

# Prof. D. Worley

## No Hierarchy In The Ministerial Office



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# No Hierarchy In The Ministerial Office

By Professor D. Worley  
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# **The Ministerial Office, Distinct From The General Priesthood, But No Hierarchy.**

**By Professor D. Worley, A. M., Columbus, Ohio.**

WE HAVE had occasion several times, in self-defense, to declare our conscientious difference from the brethren of the Missouri as well as from those of the Buffalo Synod, on the doctrine of the Ministerial office; by some whom we think a little sensitive in the matter, we have been soundly berated, both privately and publicly, for having done so. We feel it, therefore, due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to present a calm expression of truth as we believe it to be found in the Holy Scriptures. We ask only for what we shall present, the unbiased and impartial Christian judgment of all who may have patience enough to follow us through the whole course of our investigation. We shall endeavor, also, to steer entirely clear of bitterness and personality, and while we confess the truth, do it with all proper respect and deference to the views of those who differ from us. We fear that much injury has already resulted to the Church in the extreme warmth, with which this, by no means unimportant, subject has been sometimes hitherto discussed. By the grace of God we hope to be able to speak the truth in love. Our desire is to convince and edify, not to embitter and repel.

A great mistake, it seems to us, has been made in the discussion of this question, in Europe and this country, by the attempts which are so continually made by the representatives of the various views of the Ministerial Office to show that the older divines in our Church, and especially Luther, was a decided advocate of that particular view which the disputant had himself espoused. The question is one, in regard to which we are clearly convinced, that the views of Luther, never having been given to

it directly, will require but little ingenuity to be molded into that shape which may be required by the strong bias of his particular commentator. Our confessions, too, are not decidedly clear in this subject, because, doubtlessly, there was not as much prominence given it in the days of the Reformers and Fathers, as it has attained in our day. And until it be settled in some manner authoritatively by a general council of the Church, we must solemnly protest against unchurching those, and forbidding them the brotherly fellowship of Lutherans, who do not in all respects, see eye to eye with us touching this doctrine. We do not, of course, undervalue the great necessity and good of seeking after and promoting unity of faith here as well as in other important matters; but unity itself can only result by carefully and prayerfully bringing our differences together, and by holding fast the good, establishing it upon the Word of God, and by rejecting the bad which the Word condemns.

## **This Discussion By The Light Of Scripture**

In the discussion of this question, now, therefore, we desire it to be clearly understood, that we have not sought to establish our views of the doctrine of the ministry, upon Luther; nor, as we are fully convinced both of the impropriety and impossibility of establishing open and unsettled Church questions by quotations from the Fathers, especially when, as they are generally, they are mere incidental allusions, will we agree to have our views judged in this manner. This discussion will require us to go back of the Confession and the Fathers, to that upon which the Confessions themselves depend, and upon which they so immovably stand, the Word of God. We love and honor our confessions of faith because they are so clearly and decidedly confessions of truth, presented in the Word; but we feel it a very holy and necessary duty of every son of the Church to guard them from that spirit of proscriptive intolerance which turns every sentence into a necessary element of Lutheranism, even where there is strong room for the



belief, that if those who prepared the Confessions originally, had expressed themselves directly and fully in many cases, they would be found holding very different views from those which have been pressed out of incidental and disconnected passages; we fear the danger in this direction almost as much as we fear the influence of those who have, with unholy touch, attempted to rob the confessions of their chief strength and beauty by recension, so called.

We, therefore, propose to leave the Confessions and Fathers in this discussion in the background, and examine into the nature and relations of the Ministerial Office by the light of the Holy Scriptures; though we are assured that, as far as the matter is referred to among the former, we shall not be far, if at all, in disagreement with them.

The question of the ministry is without doubt a very important one, in reference to which it is very necessary that we should be clearly and decidedly grounded upon the Word, if we would not, in our Churchly relations, be the subjects of many perplexing and anxious doubts and fears. While it is important on the one hand, that we do not take from God and give to the creature instrument, what is alone due to God; it is just as necessary, that we should not despise the instrumentalities appointed of God, lest we be found therein despising God Himself. Whilst the minister is to us an example of the flock, and, therefore, of it, he is also the servant of God unto the flock to guide, direct, and feed it upon the rich pastures of God's Word, and, therefore, over it. In a word, whilst the ministry is not a hierarchy, it is not the creature of man; whilst it may not usurp the place of God, it has the authority of God; whilst its purpose is to serve the congregation, it is only this, in so far as God's service calls for it and as He Himself directs it.

## **The General Idea of the Church**

In order to a fair and scriptural understanding of the holy office of the ministry, it is necessary that the reader bear with him, through the entire investigation, a clear idea of the Church in its general features and relations.

The Church is the communion of saints, the congregation of all believers in every nation and of every tongue, and as such, in its perfect and spiritual form is invisible, for no man is able clearly to discern the hearts of his fellow men and pronounce positively and absolutely whether they be believers or unbelievers; God alone reads the heart and pronounces the judgment which accepts or rejects us as true and living members of the Body of Jesus Christ, though each one of us, who truly submits to the Word of God, has the witness of the Spirit for himself that he is born of God; but inasmuch as the Church is designed for men in the world, who themselves are not yet spiritual and invisible, but consist of body, mind and spirit, there is an absolute necessity in man's nature for a visible presence or presentation of that which is designed for his welfare and restoration to the image and peace of God. This necessity is amply provided for in the divine institution of the Gospel, in the presence and administration of the Word and Sacraments, submission to which, in their complete and essential integrity, constitutes that confession of Christ upon which the Church is built. And whenever these, the Word and Sacraments, are present and submitted to according to the injunction of the Head of the Church, we have the assurance of His own promise, believers are there and the Church itself is present and established. And in the visible presence of the Word and Sacraments, in their integrity, we have the invisible Church, which is as surely present in the visible congregation where the pure Word and Sacraments are, as the assurances and promises of God Himself are true. His Word does not return unto Him void, but under the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit, will accomplish that whereunto it is sent, which is the establishment, building up and perfecting of Zion, the Church.

Hence it is, doubtless, that our Confession so distinctly says, the Church is where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the Sacraments are administered in accordance therewith; not as some would have it, in so far as these are present. Where the Word is preached, in its integrity, there the pure Sacraments will necessarily also be administered, and where both are, the Church is; they are visible signs of an existing Church in the visible congregation. Without submission to the Word and Sacraments, we cannot ordinarily conceive of the existence of faith or believers, nor consequently of the Church.

The existence of the Church, therefore, requires also the prior presence of the Word of God in its integrity; in the ordinary dealings of God with

mankind, and with what might be under extraordinary circumstances we have nothing to do, He gives the influence of the Holy Ghost and restores, forgives and sanctifies men alone through the life-giving Word: that which at first spoke man into existence, again in Christ speaks him into a new and living creature. Hence, says the Apostle, How shall they believe except they hear; which is equivalent to saying, How shall there be believers without the hearing of the Word, and without it, how the existence of the Church? And this is to be said not merely as regards the first establishment of the Church and the calling and introduction of believers therein.

The Church in this world is altogether militant; it is in all respects a missionary organization of God, as it were, in a foreign land. It battles against the kingdom of the devil in the world, and seeks to draw immortal souls out of the meshes of Satan and restore them to the kingdom and love of God first; but it never continues to battle against the remains of the kingdom of darkness in the flesh even of believers, and is and must necessarily be ever upon the aggressive. If the Church become lukewarm or lie down in supine negligence, or if individual believers do it, they at once find themselves taken at advantage by the devil, and unless waked up from their lethargy, by the grace of God, they will sooner or later find themselves at his mercy; his victory over them will be completed unto eternal overthrow and destruction.

The perfection and growth of believers in the Church, and, consequently, also the perfection and growth of the Church in believers is inseparably connected with the Divine Word in its preached form and in its visible form in the Holy Sacraments. Our Lord, when He prays to the Father, for His followers, says Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth. And the Apostle speaks thus of the Church and of Christ, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. From these and many other Scripture passages which might be quoted, if space allowed, we learn conclusively that the Church is established, built up and perfected through the Divine Word, and hence also that the Word is antecedent both to the establishment and growth of the Church.

# The Preaching Office Precedes The Church

Furthermore, if the Word is thus antecedent to the very existence of the Church, and it hath pleased God to present His word in the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, the office, by which these are accomplished, precedes the existence of the Church where yet it is not, and precedes all development of the Church among believers where it does already exist, though united with their imperfections. Hence the Apostolic word, How shall they hear except it be preached, and how shall they preach except they be sent? Christ, Himself, in the Church of the New Testament, is the first and original Teacher. He preached the Gospel, the tidings of great joy, publicly among the people, and at the same time instructed a chosen few from among the many, particularly, that after His death, resurrection and final departure from the scene of His humiliation, they might continue the ministry which He Himself inaugurated.

He authorized and commanded them not only in His relation to the Church as Lord, but also in the relation He sustained to it as prophet or teacher, to carry the tidings of salvation to all men, under every nation and of every tongue. The Apostles and Evangelists whom thus Christ prepared and authorized, themselves, as He had done to them and with them, went abroad after they had received the outpouring or baptism of the Spirit, and preached publicly among Jews and Gentiles the unsearchable riches of the kingdom and salvation of God, calling men everywhere to the blissful fellowship of new-born creatures in Christ; they also as the form and substance of the Divine authority, with which they were invested, required them to do, committed unto others that with which they were invested, commanding them in like manner to commit the same to those who would be able to transmit it to future generations. God blessed their labors in the rapid spread and triumph of His Church, and from that day to this, has owned and blessed the faithful labors of those, who, invested with His authority, have gone forth among the nations, in His name, preaching Christ and Him crucified.

In the teaching and example of the Apostles, and in the teaching and history of the Church in all ages from the Apostolic age to this day, we have indisputable and positive ground for the truth here advanced, viz: that the preaching of the Gospel and the office of preaching precede, and, in the arrangements of God with man, must necessarily precede the existence and development of the Church among men. The necessary and logical deduction from this proposition we leave for future consideration. We merely desire here to impress it upon the mind and attention of the reader.

## **The Church Is Visibly Presented By The Word And Sacraments**

Again, the Church, though in her spirituality she is invisible, is visibly presented, i. e., in the presence of the Word and Sacraments, and through their preaching and administration her presence is visibly attested to us; and the invisible Church composed of all believers, and thus in the bond of faith, having an internal bond of union and communion with Christ the Head, has in the authorized preachers of the Word, through whose instrumentality the internal bond of faith is begotten and cemented, as the public confessors of the Word, a visible bond of union and communion in all the earth, wherever the true Church has an existence. And in this sense the apostles and first ministers of Christ, and after them the ministry in all time are, by the authority of God under which they preach and act on the one hand, the representatives of the visible Church on the other; hence the apostolic Synods and the establishment of ministeriums in all ages of the Church to consult, and under the word of God to decide questions of doctrine, and to quell dangerous and wide-spreading heresy and scandal to the Church. And although with regard to many, nay of most things concerning the Church in any given extent of country, the laity are and should be represented, this is to be viewed from an entirely different standpoint, and does not at all interfere with the claim that the ministry are by the authority of God, as the public confessors and perpetrators of the

truth under God, the stated and steadfast representatives of the Church. In this connection we cannot further go into the scriptural grounds upon which we base this claim, as they are more particularly connected with a portion of our subject not at present under consideration. As we proceed the reader will be more fully able to see the nature of this representation, its scripturality and its necessity for the Church.

## **The Individual Congregation Has No Authority To Act For Other Churches**

Impressing these four positions upon the attention of our readers, viz: that the Church, though invisible is the one, holy Church, is visibly presented and attested by the Word and Sacraments; that the Word must precede the Church; that hence the office of preaching also precedes the Church; and that as the authorized servants of God the ministers of the Word represent the Church, we proceed further to say that the individual congregation, while it has for itself all the rights and immunities of the Church, is not the Church and has no authority to act for other congregations or for the Church in general.

Congregations sustain to the Church universal about the same relations which individual members do to the congregation; no individual Christian in the exercise of his scriptural rights in the congregation, can act for others or by his own will determine and act for the congregation; yet he enjoys for himself all the rights and privileges which pertain to the congregation; so while the congregation may enjoy and claim for itself, and even under particular circumstances perform for itself all which appertains to the Church at large, no congregation can dictate or legislate or perform any function pertaining to the Church at large, for other congregations or for the whole Church. All those offices of a general nature, which have regard to promoting and securing the welfare and upbuilding of the whole Church,

are of this nature, and can only be properly performed by the Church in her representative capacity, an essential and the only steadfast element of which is the holy ministry, as we have already remarked.

Having thus, as we believe, sufficiently referred to the necessary relations of the Church in so far as they will be required in the further consideration of the ministerial office we present the following chief points, which we propose to discuss in this consideration:

- FIRST. The ministerial office is directly appointed of God, and in the Church militant is an essential requisite to the Church's organization.
- SECOND. There is a twofold call to the ministry; the one part having reference to the office itself, the other to particular administrations under investment with the office.
- THIRD. The general call to the ministerial office, is ordinarily in the hands of those who already hold the office, as the authorized representatives of the Church in this regard.
- FOURTH. The call to particular administrations proceeds sometimes from the Church in her representative capacity, and sometimes from the individual congregation wherein a minister is called to labor.
- FIFTH. The general call to the ministry is not and cannot be in the congregation.

## **1. The Ministerial Office is directly appointed of God, and is essential to the organization of the Church.**

This proposition is questioned by very few in our Lutheran Zion, perhaps by none in the Church in this country; and were it not for questions and propositions incidentally connected with this principal one, we might

let it pass with a simple enunciation. For the sake of these, however, we deem it necessary to speak of it at length.

In the Divine plan for man's deliverance and salvation, God has so ordered the arrangement of His Church, that heavenly treasures are brought to man by human instrumentalities. The Gospel calls all men to salvation, and when its conditions are fulfilled, to the believing and submissive it brings and guarantees forgiveness of sins and eternal life. And with Christ as their pattern, this Gospel has been committed to chosen ones of God, whose office requires them to preach the Gospel tidings publicly to all who will hear, and when these are submitted to, to pronounce to the believer the positive reception of God's grace unto forgiveness and life. This authority, in a general way, was already given to the Evangelists whom Christ first, during His sojourn in the flesh, sent forth to proclaim to those, who looked for the coming of Messiah's kingdom, the tidings of His advent, and the rejoicing truth of which He was at once the embodiment and representative. Though these, doubtlessly, continued in the exercise of the functions of the office thus committed to them, we have, however, no particular record of their work in the Holy Scriptures, because probably their ministry was designed as a temporary one, and was especially included in the more general office of the apostles to which, as of lasting necessity in the Church militant, the Scriptures give chief reference.

But already in the teachings of Christ to His apostles, giving unto them the power of the keys, we have, as well as in their original calling to be the special attendants upon Christ's instructions, particular reference given to the institution of the office of the holy ministry. The representative character of the ministry is also at this place, brought out in a peculiar and public manner. In the 16th chapter of Matthew, Christ speaking with His disciples asks them, Whom say ye that I am? This question is propounded to all of them, but Peter as the representative of all gives the answer, which forms the confession of Christ upon which, a rock, the Church is built; and in like manner and under the same circumstances, the office of the keys, which is the very substance of the Gospel and its ministry, is given unto Peter certainly in no other sense, than, as he became, by his confession of Christ, the representative of the other disciples. These also in the 18th chapter receive the same from Christ, and our Lord addresses them as though they were the embodiment of the Church herself, i. e., as the representative of the Church as well as of Himself in that Church, in the



public confession and promulgation of the truth. In the latter case all the disciples are together in this capacity as public confessors of the truth of Christ, and as such now they are all addressed and empowered just as Peter was before. We affirm positively from the Scriptural relation of the subject matter here, that the apostolic office, essentially the office of the ministry as we now have it in the Church, is, as the office of general confession, the office also of general representation to the Church. For either the power of the keys is given to this office as an exclusive prerogative of special men in the Church to be exercised at will, or it is given to all men equally in the Church, or it is given to the Church in her representative ministry. The first of these three positions cannot be maintained, because, in the exercise of the power of the keys, the minister is positively bound to God's word, and as soon as he departs from it, in that departure he ceases to be the ambassador of Christ. The second likewise must not be admitted, because the authority of exercising this power is nowhere in the Scriptures given to persons in the Church indiscriminately. In accordance with the third, however, and only in accordance with that can these Scriptures be made to harmonize with the Scripture order of salvation; for forgiveness of sins and grace unto eternal life are presented to men through the Church, in the means of grace, which become effective in their administration to him who submits to them, when they are regularly presented to him; the Church built upon the Word confessed and preached, has been entrusted with these means of grace, and she administers them through her special office of ministry, not collectively nor indiscriminately by her members, all of which have not the same office. As in the natural body the vocal organs give forth the general expression of the whole man, so the ministry are the mouth and tongue of the body of Christ, which is the Church.

The direct appointment of the ministerial office, however, only receives its full presentation and perpetual force in the last interview of our Lord with His disciples, previous to His ascension to the right hand of the Father. This is found in the command, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. We learn from this Scripture that the ministry is essentially the apostolic office. For the office is that of teaching the word and administering the sacraments as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; this office is here given to the apostles

and has been by them, in what manner we shall see hereafter, perpetuated in the regular ministry of the Church. In both the functions to be performed are the same, and hence the office in both is the same. The apostles, too, are not called by, but are sent out for and to the congregations of the Church as through their instrumentality, also, these successively arose upon the Word and Sacraments presented unto them by the ministry of the Word.

We learn here further that the office of publicly teaching and administering the sacraments is not bestowed upon all members of the Church, neither the right and authority of Christ so to do; for special reference is had to the fact that Christ did not give the command to teach and the promise of His accompanying the teaching, to the assembled multitude of His followers, but only to the eleven apostles.

We learn here again the parity of ministers in their office; for neither in the act of empowering the apostles, nor in the present command for them to go forth to the exercise of that power, do we find that any distinction is made among them, nor the preshadowing of such distinction in those who after them should hold and exercise the office. Lacking thus the authority of Christ for their arrogant claims, the Papacy and Episcopacy are alike without foundation for them.

Finally we learn from this passage of Scripture that the apostolic office, that is to say, the ministerial office is perpetual in the Church militant; for the promise: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, is directly associated with the command to teach and administer the Sacraments.

That the ministerial office is essential to the organization of the Church, should, we think, sufficiently appear from the fact that it is thus explicitly commanded and ordered by the Head of the Church for all time, even unto the end of the world. But aside from this there is inherent necessity for it manifested in the whole tenor of Scripture, teaching concerning the Church and her Divine mission among men. The Holy Ghost comes, and the full and complete blessings of acceptance with the Father and of salvation through His only begotten Son are given to man by the Church's agency, in the means of grace. But these means do not and in the very nature of things cannot come to man without administration; and this again necessitates the ministry. The Apostle Paul most beautifully and forcibly sets this necessity forth in his epistle to the Romans, 10:13-15.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?”

## **2. There is a twofold call to the ministry**

With this upon our proposition we leave it to consider the second, viz: There is a two-fold call to the ministry; the one part being the call to the office itself; the other the call to particular ministrations under investment with the office.

This proposition rests in the very nature of the ministerial office; the ministry are on the one hand the ambassadors of Christ sent forth by Him, invested with his authority, and in the Word and Sacraments representing Him in the Church among believers, and to them also, who are called of God unto salvation, through the Gospel which is preached; on the other hand the minister is the servant of the Church, either in individual congregations or for general purposes as, for example, in missionary labors. It is, therefore, requisite in the first place that he be really empowered of God to represent Him in the publication of the truth and in all that which is consequent upon submission to it. No regular administration of the Word or Sacraments can take place at the hands of an unauthorized person; but when once in the proper manner a man is invested with the office, i. e. has been entrusted with the Gospel; he is ready for such a disposition in administrations as may be required by the peculiar circumstances under which the Church may have need of him. First, a minister by divine right and appointment, he becomes also subject to the rules of order which are found in every well regulated economy, and which, by the Scriptures, are also made essential to the divine economy in its relation to man's redemption and salvation. The ministerial office does not exist merely as an arrangement of the Church for the sake of order; it is of divine appointment and the Church is not at liberty to use it or dispense with it as her own

desire or opinion of expediency may determine; the office is expressly given her and its use enjoined upon her generally, while at the same time its exercise is committed to particular persons for her benefit; but when these are once in the office, then they also come under the requirements of decency and order for the ministry, just as individual believers are bound to submit to the order of the congregation or Church in general; they first become believers through the gracious work of the Holy Ghost, in submission by faith to the regularly appointed means of grace; and then in necessary consequence as believers they are subject to the requirements of order in the Church.

This distinction again between the office in general and its particular administration grows out of the necessity in our congregational and general churchly operations to provide against deception and abuse. We are commanded to beware of wolves who come to us in sheep's clothing, against false teachers whilst we must submit to those who are regularly placed over us in the Church by the Lord. But how is the congregation, say for instance, to be assured that one coming to them is not a wolf? It is not to be expected that our church members generally have that intimate acquaintance with human nature, and the mental and moral aptitudes and powers required by the Scriptures in a minister, which enables them to form even a comparatively safe judgment of those who may come among them claiming to be servants of God. Nor is it in accordance with the spirit of God's will to man in this regard, that the Church be exposed to so much uncertainty and even positive danger. He has provided, first, that there be the general office of preaching for which there are certain specified qualifications necessary, and, secondly, that this office be bestowed and perpetuated in such manner as to avoid those dangers, which are otherwise associated with the weakness and perversity of human nature, fallen and corrupt. Whilst they who set up for themselves, and undertake to be the judges in all things of the qualifications of those whom they desire to break unto them the Word of God, are oftentimes, nay, generally disappointed and deceived, even where they are not, in time, which also often happens, entirely perverted from the right way; those who make it a rule to receive none as evangelists and teachers, except those who come to them clothed with the proper authority, are comparatively safe. We point to Congregationalism as a fair exemplification of the tendency of the former system, which it is well known among Churchmen has so degenerated in

the progress of a few score years, as to be now scarcely distinguishable from heterodoxy of the radical order. Individual exemplifications of the same will occur to every reader. We do not say, of course, that it is absolutely certain, that those who hold the office under the sanction of a regularly constituted Ministerium, will in all cases be true teachers and without danger to our believing people; we do say, however, that in and from them there is comparative safety. The probabilities for deception in the introduction into the office, and of discovery afterward in the case of those who unworthily obtrude themselves, are very greatly increased.

Again, in the authority and investment of the Apostles, in the original establishment of the apostolic or ministerial office, we have an exemplification of this principle given us in the Holy Scriptures. In the command, Go ye forth, etc., they were invested with the office, although they were not permitted to go forth to its exercise, but in accordance with the express command of Christ they remained at Jerusalem for a specified time to await the giving of the Holy Ghost, under whose influence and guidance they went forth afterwards as they were appointed and directed. In the calling of the Apostle Paul, this distinction is still more clearly and pointedly expressed. When, yet a persecutor of believers, he was on his way to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to bind all them who called upon the name of the Lord, the already ascended Jesus appeared unto him in the way, heard the prayer of Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and directed him to Ananias for the necessary instruction. To Ananias, also, the Lord announced that Saul was a chosen vessel to bear His name among the Gentiles, and when he came Ananias received him and did as he had been directed. That this was Paul's call to the ministry in general, is seen from the fact, that "he straightway *preached* Christ." That he himself so considered it, is proved by the authority which he claimed for himself as an Apostle of Christ by the will of God, without even the agency of man; instance, Gal. 1:1, Paul, an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. But whilst thus Paul was authorized in general for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, we find him afterwards specially set apart for a special ministry by the laying on of the hand of the other teachers at Antioch. As they ministered to the Lord, it is said, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent

them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." Acts 13:2-4.

It is true that the Scriptures give us ground to believe, that in some cases the two parts of the call to the ministry were conjoined and given at the same time, though even here the language is such as to indicate the distinction. For example on the tour of Paul and Barnabas related in the 14th and 15th chapters of Acts, we find that as they passed along from city to city, comforting and instructing the disciples, and organizing the Churches, it is said: And when they (i. e., the apostles) had ordained them (i. e., for the Churches) elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed. Acts 15:23. Here we have the ordination of elders by the apostles, and for the congregations brought out distinctly and yet in connection. Under both, viz: the authority of God in the laying on of the hands of the apostles and the desire of the believing people to have them for teachers and guides, the elders or pastors received, held and exercised the office of the Holy Ministry.

We conceive the general call to the ministry to be met in ministerial ordination after due preparation and examination of the candidate, and the special call to be given in Synodical or congregational election and installation. By ordination we do not understand merely, neither essentially the laying on of hands, which, however, as a good and wholesome regulation of the Church should not be disregarded, but that divinely commanded examination and setting apart of men to this holy office, whereby they are invested with the authority of Christ to preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and exercise the power of the keys in accordance with the Word. When one is set apart, say for special missionary purposes, or for pastoral services, the second part of the call or installation properly is in place; its form is immaterial, but it is desirable that, as in apostolic times, it too should be accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands. Ordination from its very nature takes place only once, but installation may take place as often as the scene of a minister's labors among congregations is changed or the special calling is itself changed. We remark finally that we find in the practice of the Church in all ages, not only in the days of the apostles, this distinction of the general call to office, from the special call to ministration in the office. In the further consideration of this two-fold call in succeeding propositions, this fact will be sufficiently

considered, and we leave it now with the whole proposition to the reader's consideration.

### **3. The general call to the ministerial office is ordinarily in the hands of those who already hold the office**

The third, and next proposition in our course, is this: the general call to the ministerial office, is ordinarily in the hands of those who already hold the office, as the authorized representatives of the Church in this regard. To the discussion of this proposition we now ask the reader's serious and close attention; for on the proper understanding of this hangs the whole question of the ministerial office. The office of teaching and administering the Word as we have already shown, of necessity and according to the Scriptures precedes the congregation itself and Christian development in the congregation, after it has once been organized. It is, therefore, an office of a general nature to the Church at large; and in his authority to teach and administer, the ambassador of Christ is not confined to time and place; but, by the power of Him whom he represents in the preaching of the Word, it is his duty to go wherever an effectual door is opened him for his labors. This appointment, therefore, must either proceed directly from Christ Himself, or from Him in that part of the Church's general organization, wherein He is himself represented in His Word and Sacraments as the Head of the body. For besides its being an office of a general nature, the ministry presents and, therefore, also, in the Word represents Christ before and in the world for the forgiveness of sin and the salvation of the soul. The office of the ministry is, too, the only office of this general nature which the Holy Scriptures recognize and the only one thus representing Christ; though nothing, in this expression, is to be so understood as that lay-members of the Church are

not to represent Christ in the example which He has given us, in fervent prayers, in deeds of charity and love, and in the practice of all Christian holiness, before the world; as ambassadors of Christ, however, they do not do it, but merely as bearing about in their own bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus, inciting others to the praise of God by their own good and holy works, those which by grace the new man in them is enabled to bring forth. But it is clearly seen from the Holy Scriptures, that apart from the first authorization of the seventy evangelists for a special purpose, our Lord Himself directly appointed to the general office of preaching only the apostles, including the Apostle Paul. Their successors were appointed in due order by themselves, and directed to ministrations by them with the brethren, either in missionary labor or for particular congregations as they desired. This we have now to establish upon the sure foundation of the Scriptures; its establishment will also render a consideration of direct appointment by Christ to the holy office unnecessary, for if we find universally in the practice of the Apostles that they appointed and authorized as the ambassadors of Christ, those upon whom the office was to descend, we may fairly conclude that as Christ did not then directly appoint, neither have we any right to expect it now.

We base our third proposition first upon this, viz: that our Lord in appointing the twelve and authorizing them to represent Him after His ascension to heaven, in the preaching of the Word, also invested them with authority to perpetuate the office thus committed unto them. If the Apostles had acted without such authority from Christ and had merely perpetuated the office as a very good one for the purposes of order, and in their capacity merely as an important part of the congregation in which they labored, then the office of the ministry would necessarily also have been subject to the same rules of order and expediency to which other offices of this character in the congregations were subject. When the immediate necessity which called them into being ceased, the congregation was at perfect liberty to suspend, or totally abolish the offices thus created; as, for instance, the office of deacons for the distribution of the alms of the congregation. This office may be either temporarily suspended, totally abolished, or increased in the sphere of its duties, and yet the Church not be affected at all, as to her essential integrity. But the command of Christ establishing the office and the teaching of the Apostles concerning its necessity, as well as this necessity itself clearly show that the office of the ministry is not of this



temporary character. Its duties in the church militant always remain the same as definitely established by the Word of God; therefore, also there is always the same necessity for the office itself.

Now Christ, in the command wherewith He authorized and sent forth the Apostles first, has also invested them with authority for the perpetuation of the office. He commands them, in the first place, to go into all the world; for the purpose, in the second place, of preaching the Gospel to every creature; assured, in the third place, that He is with them always, and even unto the end of the world. Either of them, and all these propositions together, most positively preclude the idea that this was addressed to the Apostles in their individual capacity; for neither did they, nor could they themselves go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, and unto the end of the world be assured that Christ was with them in authority and power. They were mortals like ourselves, and were subject like us to wear out in process of time, and die, even as they have done, before this more than Herculean labor has been performed. On the other hand, however, this authority was not given to the whole body of believers, for as we have already seen, it was declared to and conferred upon the eleven, when Jesus by appointment met them, and not the believers generally, as it seems, for this very purpose. Matt, 28:16—20. The only logical deduction, therefore, that can be made from the whole passage is this, that it was addressed to the eleven as those from whom, until the end of time, yet under Christ, in themselves and in those to whom they committed the authority by the will of Christ, the office of preaching should go forth, bearing in its hands the gracious blessings of salvation to the whole perishing world, and until the Church militant urns completely and fully taken up into the Church triumphant.

We base our proposition in the second place upon the practice of the Apostles which, without exception, is in accordance with this our deduction from the command of Christ Himself. This practice most fully and completely corroborates the deduction. Were it not so, and did we find that as a general thing they in their practice referred the appointment of ministers, teachers and pastors to the whole congregation of believers we would have good reason to doubt our conclusion drawn from the circumstances, under which Christ gave this office to the Apostles, and the nature of the office itself as then given. But with this practice before us in the Scriptures we are most firmly and positively assured that Christ

intended it so to be, viz: that the authorization of public teachers in the Church should proceed from those whom He had appointed already to the office. We have before called attention to the fact that Paul and Barnabas thus appointed and authorized, by virtue of the power of the office which they had received of the Lord, teachers or pastors in the congregations whithersoever they went. Acts 14:28.

That the word Elder here used is only another word to represent just what the word Bishop does, compare 1 Tim. 3:2-7, with Titus 1:5-9. In Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, chap. 1, he puts him "in remembrance to stir up the gift of God which is in him by the putting on of his own, i. e., Paul's, hands," and, therefore, also commands him to "hold fast the form of sound words, which he had heard" of Paul, thus showing that Paul, by virtue of the grace given him of the Lord Jesus in bestowing upon him the office of an Apostle, also instructed and appointed Timothy to the holy office.

He also prefaces his charge to Titus by calling him his own son, after the common faith, without doubt reminding Titus that as he himself had been the instrument of God, through whom he had received the office, he ought to give the more diligence to the admonitions which Paul gave him concerning its administration. That Paul in thus setting apart teachers in the Church did not act alone, nor with the cooperation of the congregation, but with other presbyters or teachers, is seen from this, that the same gift which above is confided to Timothy by the laying on of his hands is also in Tim. 4:14, said to have been conferred by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, that is, a number of teachers associated together for this purpose. But we find that the Apostles were authorized to go even further than this, and commanded those whom they had appointed as teachers, to appoint others in like manner after them in all time. Thus Paul says to Titus, chap. 1:5, that he had left him in Crete to ordain elders or bishops in every city, according to certain specified qualifications following. To Timothy, also, he says, 2 Tim. 2:1-2:

"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things, that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

When to this we add the fact, that in connection with the direction to set apart teachers as he himself had done, Paul gives to Timothy and Titus, the particular qualifications which they are to look for in proper candidates for the holy office, and commands them to use great circumspection in the exercise of this right, we have the strongest scriptural assurance, as to what construction the Apostles placed upon the authority with which Christ invested them, and the course which they took in its exercise. Besides the passages describing the qualifications which an elder or bishop is to have, to which we have already referred the reader in a former part of this article, we here introduce only one more to indicate the circumspection which Paul charged, in the appointment of ministers to the holy office, not upon the congregations, but upon those who already held it and who, as we have before seen, had, therefore, the authority of Christ to perpetuate it according to the Divine Word. 1 Tim. 5:22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man." This is the direction of Paul to Timothy; and that it has particular reference to ministerial ordination, we think is conclusively established by the fact that in the general charge given Timothy concerning various parts of the different churches under his supervision, this forms the conclusion of the direction having reference to the elders. This whole view of the case is greatly confirmed and strengthened when we consider that the charges concerning the setting apart of new ministers, is always in the Holy Scriptures given to those already in the office, and neither by Christ nor His Apostles, to individual congregations or the whole assembly of believers.

The instance concerning which so much has been made, viz: the election and ordination of an Apostle in the place of the traitor Judas, we are very clearly persuaded by several considerations, is not a real exception to this rule. These considerations are first, that while it is said that one hundred and twenty believers were gathered together, a goodly number of these were undoubtedly women, who, in apostolic times, as in all proper Churchly relations since, were not allowed a voice in these or other public matters; and it is both possible and probable that apart from the women, the evangelists and Apostles under the general name of Disciples formed the whole company of these believers. Again, the Apostle Peter, in his address upon the occasion does not call upon the whole company to take part in the choice but merely announces to them the necessity, in accordance with prophecy, that such choice be made. In the third place, the language in the latter part of the relation is such that it cannot be said beyond question to

include all present in the vote or lot which was cast. The probability is that only the Apostles took part in the choice and out of the company of the Evangelists, or perhaps others who were present, they made that choice. To say the very least, it is not in accordance with sound interpretation of the Scriptures to suffer a doubtful passage, where it is not introduced especially to indicate the distinction between the rights of congregations or believers generally and ministers, to disqualify and overthrow a clear and positive teaching of the Scriptures applied to the very purpose of showing how ministers, and not believers generally, are to proceed in vesting others with the authority to preach and administer the Sacraments. From these considerations we conclude beyond question, that the practice of the Apostles and early ministers of the Church was altogether in accordance with our third proposition, and that they understood the authority with which our Lord invested them just as we do now.

We might also base our proposition upon the analogy which the Christian ministry in the Church of the New Testament sustains to the Priesthood of the Old Testament. For while there is a great distinction to be drawn between the old covenant and the new in the essence of their whole relation, there is in this, which is the antetype of that, a strong resemblance in many, we might almost say in all of the arrangements of both. We refer, for instance to the analogy, which Circumcision in the old and Baptism in the new, very clearly hold with each other; to the Paschal Supper in the old as analogous to the Lord's Supper in the new, and from these alone, we might draw antecedent probability, that in the case of administrations, and the relations of the administrators, there would also hold an analogy in both. The Priesthood having charge of the service of the Temple and the Synagogues, were of the tribe of Levi, and the descent was from parents to children in this tribe as to those who should hold the office of Priests in the public service of God, for the people. So there is probability that the Christian Ministry would have a spiritual descent conferred upon them for the perpetuation of the office with which they have been entrusted by the Lord of the Church as well of the old as of the new covenant. It is true that a great part of the duty of the Levitical Priesthood consisted in attending to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and that in the New Testament Christ our sacrifice has been offered once for all, and the sacrifice needs no constant repetition as with them; but their sacrifices were to them, in the regular administration, types and means, through which by faith they were

united unto the true sacrifice, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the World; and the New Testament Scriptures abundantly testify, that we must be made specially partakers, in the means provided for the purpose, and in their proper administration, with the same Atoning Lamb. The difference is, that whilst they reached the reality through types and shadows, we come directly, in the appointed means, to the reality which is therein presented us. In both cases, however, particular administration is established and in this we place our analogy, though by no means identity, of the Ministry of the New Testament with the Levitical Priesthood of the Old Testament. This probability might not be of much worth standing alone and by itself without New Testament corroboration; but with this as it has already been presented from the New Testament it becomes an absolute certainty.

Before concluding the discussion of this part of our subject, we think it is necessary to warn the readers and all true inquirers after truth, against the ghost of hierarchy which may possibly be rapped out from the shades to frighten them from a fair consideration of the grounds advanced in favor of the views which we think the Holy Scriptures teach here. There is a hierarchy of popular, mob suffrage, as well as of individual arrogance and assumption, against both of which our readers will find us in the further progress of our discussion equally guarded on the immovable basis of the Scriptures. We have not consciously endeavored to wrest any Scripture from its literal force and meaning, and we are much better satisfied to follow the clear exposition of God's Holy Word, than to seek a more popular standing by any private interpretations, which with the Apostle Peter, and in the same sense, we hold in utter abhorrence, as the very engine of evil in the hands of Satan, in his Opposition to the truth, and the Holy Church of God built up and established upon that truth.

## **4. The call to particular administrations proceeds sometimes from the Church and sometimes from the individual congregation**

Besides the general call to the ministerial office, we have before shown that there is a second call, to those invested with the office, to particular ministrations. Our fourth proposition is, that the call to particular administrations proceeds in some cases from individual congregations, and sometimes from the Church in general in her representative capacity. This we now proceed to notice at length.

We have already seen that the minister sustains a two-fold relation to the congregation, as does the ministry to the Church. He is, on the one hand, the ambassador, or representative in the Word, of Christ among those to whom he is sent and over whom the Holy Ghost makes him overseer; in the second place, however, he is by reason of his relation of teacher to the people, also their representative, in the public worship of God. The minister is not allowed to lord it over God's heritage, but is admonished to be the helper of their joy and an ensample of the whole flock. Whilst he is the servant of Christ to the people, he is their servant also for Christ's sake. From these considerations it inevitably follows, that the ministry are not invested with hierarchical power to bind burdens upon the people and to exercise arbitrary control over them even in spiritual matters. On the one hand, while all are required to give the ministry that respect and obedience, which is demanded by the Word of God, in the proper exercise of its functions, the ministry, on the other, are bound to exercise towards their people that respectful consideration and tender solicitude which, for example, our Savior Himself always manifested towards His followers, or that the head of a family shows towards the family itself. These two

relations of minister and people are perfectly compatible with each other, and the Holy Scriptures make them, in most unmistakable terms, positively obligatory upon each one in his respective station. Out of them also flow the respective rights of minister and congregation. In our present connection this right is such, that while the congregation is not authorized to invest any man finally with the office, no minister, on the other hand, has the right to intrude himself upon the congregation against its will.

This position still further grows out of the requirements of order in administration. Several pastors may be equally entitled to hold and exercise the office and have equal ministerial authority; but one may be a suitable laborer in one part of the vineyard, whilst he is totally unfit for other positions; he should, therefore, according to every principle of right and order, be assigned to that part of the Master's service to which his capacities direct him; to assign him a portion to which he is unsuited, would be detrimental both to himself and to those with whom he was designed to serve. Those who are immediately acquainted with the circumstances under which any pastor will be called to labor are the best judges of his fitness for the given field. Then, whilst neighboring ministers may be in a position to recommend a pastor to any given people, the people themselves, in the end, are the best and most proper judges of what special qualifications their charge will require, and to call to administrations among them, therefore, can most properly in such cases proceed from themselves. We know that the people, in giving such call, are sometimes very much mistaken and even make up their estimate of a pastor on very wrong grounds; but the probability of mistake in the case is much less than in any other; and the requirement of order will consequently be thus much better fulfilled.

But we further think, that this view of the special call of ministers is taught and encouraged by the Holy Scriptures. The Apostles while they themselves ordained elders or bishops in the churches, whithersoever they went, did it as the Scriptures expressly say for the congregations; thus indicating that while the authority to preach came from themselves under Christ, the choice of the people was to be consulted, and by no means disregarded. The Church of Christ is universally represented as a kingdom in which, however, the administration of the Lord's government, while it is committed to earthen vessels, is one of limited, constitutional power within whose restraints all ministrations are necessarily confined, and the subjects of the kingdom at the same time are called to the enjoyment of

constitutional freedom or liberty. In the kingdom of Christ we are delivered from the slavery of Satan to the liberty of the children of God; and the blessings which we enjoy in it are not those of constraint, which would greatly tend to destroy their blessedness, but they are the blessings of privilege, and the freedom of their enjoyment is the great increase of the bliss. It is thus that Christ and the Apostles represent His kingdom to men; and in no case do they teach, or does their teaching imply, that men, in passing from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ, are delivered merely, even in this life, from the satanic bondage to be slaves of hierarchy or priestcraft. On the other hand, however, the Church is not left to the wild and changing will of men; her policy and arrangements in their essentiality are fixed and determined. Both of these views, which form the view in which the Church is presented to us in the Scriptures, only harmonize when we combine our third and fourth propositions; viz: the ministerial office is perpetuated by and through the ministry itself, as the command of Christ and the practice of the Apostles teach us; but the call to particular administrations to those who already hold the office proceeds from the congregation in which the administrations are to be exercised.

The Apostolic practice of recommending faithful pastors to the people whenever they sent them, and of exhorting the people to receive and treat them well for their work's sake, instead of arbitrarily commanding them to receive those sent, under peril of displeasure and punishment, goes also to establish our fourth proposition. If the Apostles claimed the authority to place over the people whom they desired, without consulting the will of the people at all, they would have directly commanded the reception of such as they sent to the different congregations; the fact that they did not do so, but addressed them in the tone of recommendation and exhortation, i. e., addressed their freedom of choice, shows conclusively that the congregations had the right to exercise such choice.

We find the same truth verified in the directions which are given to the people to beware of false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, who might intrude themselves among them or come to them, with a fair outward show and perhaps even the pretense of Apostolic authority, which some of them undoubtedly formerly possessed. The necessity which called for these warnings in the days of the Apostles is one which will endure as long as the Church endures, even to the end of time, for in the last times the Apostles themselves warn us, that these false teachers will be many, bringing in



damnable heresies. The congregations are taught to try all such spirits and hearken not to the strange voice of those who come to them with new-fangled notions and doctrines of men; they are to beware of them, and reject them, even though an angel from heaven should herald them. This right is also here closely connected with the relation sustained by single congregations to the universal Church. All the privileges of the Church in general, the individual Christian congregation possesses for herself. While, therefore, it is the duty of the Church in general to provide for the preservation of pure doctrine and the rejection of heresy and error, it is the right of each congregation to guard herself against the false and to preserve unto herself the true, which the whole Church acknowledges and teaches. The Church in her ministerial, representative character must take pains to prevent wolves from entering the holy office, whilst she provides good and approved teachers in general; and this right becomes in the congregation also requisite, and its exercise is called forth, when pastors are to be introduced among them, or when having been so introduced they, at any time depart from the faith and promulgate false doctrines. This necessarily implies the right of the congregation to call the services of the Pastor, as well as to dispense with them for good and sufficient reasons.

Upon these grounds we think the one part of our fourth proposition is fairly and scripturally established. It remains for us to establish the other part, viz: that sometimes this call to special ministration proceeds from the representative Church, including, as the case may be, at times lay as well as ministerial representatives. Besides particular pastorates and pastoral services which call for the exercise of the holy office, the Church is called upon in the very establishment of the office to look to general interests and teaching, where congregations are not yet in existence. There are Home and Foreign Missionary operations which the Church, without neglect of duty, cannot regard as indifferent and pass by. The command of Christ is, "Go into all the world." And whilst the obligation thus to go rests upon them to whom the office itself has been entrusted; there is a corresponding obligation upon the Church to send them forth on their holy mission and to provide for them in its fulfillment; for "How shall they preach except they be sent?" And as this part of special ministrations is to be carried out where the gospel has not yet entered, and where, consequently, there are not yet congregations, it devolves upon the Church in general to provide and send forth suitable laborers into this part of the Master's vineyard. This indeed is

the prior work of the Church, and it is by no means an exceptional work. It is all right and proper that we provide for the preservation of the pure word and sacraments in the congregations already established, but the obligation to go forth, and carry forward the conquests of the Redeemer's kingdom is consistent with the former; whilst that receives our careful attention, this may not by any means be omitted. The Master has committed the whole work into our hands, and all parts of it must be performed, to merit the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

Before we can have congregations, they must be established; they are established by the preaching of the Word; it is the duty of the Church already established to extend herself thereby into all lands; and until this is accomplished, Missionary labor will have in accordance with Christ's commands and Apostolic teaching and practice a superior claim upon the Church. Christ Himself first called the Apostles to this general labor, who after their call, went forth; they also afterwards sent forth from their own number, as well as from others, upon whom they had conferred the office those who should carry the Gospel where the glad tidings had not yet been borne. See, for exemplification, the sending forth of Paul and Barnabas, as related in Acts 13. As it was then done, so now is it the duty of the Church to provide for Missionary labor.

Growing out of the necessity to provide teachers and pastors with the proper qualifications, is the requirement of institutions of learning where our young men of the proper physical, mental and moral qualifications may be prepared for the duties of the holy office. This necessity, to be sure, is not absolute, but relative; we might get along and prepare ministers without Colleges and Theological schools; but experience teaches that the encouragement and support of schools of a high order is not only of great benefit to the Church, but a comparative necessity; without them the Church cannot so fully and so successfully carry on the great work of the world's evangelization committed to her hands. The provision of such schools, therefore, and the calling of suitable men to preside over them, and instruct the young men confided to them by the Church becomes a part of her duty. From the nature of the case this cannot be accomplished by individual congregations, but by the Church in her representative capacity.

In these respects and in others, which the length of this article precludes us from noticing particularly, the reader will readily see the necessity for the second part of our proposition, and with this we dismiss it.

## **5. The general call to the ministry is not and cannot be in the congregation.**

It yet remains for us to establish our last proposition, viz: that the call to the ministerial office neither grows out of, nor has any direct connection with the spiritual, general priesthood of believers. We do not, of course, deny that there is such a priesthood of believers; on the contrary, we hold it as one of the special and glorious treasures which by God's grace are bestowed upon all who are united in full and living communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, that there is no longer need of a mediating priest between man and God, but that now every believer may directly present unto God the sacrifices, which are well pleasing in His sight. But we do claim that this priesthood has no connection whatever with the holy office of the ministry, and that this is something entirely and essentially different from that.

This will appear evident, we think, in the first place, from a comparison of the objects of the two things. If we find two things presented in the Scriptures without any connection stated as existing between them, when at the same time, they propose to effect different objects and aims, it would be extremely abhorrent to all true rules of Biblical rendering to say, that the two had the same aim, or that one owed its existence, directly or indirectly to the other. The prime and essential object of the ministerial office is, beyond doubt, that of teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is the command of Christ, establishing the office; "a bishop (or minister) must be apt to teach" the Apostle gives as one of the requirements to the holy office. How the question naturally arises, does the Scriptural presentation of the general priesthood propose any such object, or make any such requirement? The Holy Scriptures give us a very clear negative: Peter says, in his first Epistle, 2:9, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a

peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” in the 5th verse he says, in like manner, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” John also says, Rev. I: 5-6, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever,” language evidently which has reference only to believers. In none of these passages, either in direct or remote connection with them is the office of the ministry mentioned, or anything said of teaching which is the object of that office. Nay, in every respect the two relations and their objects are different; the one, the general priesthood is the right of all believers, the other requires special qualifications in addition; the one is the privilege of rendering service acceptably unto God as believers, the other is the office through which believers are made and established; in the one, man renders acceptable prayer and praise unto God, in the other, God comes down mercifully and graciously unto man; indeed the only connection that can be drawn from the Scriptures between them is, that through the office of teaching or the ministry, in the Word, God makes believers in His Church, who, then, as believers, and in no other capacity, are enabled through grace to serve God acceptably by prayer, praise and thanksgiving. If more than this is given to the general priesthood, we have entirely failed of finding it in the Scriptures. Neither is there here anything said, directly or indirectly, to the effect, that it is one of the prerogatives of the general priesthood to call ministers to the office. We know of no rule of interpreting language which will render the words, “offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God,” or “show forth the praises of Him,” equivalent to the right of calling and authorizing ministers in and for the Church. And not finding it in the language of the Scriptures which treats of the general priesthood, either expressed or implied, we must with all due deference to the brethren who think differently, suggest that they have strained the Scriptures to make a point which they do not even propose to make; and as such we must reject it.

Again, upon the plea that the call to the ministerial office must proceed from the whole congregation as a matter pertaining to their rights as spiritual priests, the office itself is degraded from its proper place in the Church organization, and ceases as an object of administration in which

God deals with man, being merely a representative office of the congregation in their general or public sacrifices. No body of men can give authority for more than they possess themselves; it is not in the power of the congregation to confer rights which they themselves do not possess, or which the Scriptures have not given them in this or some other capacity. If, then, upon the ground that all believers are a spiritual priesthood, it is claimed that they are empowered to call men to the ministerial office, it must be because either this right has been expressly granted them, or that the office has no greater authority than pertains to the congregation, or to the individual believers of which it is composed. This right is certainly not directly granted them; then the office of the ministry upon this supposition, has no higher duties, or authority, than belongs to every spiritual priest, i. e., to every believer.

What then becomes of teaching and administration? They are certainly not granted to believers generally, if for no other reason, because all have not the specified qualifications; spiritual priests, or believers are allowed to offer the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to God for themselves in Christ; but inasmuch as they cannot confer upon others more than they themselves possess, and man is dead in trespasses and sins, and cannot move in the work of his own salvation; there is no arrangement upon this supposition by which God will deal with man and form for Himself believers to praise Him. No! the office of teaching and administration is the glory of the Church's organization, and while it takes away from the spiritual priesthood none of its special glory, neither does it borrow its light and authority therefrom. There is a spiritual priesthood; but distinct from it, yea, going before it, is the office of reconciliation, for whose perpetuation, as we have already seen, the Head of the Church has made special preparation and instituted a certain order.

Nor will it relieve the matter to tell us, that while all are priests, it is an order from Christ, that only special ones shall be called to its exercise for the sake of order. The same difficulty will meet us here that arose before. No rule of order will allow the sum total of believers in any given locality to confer upon others more than what has been committed to them. And further still if it be a question of order which gives to one man the right to teach and administer and forbids others so to do, we would like to know why all are not permitted to teach and administer without a call at all, when it is done decently and in order. If all are spiritual priests and as such have

the authority to preach, no rule of order will justify the congregation in depriving him of it, who feels disposed to its exercise, when he does not interrupt any other; and where then is the necessity of the Apostolic, earnest injunction to lay hands suddenly on no man, or indeed the office of bishop at all? In this case every man is his own judge of a call to preach; and they that interfere with him, deprive him of a God-given right. Yet more: women equally with others are priests, i. e., a part of the spiritual priesthood, and upon this supposition they not only should take part in giving the call, but may themselves claim equally with men the exercise of the duties of the office; for in treating of the 'priesthood of believers the Apostles make no distinction between believers; though we are not at all forgetful of the fact that women are directly forbidden to take any part in the office of teaching.

Again, if the office grows out of the spiritual priesthood, we have the thing made, making that through which it is made; or thus believers are made, as the Apostle teaches, through preaching, but preaching itself is made by believers. The ministerial office always precedes the congregation; if then the congregation invests with the authority to preach and itself comes from preaching, it must have existed before itself. Neither does it alter the question to say, that this applies merely to missionary labor and in lands which have not yet heard the Gospel; for, without discrimination the ministerial office is made by the Scriptures a missionary arrangement, through which the Lord first makes believers, and then confirms and strengthens them; and the language with regard to ministers in general is sent, not made; for how shall they preach except they be sent? the Apostle Paul inquires.

To the cry of hierarchy which may possibly be again raised from these as well as other Scriptural positions which we have taken, we will only here yet add, as closely connected with this part of our subject, that mobocracy will necessarily spring from the position we are combating. The minister will necessarily be merely the servant of the congregation, and the power being in their own hands, whenever he ceases to meet their expectation, the same order which induced them to give him the office will in inevitable disorder enable them to depose him and rid themselves of unpopular preaching and unpleasant truths. This, again, will act back upon the ministry, and instead of a high and scriptural-toned style of preaching, the pulpit will become a stage for the exhibition of literary excellence, beautiful oratory, and popular flattery. That such would be the case the Apostle Paul

seems very pointedly to intimate when he says, in the second Epistle to Timothy, 4:3-4,

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.”

It is also a very significant fact that this is the only passage of New Testament Scripture which directly refers to the people, making and authorizing their own ministers; and in this connection, it is of great value, showing that it is under delusion and not according to the truth, that congregations can at any time undertake the final authorization of those who are to perform the functions of the ministerial office. It is not necessary here to direct the reader's attention to instances illustrating this position; though we could easily do it, indeed they are so abundant, that each one can see them on every side. A Ministerium may abuse power entrusted to them by the Head of the Church; a usurpation of that power by the congregation, however, beginning in wrong, will be far more destructive to the peace and prosperity of the Church. A popular hierarchy is the most dangerous of all.

We have now taken the reader over the whole ground which we proposed to ourselves in the discussion of this subject. In concluding, we desire merely to give a general view of the ground and to refer briefly to the witness which is incidentally given to our positions by the Symbolical Books. The office of the Holy Ministry has been instituted of Christ; its purpose is the establishment and building up of the Church in all lands and among all people through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. The Church is comprised of all believers, i. e., of all those who have and submit to the Word and Sacraments in their purity; and whilst she, as far as individuals are concerned, is invisible, she is visibly attested in the presence of a pure Word and pure Sacraments. See Augsburg Confession, Art. 7. Also, the Apology, Art. 4, particularly in Eng. Ed. pp. 218, 219 and 220. The latter part of this reference only we quote here, as follows:

“Nor are we speaking of an imaginary Church, which may nowhere be found, but we affirm and know, in truth, that this Church containing saints truly is and continues to be on earth; that is, there are children of God in different places throughout the world, in various kingdoms, islands, countries and cities, from the rising to the setting of the sun, who truly know Christ and the Gospel; and we assert that the external signs, the ministry, or the Gospel and the Sacraments are in this Church.”

As the Church is built up of believers, and believers are made through the preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments, the ministerial office precedes both the existence and development of the Church in any given locality, and hence is not a local but a general office in and to the Church at large. Here compare Articles 5 and 7 of the Augsburg Confession.

The necessity for the Church in the world endures through all time, and, consequently, perpetual authority is given to the ministry as the office of reconciliation, “always, even unto the end of the world,” yet this authority is not absolute, but circumscribed and fixed, for the minister, though the ambassador of God, is such only in the Word and Sacraments, in accordance with which it is his duty to exercise his office; whenever he administers, contrary to the Word he is no longer the ambassador of God therein, and all are absolved from hearkening to his false and unscriptural teachings. Aug. Con. Art. 28. Sym. Books, p. 135.

The call to the holy office of the ministry is twofold; the call to the office in general, and the call to particular administrations in the office. In the general call to the office the rule of order in the Holy Scriptures is, that the office descends ordinarily from those who already hold, to those who desire it and upon careful scrutiny are found to possess the proper qualifications. It is not claimed here that ministerial succession, as we hold it, is one of special prerogative, i. e., that ministers have power to confer the office upon whom they desire and to withhold it from those upon whom they do not desire to confer it; neither that there is any special grace in ministerial ordination by succession. This succession is merely one of order in the Church established under the authority of Christ by the Holy Apostles, and in like manner to be perpetuated; and ordination is nothing more than publicly authorizing those who are found capable to teach and preach, in accordance with the clear Word of God. Hence also, should necessity arise, the congregation might authorize a minister for themselves leaving his authorization by ordination to follow whenever opportunity presents. Smal.



Art. 10, and Appendix “Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops.” This power, however, the congregation has only by way of exception as in the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism in extreme cases by a lay-member of the Church.

To particular pastorates the congregation has the right to call, whilst to offices of a general nature under the general ministry the Church, in her representative capacity, gives the call to special ministrations. The former part of this proposition, as we have seen, grows out of the relations which the congregation sustains to the Church in general, and which pastor and congregation sustain to each other. All the rights and immunities of the Church in general, the congregation has for itself in particular; the pastor, too, is not Lord over God’s heritage, he is only the helper of their joy. The Church, through the ministry, examines and sets apart those who possess the necessary requirements, for the holy office in general, and for their own special requirements the congregations, being the best judges, are empowered by the Scriptures, to give the call.

The ministerial office is nevertheless totally disconnected with the spiritual priesthood, though by virtue of his office the minister becomes also the representative of the congregation in the public worship. The Priesthood of believers is the privilege of every believer, by which are all enabled to have free access to God in prayer, praise and thanksgiving without human mediation, alone through Christ, the only and everlasting Mediator between man and God, The office of the ministry is that of teaching and administering the Word of God, and is the office through which God deals graciously, according to his promises in Christ, with man; its exercise is confined to those specially set apart thereto. A. Conf. Art. 14.

We had intended to further exemplify our positions from the writings of Luther; but the great length, to which our article has already extended, will fully excuse us from doing so now. If we should have occasion to resume this subject, we are prepared to show that our positions are not only scriptural but in accordance with the almost universal practice of the Lutheran Church. For the present then, we dismiss the whole subject, praying for the blessing of God upon our feeble efforts to secure and promote the truth and power of the Holy Office, which He is pleased to own and bless in the salvation of immortal souls.

# How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

Suggested Reading: [New Testament Conversions](#) by Pastor George Gerberding

## Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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