know which procedure fits in each situation. As a prudent builder and faithful steward (1 COR. 3:10 AND 4:1), he ought to know how to apply that with urgency in and out of season (2 TIM. 4:2).

Fourth, in a public admonition, he must also use prudence lest the cure exceed bounds. Augustine, epistle 64, to Aurelius, urges him “to use severity towards the sin of a few, but in the case of sins which have swept over the entire multitude and have gone off to nearly become customs,” he writes as follows: “As far as I can opine, we must not remove those things harshly, not roughly, not imperiously but rather by teaching than by commanding, rather by warning than by threatening. In mercy a man should reprove what he can; but what he cannot, he should bear patiently and bemoan and weep over it with love.”

Fifth, the clemency of gentleness should always temper the severity of the discipline and correction. The Third Council of Bracar, canon 6: “A person who has been chastised with gentleness has respect for the one who has chastised him. A rebuke of

excessive severity brings neither a rebuke nor salvation.”  
Gregory, Bk.1, epistle 25:

*“Let the ark, that is, the church and the state, and its leader, have the Tables of the Law as the rod of discipline and correction and the sweetness of manna in ruling. Hence, the Samaritan pours wine and oil upon the wounded man so that the wine stings the wounds and the oil soothes them. Therefore, let there be love but not a softening love; let there be strength, but not the strength that makes things worse.” See also Gregory, part 2, pastoral., c.6, and Bk.20, moral., c.6.*

Ambrose, Bk.20, *moral.*, c.6: “Discipline and mercy lack much if one be applied without the other. As regards their subjects rulers ought to have mercy, which offers just advice and discipline, which provides a pious service. Thus it is that wine and oil are applied to the wounds of the half-dead man whom the Samaritan took to the inn. In this way the wine stings the wounds and the oil soothes them. In the same way each person who is responsible for healing wounds should apply the bite of restraint in the wine and the soothing quality of pity in the oil. Wine cleanses rotting wounds; oil soothes them for healing. We must, therefore, mix gentleness with harshness and must take a proper measure of both so that we might not exacerbate our subjects with excessive severity nor let them off with excessive gentleness. In fact, this is what that ark of the tabernacle signifies, in which ark, along with the tables of the Law were the rod and manna because if, along with a knowledge of Holy Scripture, a good ruler has the rod of restraint in his breast, let him also have the sweetness of manna. Hence also David says: ‘Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.’ Certainly, the rod strikes us, and the staff supports us. Therefore, there should be the restraining force of justice to strike and the comfort of the staff to support one. Let there be love, then, but not love too soft let there be harshness, but not an exacerbating

harshness; let there be zeal, but not a zeal that rages unduly; let there be pity but not a pity that spares more than it helps.”

Sixth, we should not resort to excommunication, especially to major excommunication, without first having tried everything without success on the sinner, for, as that is the greatest and ultimate judgment of the church, so also it is the most terrifying judgment.

Seventh, a minister of the church should undertake neither major nor minor excommunication without the judgment of a senate or consistory of the church. The power to excommunicate does not belong to any one bishop, but to the presbytery that represents the entire church. “Tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church [that is, to the presbytery and the assembly of elders], let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (MATT. 18:17), separated from the fellowship of the church. In fact, major excommunication of the church ought to occur only with the knowledge and approval of the entire church. “When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan” (1 COR. 5:4-5). “For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough” (2 COR. 2:6).

The most serious responsibilities of the church ought not be undertaken without the consent of the entire body of the church. As Pope Leo writes: “That which has to do with all the people ought to be done with the consent of all the people.” But what can be more serious and what relates more to the body of the church than to cut off some member from that body? If the entire church should refrain from familiar and ordinary association with the excommunicated person, it certainly is necessary that the excommunication take place in the assembly of the entire congregation and with the tacit approval of the same.

Eighth and finally, the minister must be very careful in his use of the keys that he not loose what must be bound and not bind what must be loosed, because God, as Jerome says on Matthew 16, “does not ask for the opinion of the priests but for the life of the accused, and because the key of power accomplishes nothing without the key of knowledge and discretion.”

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### REBUILDING THE PRINCE

The first question asked here is whether we must give or grant permission to bring suit against a minister who is too vehement in censuring his hearers' sins. We can set up two parts of such a suit. The first is preparatory, the accusation contained in the complaint and the citation thereof; the second is the inquiry into the case and its adjudication. Here, the question concerns not the latter, but the former as it applies to the citation of the accusation. Must we allow to be called into court without discrimination any ministers at all, that is, those whose zeal has become known and investigated according to factual knowledge (**PHIL. 2:22**), as well as those who lack such a zeal (**ROM. 10:2**)?

As far as the first class is concerned, we prove the negative first from the apostle's statement (**1 TIM. 5:19**): “Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses”; second, from the case of law. Those who want only to behave well in regard to the eternal salvation of others and to the entire church, but who are responsible for deceiving and perverting many, against such we must admit no accusation except under the aforementioned condition. The antecedent is true about good elders and people like them.

Third, we prove it from the unfortunate consequences. The true church is offended by this procedure; the church that takes pleasure only in being called “church” is confirmed in its perversity and is encouraged to make greater advances in this process. See Tarn., *de minist.*, q.6.

The second question asked here is whether ministers of the church can publicly censure a magistrate who sins. Some public officials think that such rebukes are repugnant to the honor due the magistracy and detract from its esteem. In fact, they believe it offers an opportunity for seditious behavior. Also, some counselors of the court notice that such rebukes do not please great men, but are dangerous to them. (Very often they are compelled to hear what King Amaziah told the prophet who accused him of idolatry: “Have we made you a royal counselor? Stop! Why should you be struck down?” [2 CHRON. 25:16] and “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom” [AMOS 7:12-13].) Then they become negligent in their duty.

However, to them we respond that there is the general command that orders ministers of the church to rebuke sins with no discrimination of individuals (IS. 58:1, 1 TIM. 5:20). Nowhere do we find the addition of the limitation that they must reprove the sins of private citizens but not those of public officials.

Second, we note the particular command that orders ministers of the church to censure even a magistrate. God tells Moses: “Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land” (EX. 6:11). “Say to the king and the queen mother: “Take a lowly seat”” (JER. 13:18). “The word of the Lord came to me: ‘Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude . . . ’” (EZEK. 31:1-2).

Third, there are the examples of the prophets, the apostles and even Christ Himself. They placed the sins not only of private citizens and commoners but also of public officials and persons who were of the magistracy before their eyes. Obedient to a divine command, Moses and Aaron rebuke the Pharaoh of Egypt because he refused to let the people of Israel go (EXODUS 7-9). Samuel reprovved King Saul (1 SAM. 15:19); Nathan did the same to David (2 SAM. 12:19); Elijah to Ahab (1 KINGS 18:17); Isaiah



to Hezekiah (Is. 39:6); and Jeremiah (32:4), foretells to the king the king's abduction into captivity. The prophet Micah says (3:1): "Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?" "Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth" (MICAH 6:2). John the Baptist told Herod: "It is not lawful for you to have [your brother's wife]." He said this, as Chrysostom noted, within the hearing of everyone (MATT. 14:4).

Ambrose censured Theodosius for excessive cruelty against the citizens of Thessalonika. Gregory, a Dominican monk, was an ecclesiastical advisor of Duke Frederick of Saxony whom Luther and others recently approved. When Gregory wanted to rebuke the sins of the princes before the congregations, but didn't dare do it openly, he spread it among the people by a trick, using this comparison: "A preacher is not unlike the man who skins a rabbit. You see, even though he draws the pelt from the entire body easily, yet he experiences some difficulty when he comes to the head. Thus, when the preacher censures the sins of the people, it is not that he fears the difficulty. But when he comes to the head (and right here he points to the prince who is standing nearby), '*So streif dich einander!*' (That's the way you skin each other!) The prince gave the monk a new cap of honor." See Wolff, *cent.16*, p.140.

Fourth, we note the dignity of the ecclesiastical office. You see, however much of the individual and property of ministers are under the magistracy, it still is their duty to know no other lord than Christ alone, whose ambassadorship they are performing (2 COR. 5:20). Therefore, with respect for that relating to the doctrine and ministry of reproof, they know they are subject not to the magistracy, but to God alone.

Luther, Vol.6, German edition of Jena, f.384: "The office of the ministry is the job of neither a court servant nor of a hired hand. He is a servant and laborer of God, and his responsibility surpasses master and servant." To rebuke sins is the work of

the Holy Spirit (**JOHN 16:8**); it is He who speaks through ministers (**MATT. 10:20**). Therefore, when ministers rebuke the magistrate who sins, God is holding judgment “in the midst of gods” (**PS. 82:1**).

Fifth, we note the usefulness of this reproof. It brings good to a magistrate so he is called away from the course of his sins to repentance and brings him to an inheritance of eternal life. Whatever occurs by God’s command and for the good of a magistrate, we must not consider as detracting from his esteem nor as offering an opportunity for sedition.

Sixth, we note the necessity of this censure. That censure is necessary with respect to God’s command that ministers of the church are bound to obey. “for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak” (**JER. 1:7**). It is also necessary with respect for those very ministers who will be forced to give an accounting at the last judgment for the souls not only of their subjects but even of the magistracy itself (**EZEK. 3:17** and **33:7**, **HEB. 13:17**). In addition, upon these, by reason of their office, necessity imposes the preaching of repentance and the remission of sins to all people (**LUKE 24:47**), and certainly then also to the magistrate. That censure finally is necessary with respect to the magistrate himself who must be rebuked and instructed if he is to be led to a knowledge of his sins, to conversion and to salvation.

In fact, the sins of public officials seriously harm the state by example (for whatever they do, their subjects think they have license to do also and “the whole world is arranged after the example of the king”). Therefore, it is especially essential to reprove the sins of magistrates, even as the healing of the body begins with medicine for the head. Furthermore, we add that just as in rebuking other people, so also in the censuring of a public official, we must use prudence, an example of which we have in the case of Nathan (**2 SAM. 12:1FF.**) and with the anonymous prophet (**1 KINGS 20:39**). By outstanding cleverness, both of these elicited from the mouths of David and Ahab statements that condemned those monarchs.

Second, we must distinguish lesser peccadilloes from great and notorious sins, and secret sins from public disgraces, lest we censure publicly and immediately a magistrate because of minor or secret sins.

Third, we must be extra careful that the censuring office of the Holy Spirit not degenerate into popular outcries raised to incite seditious behavior against the magistrate. Devout ministers are heralds of conversion, not trumpets for rebellion.

Fourth, we must distinguish correctly the office of magistrate from the faults of individuals administering that office. The minister of the church can and should censure the faults of the magistrate no less than those of subjects. However, the dignity of that public office should be sacrosanct to both ministers and subjects.

The third question is whether anyone can confess to a pastor other than his own ordinary one and ask him for absolution. We deny this, first, on the basis of Scripture. “Let none of you suffer ... as a meddler” (1 PETER 4:15, CF. ACTS 20:28, 1 PETER 5:2, HEB. 10:25 and 13:17). Secondly, we deny it on the basis of the sacred canons. *In c. Ut dominic.*, etc., in the decretals of Gregory, title *de paroec.*, it is established that on Sundays or festival days, before the priests celebrate the mass, they should ask the people if there is a member of another parish who wants to hear the mass there because he holds his own priest in contempt. If they should find such a one, they should immediately remove him from the church.

Third, we deny it on the basis of a decree of the Council of Carthage that decreed no bishop should be in charge of another’s people nor should any bishop be over his colleague in a diocese.

Fourth, we deny it by the authority of Cyprian, Bk.1, epistle 3, q.55, in the Goulartian codex. Part of the flock is ascribed to individual pastors, which each is to control and guide as one who will give an accounting of his activity to the Lord. See also Luther, Vol.5, German edition of Jena, f.76, explanation of PSALM 82; and

Bidembach, *decad.2, concil.4* (which belongs to Jerome Mencil, p.99) and *decad.3, cons.6* (which is part of Tilem. Hesshus, p.128).

Fifth, we deny it on the basis of a pairing. No one is allowed to preach in another's parish if that pastor is unwilling, nor may he baptize or marry anyone there. Therefore, he is not allowed to absolve or give the Lord's Supper to anyone from another parish, even if he has a house or an estate there but still is a member of another parish.

Sixth, we deny it because of the inconvenient results. If a person wants to go off to another pastor, he upsets the divinely established order and disdains the ministry of his own pastor.

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#### THE PRESERVATION OF THE RITES OF THE CHURCH

The sixth duty of ministers of the church involves the preservation of the rites of the church. To be sure, the institution of those rituals relates not only to ministers of the church but also to the Christian magistrate. Such institutions ought to occur with the consent of the entire church, but the preservation thereof is correctly assigned to ministers that they neither change nor abrogate on the basis of personal judgment rituals accepted by the public authority of the church. Instead, they should preserve them to protect harmony and promote good order.

By nature, church rituals are adiaphora because God's Word neither commands nor forbids them, and they do not of themselves constitute some portion of divine worship. Nevertheless, their cessation ought not occur merely because of one party in the church. By such an arbitrary and rash abrogation, one may sin against Christian liberty whose function is moderated by a love that is very careful not to cause a neighbor to stumble by the preposterous use of adiaphora (**ROM. 14:15** and **1 COR. 8:9**).

Second, a minister may violate the good order and authority of the church. Third and finally, he may hold in contempt the

apostle's command that in either the institution or abrogation of rituals in the church all things ought to be done "to build up" (1 COR. 14:12). The consequence of this canon is that ministers of the church should not yield even for an hour to enemies of the truth who argue for the introduction or abrogation of some church ritual. This they should not yield lest they subject their Christian liberty to the whim of their adversaries and be taken captive under the yoke of people. "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (GAL. 5:1). "You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men" (1 COR. 7:23).

Thus, to the false brothers who argued for circumcision (which at that time was an adiaphoron), the apostle was unwilling even for an hour to yield that he admit this in Titus, for they "slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery" (GAL. 2:4). Second, they should not yield, lest by such a yielding to their adversaries they cause them to become more bold in their mental tyranny and provide them with an opportunity to bring false accusations.

Third, they might appear to be in collusion with their adversaries in confession, the symbols of which are considered as rituals in the church. Instead, in this case they should give witness to the truth of their confession by word and deed. "To them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you" (GAL. 2:5). "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 COR. 6:14). "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 THESS. 5:22). They might offer a stumbling block to the weak.

You see, if the weak see such changes being undertaken in favor of the adversaries, they are easily thrown into doubt about the confession's truth and sincerity. This is not being used as an excuse by the very adiaphoric character of rituals, for that ceases in the case of confession; nor by the harmony of the church, for we

must not seek that at the cost of the truth, scandal for the weak, or the violation of liberty; nor by the example of the apostle, who testified that he “became all things to all people” (1 COR. 9:22), for we must distinguish between the weak brothers and the stubborn opponents of the truth of the Gospel.

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#### THE CARE OF THE POOR AND THE VISITATION OF THE SICK

Finally, the seventh duty of ministers is taking care of the poor and visiting the sick. Ministers of the church should not think that anything related to caring for the poor is foreign to them. First, in His own ministry, Christ had the diligent care of the poor (JOHN 13:29).

Second, Paul gave orders about collections for use by the saints in the churches of Galatia and the Corinthians (1 COR. 16:1; GAL. 2:9-10): “James and Cephas and John ... gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me ... Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.”

Third, in the primitive church, “*αγαπαι*” or public feasts were instituted to help the poor. In the Council of Gangres, c.11 reads: “If anyone despises those who conduct the *agapae*, that is, feasts for the poor, and summon together the brothers for the sake of the honor of the Lord; and if anyone is unwilling to share in assemblies of this sort, believing that what is happening there is of little value; let such a one be accursed.”

On the other hand, in the apostolic church, caring for the sick was not connected with church ministry and was committed to some special persons who, because of this diaconate, were called “deacons” (ACTS 6:5). To emulate them, today we have church treasurers who are responsible for collecting and distributing the goods of the church.

However, on this account, ministers of the church should not judge that taking care of the poor has nothing to do with them.

Rather, with the frequent exhortation of their hearers to exercise generosity toward the poor, by their own example of hospitality and generosity, and by watching over the church treasury, they should support help for the poor. We must commend the visitation of the sick to the minister of the church with this idea: The sick especially must be lifted up by the comfort of the Gospel and armed against the terror of death.

The church constitution of the Elector of Saxony makes the following command about this topic, *art. gen. 14, f.332*: “Pastors and church officials are to visit and comfort the sick, oppressed and troubled Christians often, especially when they are near death. They should at the request of such Christians administer to them the sacred Sacrament of Christ’s body and blood. They should do this willingly and without vexation, nor should they neglect any such service out of carelessness or revenge and hostility against anyone. They should be just as ready to serve the poor in such cases as the rich. If they notice among the ill great poverty, hunger and other lack of the necessities, they should advise the officials of the treasury of the church about this. In this way such unknown poor people — unknown because out of shame they dare not lament their poverty to anyone — may receive advice and aid. They should address the well-to-do especially and admonish them in a Christian way to be helpful and comforting to such helpless and comfortless ones with their money, food, refreshment, linens and the like. Pastors and church officials, however, should consider carefully the difference and opportunity of each person. They should not depress the ill with vexing words but strengthen, teach and comfort them with a few short, sweet, comforting verses of Holy Scripture, especially if the ill are very weak. When a new member among his hearers falls seriously ill, and if the pastor has something to say to the good for the salvation of that sick person’s soul, the pastor should not wait too long. Instead (*note this!*), uncalled, he should make himself available to

that sick person. He should provide all proper encouragement, comfort and admonition with all Christian gentleness and modesty. You see, that ill person can still grasp such assistance and go to his death as a Christian.”

What ought to be the chief points of that admonition and consolation we have explained in detail in the church constitution to be published by his illustrious highness and prince, His Highness John Casimir the Elder, Duke of Saxony, etc.

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These are the seven most important duties of ministers of the church to which we can relate the rest conveniently. The apostle embraces them all with one word: “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful” (1 COR. 4:1-2).

In fact, faithfulness includes not only those duties of the office we explained in the preceding paragraphs but two others: first, steadfastness in one’s legitimate calling, so the minister of the church does not change his ecclesiastical duties with a sort of superficial levity but remains firm in the calling to which he believes he was divinely called; and second, the selection of other ministers.

You see, because ministers of the church have mortality in common with all other people, and thus, because ministerial functions begin to go undone because of the blessed death of faithful ministers; they must give thought to ordaining others in place of the dead not only out of the situation itself but also out of the church’s need. We have spoken earlier as much as is sufficient about this latter duty, namely, about ordination being attributed by constitutions of the church to bishops alone. Therefore, in regard to the former, let us ask first whether a minister of the church may run away during a time of plague. First, we say no because that is when his hearers need his work and ministry so they may be



admonished about true and sincere repentance and may be correctly instructed in regard to a blessed and easy death.

Although a divinely sent disaster or plague suddenly raged and in its swift progress killed 14,700 people, Aaron “stood between the dead and the living” and placated God with his incense (NUM. 16:48). Thus, it befits ministers at a time of plague to light the incense of prayer and to fear no peril from closeness to the sick and dead. By order of the Lord, Aaron received no harm from this.

Third, excessive timidity on the part of ministers who run away presents a stumbling block to the weak and argues for a lack of confidence in regard to the divine promises. “A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you” (PS. 91:7). “But even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (MATT. 10:30). “For he has said: ‘I shall never leave you nor forsake you’” (HEB. 13:5). For examples that prove the truth of these promises, examples occurring at the time of a very dangerous pestilence, see Exodus 8 and 6; Eusebius, Bk.7, *hist. eccles.*, c.21; Evagrius, Bk.4, *hist.*, c.28.

Some add the limitation that ministers (during a time of plague) may ask for a recess if in their place they substitute others who perform the parts of their duty to the church with no less diligence, dexterity and confidence as they themselves have. However, they must be very careful that they do not cause the weak to stumble. They can hardly be so careful if, when plague comes, those run away whom it befits to outshine the rest with their example and to exhort others to faith, love, long-suffering and generosity, even if they substitute others in their place.

It does not appear to be altogether unseemly that, if a church has several ministers, they could agree among themselves to commit to one or more the duty of visiting the sick or even to send away to safe places one or more whose work could be extraordi-

narily useful to the church. Others proceed as follows: “A pastor is not permitted to interrupt all or some parts of his responsibility at a time of plague and to surrender the care thereof by committing them to another pastor whom they call ‘pastor of the plague.’”

We approve of this idea, first, on the basis of passages of Scripture (EZEK. 3:17, ACTS 20:28, HEB. 13:17). Those who were established without condition of perilous times as shepherds of the flock must, without any condition or exception whatsoever, watch for the souls of all their hearers in such a way that they are able to render to God an account of their office which they have administered in this way, just as they have received that office. All pastors have been established without condition of perilous time for the church, etc.

Ergo, second we approve on the basis of authorities: Luther, Vol.3, German edition of Jena, f.426; treatise *Ob man vor Sterben fliehen möge*; Wigand, *de persec. et exsil.*, p.270; Binder, *aitiolog., theol. de causas pest.*, p.96; Winckelman, Vol.5, *disp. Gissens.*, disp.14, thesis 23. We also add the testimonies of Calvin, *epistol.*, 362; of Beza, treatise *de peste*, p.30; of Ursinus, part 2, *exerc.*, p.514; of Sohn, Vol.1, in the theses regarding this argument, p.195.

Third, we approve for several reasons. First, the reason for such a flight is not legitimate, for it depends on no definite rule with respect either for the asker or the grantor. The asker is the minister, but he has no just reason to flee but is driven partly by lack of faith in God and partly by confidence in his own wisdom in seeking measures outside the Word of God. He is the one who ought to look back in faith to the divine promises of PSALM 91, etc. The grantor is the church, which also lacks a legitimate call and can arrange nothing beyond the word of its Bridegroom, especially to her own disadvantage.

Second, if at this very dangerous time the church can do without the work of its pastor and the pastor in this same condition

of peril is allowed to surrender his duties by committing them to another; the same thing can happen, and all the more, at a not-so-dangerous time, and thus he can indulge in a complete cessation from his office.

However, the latter is not so, which we see partly from reason that shows each and every function consists in carrying out the parts or works of each function; partly from the judgment and statement of our own people about the lazy bishops of the papists. The former, therefore, is not so.

Third, every one of Christ's common soldiers and sheep ought to lay down their lives for their brothers (1 JOHN 3:16). All the more then are the standard-bearers and leaders bound to do this. Tarn, *de minist.*, q.3.

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### WHETHER HE MAY FLEE AT A TIME OF IMMINENT DANGER OR PERSECUTION

The second question is whether a minister is allowed to flee at a time of imminent danger or persecution. Here we are not speaking about the flight of courage. A minister experiences this when he sees errors of doctrine and sins of behavior growing stronger among his hearers and when he fears the hatred of more powerful or other perils, but winks at all this and does not stand like a wall against them by censuring and rebuking them.

In regard to this flight, Augustine says very clearly, treatise 46, on John: "Because you said nothing, you ran away. You said nothing because you were afraid," although no one argues that this is forbidden and condemned. Instead, the question here is about the flight of the body that occurs at a time of imminent danger or persecution. Lactantius, Bk.4, c.18: "Christ withdrew not to avoid what He had to suffer and endure but to show what one had to do in every persecution lest anyone appear to have fallen because of His fault."

Augustine, on **PSALM 142**: “One may flee physically. The Lord has conceded and permitted this as he says: ‘If you are persecuted in one city, flee to another.’” With statements and examples Athanasius confirms the same thing in his defense of his own flight. Augustine does the same in treatise 15, on John:

“Any servant of God does not sin if he withdraws to another place when he sees the fury of those who persecute him or of those who are seeking evil for his soul. Furthermore, a servant of God would appear to sin if he were to do this, if the Lord had not preceded him in doing this. This, that good Master did to teach, not because He was afraid.”

Treatise 28, on John: “It was going to happen that some faithful person would hide lest his persecutors find him and not in order to find himself in hiding because of his criminal activity. What was confirmed in a member preceded in the case of the Head. Athanasius also defends the affirmative in the defense of his own flight. To Tertullian is simply attributed the negative by Perkins, Bk.2, *de casib. consc.*, c.12, and others, who cite his book about his flight. However, Martyr, clas.3, *loc. comm.*, locus 12, ¶27, and Aretius, part 1, *problem.*, locus 2, p.26, excuse him. Augustine, epistle 180, to Honoratus, uses a distinction.

Indeed, Christ’s advice does show that at times, flight is allowed: “When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next” (**MATT. 10:23**). So does the example of Christ (**MATT. 2:13** and **12:15**, **JOHN 8:59**, **LUKE 4:30**, etc.) and the example of Paul (**ACTS 9:25**, **2 COR. 11:33**) and of Polycarp, in Eusebius, Bk.4, *hist. eccles.*, c.15; and of Athanasius, in Socrates, Bk.2, *hist.*, c.11. See Theodoret, Bk.2, c.4; Rufinus, Bk.1, c.18, etc. Add also Socrates, Bk.3, *hist.*, c.6; Nicephorus, Bk.10, c.16; *Tripart.*, Bk.4, c.22. “So, be as wise as serpents” (**MATT. 10:16**).

But serpents look for places to hide when they feel traps are being set against their life. Elijah “ran for his life” (**1 KINGS 19:3**).

Basil the Great approved of flight in a homily on the martyr Gordius, as does Augustine, treatise 15, on John. Here are the reasons. First, whatever work whose beginning, object, method of performing it and goal are legitimate is itself licit. Flights of ministers of the Word circumscribed by certain conditions fit all these things. Ergo, second, it is illicit to remain in a church that freely dismisses you to spread the glory of God, to free your conscience and to not aggravate the judgment of your enemies. Therefore, to leave such a church under the enumerated circumstances is licit. Athanasius, argues in the same way, Socrates, Bk.3, c.6. To pursue to kill a person who does not deserve that is a sin. To go away and seek one's safety in flight, therefore, is not a sin.

However, we must distinguish between singular persecutions that seek one minister and persecutions that are common to the entire church. In the former we say that it is allowed; and, in the case of the latter, it is not except in a certain respect. We must further distinguish between states of the church. You see, sometimes the minister of a church flees with the consent and, in fact, at the behest of his hearers so that meanwhile the church, which was his responsibility, does not lack other suitable teachers. This we believe is allowable. (In addition to the consent of the church about which there should be agreement as concerns the one who is fleeing, the one who flees should investigate carefully and examine his courage and the reason for his flight. He ought to have been so prepared that, if his flight has not succeeded in remedying the situation, but God is calling back to death and martyrdom that man who wished to advise himself to flee, then he should be prepared also to follow Him. Here, by seeking out the enjoyment of a longer life, one ought to consider especially and most importantly the glory of God and the welfare of the church or neighbor rather than his own glory and welfare, which come from an excessive love for a long life and a too great care for one's own property. Tarn, *de minist.*, q.4.)

However, when he flees in a way that gives his hearers (who are not asking him to flee and who do not agree with his flight) a stumbling block and gives his foes an opportunity to make false accusations and to set traps for the lambs, that we believe is not permissible.

C. *Adversitas*, case 7, q.1, *Gregor*: “Adversity which is placed in the way of good men is a test of virtue, not an indication of censure. After all, who is there who does not know how fortunate it was that Paul was going to Italy to preach and on the way suffered shipwreck, but the hull of his ship remained whole in the waves of the sea? We understand then that this must be observed: when among the subjects are found some to whom the life of prelates is beneficial, and when a prelate is not especially requested to flee nor to care that the health of the church be safe through others, let it not be said of him if he begins to desert those to whom he can be useful: ‘He is a hired hand, and not the shepherd. The sheep do not belong to him. He sees the wolf approach and he deserts the sheep and flees.’ But, when they especially request the prelate to flee, let him flee according to Christ’s example, who fled from the face of Herod to Egypt. Let him flee according to the example of Paul, whom his brothers let down from the wall in a basket. Whence Augustine says, epistle 180, to Honoratus: ‘Let Christ’s minister flee as Christ fled into Egypt. Let him flee who has a special request to flee, while the health of the church remains solid through the care of others, etc.’ But, when the safety not only of prelates but of the entire church is at stake and faith itself is attacked, then it is necessary to make a frontal approach and to set themselves upon the day of battle as a wall on behalf of the Lord’s house and to risk their lives for their sheep. This they should do in order to kindle by the example of their suffering those whom they can no longer strengthen with a sermon of doctrine.”

See Luther, Vol.3, German edition of Jena, f.392. Augustine, *op. cit.*, declares that, when serious persecution arises, “ministers

of the church should not all flee nor should all place themselves in the peril of death.” Rather, he orders some to stay who seem to be of greater use in the present calamity of the church, but others he believes should be sent away. But, if they cannot agree as they make the choice among them because they all seem equal, then he thinks they must decide by lot.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

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1. What seven duties does Gerhard ascribe to ministers?
2. Do any of these duties surprise you? Why or why not?
3. Gerhard devotes several pages to the virtues of ministers. What terms does he use to describe their character? Does his list agree with **1 TIM. 3** and **TITUS 1**?
4. Gerhard also takes up the argument that the seventh duty, care for the poor, belongs to the office of the ministry. Why is this necessary?
5. How does Gerhard explain the relationship between ministers and deacons? Does this conflict with **ACTS 6:1-7**?



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