

# Die Treue im Predigtamt

## *Faithfulness in the Preaching Office*



**Adolf Hoenecke**

### Thesis I

*The faithfulness required in the preaching office, that a preacher administers the means of grace and handles the care of souls with diligence.*

### Thesis III

*Faithfulness in the Predigtamt can only be proven for the sake of its seriousness through this, namely that the preacher is made proficient for it by God and is strengthened constantly through the comfort which God gives.*

Translated by Wade R. Johnston (I) and Nathanael Bourman (III)  
Lutheranism in America  
December 9, 2003  
Professor John Brenner

## Translator's Preface

This paper was presented by Adolf Hoenecke at Synod Convention sometime during the presidency of Philipp von Rohr (1889-1908). I found this essay in the essay file and no date appeared on it. Most of the dates found in the notes from the convention that appear along with the paper mention 1893 if any dates at all. For this reason, it appears likely that the paper was delivered in 1893, although sometimes papers would run for several conventions. This could mean that the paper started in 1892, since the notes containing 1893 dates correspond with the second thesis. This scenario would be plausible because the first thesis is quite lengthy and there is a brief summary and extension of it that precedes the second thesis. For most of the Synod Conventions, the papers are included with the rest of the proceedings in the bound records in our library's reference section. For some reason 1892 and several years thereafter is missing pages and the papers presented. This is the reason for the confusion. Hopefully, further research will turn up further information to shed light on the topic. I will be translating the second thesis as soon as possible in my free time. Nate Bourman will be working on the third for dogmatics next semester. As a side note, when I searched through the various proceedings of our Synod Conventions I could not help but be amazed by the wealth of valuable material to be found there, much of which is of yet still available only in the German. What an untapped treasure!

I would like to thank Jason Oakland and Nate Bourman for their help in this translation. When I was particularly confused by a section, one of them was usually able to help me figure it out. This translation can certainly use more polishing by someone more capable than I, but I pray that it will serve to faithfully convey the thoughts of this great father of our church body. I have enjoyed reading his work and look forward to working on the second thesis. I hope the reader will have the same experience.

Soli Deo Gloria

Wade R. Johnston  
*Advent II*

## **Die Treue im Predigtamt** *Faithful in the Preaching Office*

In his introductory statements, the speaker observed that it might be good if someone at some time dealt with this topic and seriously occupied himself with it. In this way, the preacher and the audience could only win. Faithfulness is a thing that is often not understood by the members of a congregation. They often do not know what a faithful preacher actually is. In any cause, it is also good that we occupy ourselves thoroughly for a while with faithfulness in the *Predigtamt*.

Faithfulness is required by the Holy Scripture as of first importance for the preacher. We read 1 Corinthians 4:2: “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” Regarding these words of Scripture Luther aptly observed in his *Epistelerklaerung*: “Upon this all depends. After faithfulness God inquires. Angels, men and all creatures look for and demand it; not the mere name or honor of steward will answer. The question is not whether one’s bishopric be large or small; nor is it particularly important whether or not he be outwardly pious. The question is, does he faithfully execute the duties of his office, acting as a steward in the blessings of God?”<sup>1</sup> –It may attract attention that Luther here says one also does not really ask “whether or not he be outwardly pious.” Now it is indeed certain that Luther also wants a preacher to be a man who is pious of heart. However, piety, as far as he is concerned, is not that which is the chief for another. Through his personal piety alone he will not even accomplish what God wants to have accomplished through him. It is often so considered that should a preacher in that way only be pious, he has managed the chief thing of the blessing of his office and has set forth blessing. However, the more general efficacy can still be lacking in all one’s

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<sup>1</sup> This translation is from *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, J.N. Lenker, ed., 3.2.74.

personal piety if there is not the requisite faithfulness.<sup>2</sup> That is what Luther wants to say with the words: “nor is it particularly important whether or not he be outwardly pious.”

He then goes on further in the same place: The same faithfulness is also required by Christ: “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?” (Matthew 24:45).<sup>3</sup> And then Luther asks the question, “What may this faithfulness be?” His answer, in which he still once again returns to the point of piety, reads: “Tell me, who would be reformed or profited were any one bishop to have prominence and power enough to possess every bishopric, as the Pope tries to do? Who would be benefited if a bishop were so holy that his shadow would raise the dead? Who would be the gainer if he had wisdom equal to all the apostles and prophets? But none of these things are inquired after; the question is, Is he a faithful bishop? does he administer to the household of faith the Word of God? does he preach the gospel and dispense the mysteries of God? Emphatically the inquiry is made upon these points. Emphatically the inquiry is made upon these points. Here is where the individual is benefited. Above all things, then faithfulness is demanded of stewards.”<sup>4</sup>

These are the weighty words of Luther, which shed wonderful light upon the faithfulness of a pastor. It happens easily and often that otherwise well-meaning people mix it up with something different. They consider as faithfulness that which the Word of God simply does not understand as such. If a preacher also has a deep conviction in this regard that he has a high calling from God, if he has a fervent desire to lead the precious won souls to Christ, to properly bring many into the kingdom of heaven, if he has the sincere wish that all the members of his

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<sup>2</sup> *Es wird oft so angesehen, dass damit, dass ein Prediger nur fromm sei, in der Hauptsache der Segen des Amtes geschafft und ein solcher zum Segen gesetzt sei. Aber es kann bei aller persoentlichen Froemmigkeit doch fehlen an segensreicher Wirksamkeit, wenn nicht die verlangte Treue dabei ist.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* with the insertion of the NIV for the Bible verse.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

congregation live pious and godly lives and one day become blessed, if he himself not only rejoices over the godly life of one, but also feels heartfelt sadness over the worldly ways of others, if he has a delicate conscience in connection with worldliness and the most trifling symptom of it, indeed, that is all very beautiful, good, and necessary, it must be, but it is still not the faithfulness required by God in His Word. Someone can be brimming with all them and still lack true faithfulness.

*Thesis I*

*The faithfulness required in the Predigtamt, that a preacher administers the means of grace and handles the care of souls with diligence.*

If a preacher wants to be faithful, then he must first of all administer the Means of Grace—Word and sacrament—with care. In the employment of these he should employ the highest attention, he should go about it with the utmost diligence. He [the pastor] is indeed set over them as a steward. Yet Christ asks: “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?” (Matthew 24:45). In this way also a preacher will be proven faithful, if he always gives the souls entrusted to him what they need at the appropriate time. “At the appropriate time;” therein indeed also lies where and how one must be careful. A preacher should have care in that regard, as to whether it is the right time, if he should execute or do this or that. That is also more often seriously demanded from the servants of the Word in the Scriptures. So the apostle admonishes: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). And in the letter to the Hebrews it is said of the faithful preacher: “They keep watch over

your souls” (Hebrews 13:17).<sup>5</sup> By that *Seelsorge* is demanded of the preacher. And therefore diligence in the care of souls is the second part of diligence, through which the preacher should prove his faithfulness.

Care in the administration of the Means of Grace and carefulness in the care of souls, those are the two parts in which the faithfulness of a pastor is shown. Let us now delve deeper into a study of both these parts.

To begin with, in the consideration of the administration of the Means of Grace the Word of God that a preacher has preached is taken into account. Since a pastor’s care of souls now lies in just that, let him thoroughly consider this part, the Word and preaching, which God more especially emphasizes in the Scripture.

First, God demands from him completeness, thoroughness. The preacher is indeed the messenger of God. Thus, he should now also dispense the entire message entrusted to him. Christ says to the disciples “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). “Preach the gospel,” says the Lord. To that end belongs the every teaching. He speaks further: “And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Paul writes to the Corinthians: “Everything is yours.” Thus entire the entire teaching also belongs to them. He testifies about himself: “For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27). And to Timothy he says, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” [2 Timothy 2:2]. These should also then surely furthermore be taught everything.

Yes, it should always be so. A preacher should proclaim everything, the entire council of God for salvation. If he does that, then he is faithful. Unfortunately, that does not always happen. There is many a one who makes still a good start and brings forth all sorts of treasure out of the

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<sup>5</sup> This is not the NIV. Here I translated it as Hoenecke has it.

divine Word in his preaching. Yet later, when they are in the *Amt* longer or at the same place for a while, they perhaps fall upon something in particular and constantly hammer the same article of doctrine in their preaching. Although it is the same Word of God, it is still not the whole Word of God; one mere teaching, not all. One always preaches about repentance, another always only about sanctification, the denunciation of the world, and so forth, still another always only about the cross. That is wrongheaded, however. A pastor should not only expound some things, but, on the contrary, he has the charge from God to proclaim the entire teaching, all the counsel of God for salvation. If that does not happen, the people simply remain ignorant in many articles of doctrine and then in times of temptation fall into the hands of the sects due to a lack of correct understanding.

A further part of faithfulness in regard to preaching is purity. Thus, as God has given His Word, so He wants it preached. We should neither subtract from nor add to it. As soon as one add something of his own to the Word of God, that is contamination and adulteration. Then one does not act according to the method of Paul, which says, “Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit” (2 Corinthians 12:17).<sup>6</sup> Whoever, however, does not give attention to that which he does, whoever does not thoroughly prepare himself for his preaching, but, as one says, turns himself adrift to the moment, he can say many things and produce what is straightaway detrimental, perhaps without ever intending it.<sup>7</sup> Many want to distribute no counterfeit coin, but if he does not always take care and examine precisely of what kind a coin is, if he does not accurately examine each piece before he gives it out, then it could happen in his haste, that is, in the fact that he did not inspect it, that he would distribute a false coin which he

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<sup>6</sup> The NIV is quoted above. Hoenecke’s German reads: *Denn wir sind nicht, wie etlicher viele, die das Wort Gottes verfaelschen.*

<sup>7</sup> *Wer aber nicht Acht giebt auf das, was er tut, wer sich nicht sortfaeltig vorbereitet auf seine Predigt, sondern sich, wie man sagt, dem Augenblick ueberlaesst, der kann manches sagen und vorbringen was geradezu schaedlich ist, ohne dass er es vielleicht beabsichtige.*

had received. So also the preacher who does not prepare well can, under the pressure of not wanting to lose a smooth flow or have a pause, to that end speak something flip flopped, at least precarious. It should not be so. Whoever wants to be a genuine, faithful preacher can do nothing better to prove it than through pure and tidy preaching, that he speaks concerning every article of Christian doctrine neatly and purely according to the Word of God.

Luther articulates himself about this as follows. On 1 Corinthians 4:2 he says: “It is, as Paul wants to say: ‘Since we are servants and stewards, one should not correspondingly ask how we may rule in that, but rather only concern ourselves with being found faithful. That is those who teach the people the pure Word of the gospel.’”<sup>8</sup>

And at another place, where he especially wants to enjoin that a preacher must prepare himself with great care so that he produces nothing improper with what he wants to say in the sermon, but is certain of that which God wants, Luther writes: “For a preacher must not pray the Lord’s Prayer nor seek the forgiveness of sins if he has preached (if he is a proper preacher), but must with Jeremiah say and boast, “Lord, you know that what has gone out of my mouth is right and pleasing to you. . . . Whoever cannot boast thus about his sermon, let him put off preaching for he lies and blasphemes God” (XXI. 387).

A further point is the purpose—God has not given His Word to them in order that they might somehow by chance produce a spiritual amusement for the people to uplift them spiritually, but rather He has an entirely determined purpose in mind in that [Word]. There are namely three. First, faith should be worked through it (John 20:31; Romans 10:14-17), and with that salvation procured for the listener. After that, love, from which good works flow (Galatians 5:6,22). Finally, the glory of God should be promoted in everything now and forever (Ephesians

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<sup>8</sup> My translation of what Hoenecke cites from Luther. I could not find this section in Lenker. It may be a paraphrase, or I may just be missing it.



1:6,12,14). Whoever now wants to demonstrate care (*Sorgfalt*) must always have and keep this threefold aim in mind. He must truly preach that which produces faith and kindles love.

Whatever concerns faith [one must preach], so, for example, one must not always preach only that faith is something precious, magnificent, necessary, that faith alone helps us, that we, if we believe, are certainly saved, although all this is correct to say according to Scripture and needs to be said; but one must before all things so preach that faith itself is produced, that which actually kindles faith in the heart. If one leaves that out, then he is not yet a faithful preacher.

Many may now think concerning this, that repentance is also frequently named in Scripture as the goal of the divine Word and for that reason the sermon should also have the aim of working repentance (Luke 16:29-31; Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; Mark 6:12; Luke 24:47; Acts 17:39; 20:21; 26:20). We have not let this escape our eyes, since we already spoke about the most essential aim of preaching with respect to men, namely that they should work faith. Faith is, however, itself the most important part of repentance. Where repentance is said to contribute to salvation in Scripture (Luke 15:7,10; Luke 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18), there faith is certainly born in mind. Accordingly, faith and repentance are also often used interchangeably for each other in Scripture (Luke 16, compare v. 30 with 31). Yet at other times the Scriptures often speak about repentance in such a way that they include two parts in it, namely faith as the most important, upon which salvation properly and ultimately hinges, and the earlier remorse over sins, which part, nevertheless, is at times also alone termed repentance (Matthew 21:32; Mark 1:15). Thus the sermon now also has the aim according to divine intention, that it should be a Lenten sermon for sorrow over sin. Whatever preacher wants to accomplish this correctly must likewise not be content simply to preach that such repentance is necessary, that without sorrow over sins a man certainly remains under the course. He must not only call out, "Repent! Repent!"

Rather, he must make them repent. He must not only paint beautifully how God looks so pleasantly upon the broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:19<sup>9</sup>) and the humble tax collector, and contrarily the hell brimming with flames for the unrepentant (Luke 16:24). He must truly attack the heinous disease, which prevents all repentance such as faith.<sup>10</sup> The disease is self-righteousness. No murderer, no adulterer, no perjurer is as loathsome to the dear Lord as one self-righteous man, who glistens in the world's eyes. That is indeed the sin of all sins, not to believe, not to want to boast of the blood of Christ. And this self-righteousness clings to us all. Therefore, we must be thoroughly cured of it. Our eyes must be opened, that we perceive our persistent wretchedness and truly fall into the anxiety caused by sin and affliction. It should also happen that we examine the Ten Commandments and have it made striking clear to us that we lived and walked in complete contrariness to them in our lives. We must rub the appropriate oil from the Ten Commandments, so that we gradually begin to detect our stink. The purpose in that is not only to perchance incite our shame, but to be conducive to and in service of our salvation. Therefore, certainly no powerful, titanic sermon is necessary, but it is all the better to have the always plainer and more straightforward law held before our face and taken to heart.

The matter stands the same with sanctification. One can speak and preach about it marvelously and yet not demonstrate what sanctification actually is and how one must achieve it, thus rendering everything else useless. At the same time, one must plain and simply proceed to works. Let us preach sanctification like our father Luther, making use of the example of the *Hauspostille* for the Second Sunday after Epiphany for example. To the maid servants, the servant girls, for example: "If your lady, your mistress, says, 'Pay attention to the house,' and you do it at once in faith in Christ and obedience to the will of God, that is sanctification and

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<sup>9</sup> Probably refers to verse 17 in the NIV.

<sup>10</sup> *die bei uns allen Reue wie Glauben hindert*

more genuine worship.” Thus, with simple instruction one will be clearly understood and the goal reached. On the other hand, if one expels people from the sphere of their thinking, walking, and living with others, and speaks with ever loftier words about greater, more favored holiness and heavenly life, the hearers will not in this way know where to begin with it all. The preachers also need not be surprised in that respect, if the people do not pursue sanctification, if piety is lacking in the houses and families.—even if one plainly and simply teaches the people how the sinful flesh is active in us in many ways and where one must then kill and crucify it; he must still teach what sins generally stain the life of Christians, which they must daily also seek to cast aside; he must teach what God has prescribed as good works in the commandments, and tell the people accordingly on occasion how to live and conduct themselves in the family, the church, and the town, and also how to serve God with good works; in short: if one teaches the people what sanctification is, he has still not yet thus served as a preacher in keeping with God’s intention and goal if he has not helped his people come to stand in such holiness. There is nothing now accomplished by just speaking about the same parts of sanctification, to powerfully damn worldly and fleshly living, to beautifully portray the loveliness of a good, fruit-bearing tree or the good works of wealthy Christian men, and to extol with the highest earnestness the necessity of sanctification and of good works being done by a Christian. That is perhaps amply done, but they forget the chief thing in the preaching of sanctification, namely, that they instruct the Christian in a straightforward and practical manner concerning as to how he may accomplish it and help to bring himself also likewise into line through the same. Now it is certain that it is the inner man alone who can be addressed by sanctification, for the inner man has the desire for the command of God (Romans 7:22), consequently the desire to do away with sin, which is contrary to the law, and to do the good, which God wills in the law; it is indeed the inner man

which controls the soul in so far as faith reigns, which indeed can and wants to be employed in nothing other than love, love both for God and the neighbor (Galatians 5:6). So the inner man must always be strengthened, vivified, and encouraged, if it will properly come to good works. Therefore, the preacher should say to the Christians: Diligently retain for yourself trust in God over and against your sins, otherwise there will be no faith to revive you with trust and be active through love. Indeed, where you do it, there it will also be true: "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" (Psalm 119:32). And also the preacher himself must turn to the preaching of the gospel, above all, to the strengthening of faith, the kindling of love for God and all that are born of God (1 John 5:1; 1 John 4:20), and in that way he will accordingly here fulfill the purpose of God and genuinely create sanctification and good works. So also, Paul instructed the preacher Titus in Chapter 3, where he first lays out the gospel and then says in verse 8: "This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone" (Titus 3:8).

It would do well to comment here on another side of the connection with the point about the completeness, that one through his preaching creates well informed people and to that end must at least explain every doctrine in the course of a year. Nonetheless, the chief obligation of a pastor is still to preach Christ, as Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 2:2: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Hereupon, the reviewer might reply: "To be sure, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:1,2: 'When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.' What all does not then belong if one only wants to preach Christ

crucified?” At the same time one must nevertheless still speak of the fact that He is the Son of God and of Mary, our Prophet, High Priest, and King. The heart and core is certainly that he became a curse for us. One must precisely do the one and not abandon the other. It is also to be observed in this respect what things Paul then contrasts with this, that he knew Christ crucified alone and also preach the same. That is still not all other Christian doctrine. Paul does not yet really want to say: “I have not wanted to concern myself with the many other things of the faith, but I have only wanted always to preach the one thing: the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for us. No, Paul indeed does not consider the other teachings of the faith to be a trifling thing (Galatians 1:8). Rather, when Paul says he had only wanted to know about Christ crucified, he means that he wanted to know nothing, surely not about the other teachings of the faith, but about lofty words and reason-speech of human wisdom. One only hands over some knowledge, confidence, and certainty to the Christians, also in those things that perhaps seem less.<sup>11</sup> Every article of faith merges into the saving doctrine of the righteousness in the blood of Christ on the cross. They all help to fix the heart on Christ. One may contribute to the solidness of a thing also with many small nails, bludgeons, clamps, ropes, and bands. So he will truly work hard to give one knowledge and certainty in all articles of faith, even those apparently puny in our eyes, so that he truly helps to contribute to the one great, mighty religious and saving article: that the blood of Christ, shed on the cross, applied in faith, to make us pure from every sin.<sup>12</sup>

It is also still to be observed that a pastor should indeed never consider if he could in his *Amt* draw on that which he has earlier studied. If one wants to perform something properly, then

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<sup>11</sup> *Man manche nur die Christen erkenntnisreich, sicher, und gewiss in allen Glaubensartikel, auch in denen, die etwa gering erscheinen. Da tut man eitel Gutes an ihnen.*

<sup>12</sup> *Sie helfen ihn alle im Herzen des Christen befestigen. Man mag zur Festigkeit einer Sache auch mit viel kleinen Naegeln, Zwingen, Klammern, Seilen, und Baendern beitragen. So wird man wahrlich gerade dadurch, dass man Erkenntniss und Gewissheit in allen Glaubensartikeln, auch scheinbar geringen, wirkt, durch ernste Predigt, wahrlich befestigen helfen den einen grossen, wahrhaft glaeubig und seligmachenden Artikel: dass das Blut Christi, vergossen am Kreuz, angeeignet im Glauben, uns rein macht von aller Suende.*

on has it as a necessity to still apply himself diligently all the time to study. One can never finish this apprenticeship.

A further part of faithfulness is instruction. The Word of God has been given to us for teaching. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Instruction is also the primary [thing] that we need. We indeed know by nature nothing about the true heavenly things. We must first learn from God what thoughts He has in regard to us. Therefore, Paul also says in 1 Timothy 3:21 and 2 Timothy 2:24 that a preacher should also be apt to teach. The *Predigtamt* hence also has only been entrusted to those who are able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

If a preacher does not teach, he is of no use. One may say now and again: “*Lehrpredigten* is regarded entirely well, but the chief thing is still to preach edifyingly. Certainly! However, what does it mean to preach edifyingly? The Word comes in order to edify.<sup>13</sup> Now if one builds an earthly house in a fair way, he first of all lays the foundation and then builds the house piece by piece upon it. So it is also with the preacher. Thereby, one builds up when he has first laid the foundation, which is Christ. Then, however, he proceeds and finishes the entire building, in which one attaches one piece of doctrine after another. One must now understand correctly what it means when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:10: “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.” He has not thus laid the foundation in the sense that he personally first brought, ordered, and summoned Christ into the world, into the flesh, and into His saving work; for God alone so lays the foundation and has appointed Him, and indeed He was already thus appointed before Paul knew and understood anything about Christ. Paul has, rather, thus laid the foundation in that he first has preached to the Corinthians about Christ, the Savior. And so for us

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<sup>13</sup> *Das Wort kommt von erbauen*

Christ is the foundation of our spiritual building, even through the preaching about Christ as the Reconciler and Savior. The *Glaubenslehre* about Christ is here the foundation. As Luther himself says about Jude 1:20: "Faith is laid on the foundation, one should build thereupon." Even the teaching of faith. And besides my heart-faith, by which I myself believe Christ to be my salvation, I can lay no other foundation in the heart. And neither can you Christians. Since the teaching and preaching of Christ is the foundation, which is being spoken about when it says that Paul and all preachers lay the foundation, Romans 15:20 says: "It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation." Here Paul clearly says this: "Where an ambassador of God has already made the name of Christ known through preaching, there he has already laid a foundation and likewise begun the building." Jude 1:20 also shows particularly clearly that the foundation laid by a preacher for the spiritual building is the teaching of faith. For Jude says: "Faith is laid on the foundation, one should build thereupon." That is self-evidently not the faith by which you believe, for that is never the most holy of all, that is, without blemish, but stained as everything in us and by us is, but that is the faith which you believe, as stands taught in Scripture in the three articles, and this faith or teaching of faith is certainly most holy of all, that is, perfect. The Word of God and the truth is indeed without blemish. So also is the foundation that Paul and all preachers lay, the divine teaching concerning the saving truth about Christ, which is the preaching that Paul calls laying the foundation. The foundation is also something spiritual. The building is like the foundation. If the foundation is earthly, as in the case of an earthly house, then the building must also be earthly, when the house is done. If the foundation was laid with stone, then the house would certainly not endure long if I now wanted to build further upon the stone foundation with canvass and with a new purpose in mind. So also the building of a man for

salvation must also be entirely consistent with the kind of foundation laid; if it is something spiritual, namely teaching and the divine truth, then the building will also be the same. It cannot be accomplished through our external works and deeds, our walk of life, no matter how Christian it may be, but rather this building must be an entirely right spiritual deed and work internally, thus a proper work of the spirit, created by the soul, namely: that one in the first place through the Holy Spirit genuinely recognizes and understands the divine truth and saving teaching concerning Christ, and then entirely abandons himself with sure confidence. Where that happens in the course of building, and the more a Christian is furthered in the clarity of his understanding concerning Christ and fortified in the certainty of his confidence in Christ, the more he is built up. So also, father Luther says in the aforementioned passage, Jude 1:20, "Building, however, is growing from day to day in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ."

However, under edifying preaching many mean something entirely different, namely this, that one touches the people's hearts, so one preaches heartrendingly and enthusiastically so that the people are stirred through that to tears and through this to higher delight. Now it is indeed true that pastors should be assistants to delight. And whoever would certainly be, speaks where he himself has tasted and experienced the divine truths of salvation through the grace of God in faith, and for that reason speaking with *Herzensruehrung* and being glad so that the heart of the hearer becomes full of joy.<sup>14</sup> However, with that alone nothing is built. What indeed would become of a not-yet-completed building if one invited the ones working on it to rejoice yet only at this stage concerning what has already been done and did not encourage them to work further? No, that one calls to build all things further: Increase further in knowledge, further in the

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<sup>14</sup> *Und wer waere wohl, der nicht, wo er die goettlichen Heilswahrheiten selber durch Gottes Gnade im Glauben geschmecht und erfahren hat, davon mit Herzensruehrung redete and froh waere, dass die Herzen der Hoerer voll Freude wuerden?*



certainty of faith. Whoever accomplishes that with his preaching is an edifying preacher and does the work of God as a fellow worker (1 Corinthians 3:9).

However, the aptness to teach now consists of two things. First, one must distinguish well in preaching what the dear God wants to have distinguished; one must divide what God wants to have divided. One must divide into two great parts: law and gospel. Scripture requires that. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:15: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Hereon Luther has also laid so much and thereupon he always penetrates further. He says, for example: “Therefore it is sorely need that these two words be distinguished correctly and well, since where that does not happen, neither the law nor the gospel can be understood and the conscience is ruined in blindness and error. For the law has its purpose as to how far it can go and what it should accomplish, namely to Christ, to terrify the unrepentant with the wrath and disfavor of God. Likewise, the gospel also has its own special office and work, to proclaim the forgiveness of sins to the troubled conscience. May both these teachings, therefore, be laid hold of without adulteration or commingling of own with the other. It skill is simple; it is easily said that the law is a different teaching than the gospel, but is toil and labor to practice the distinction and to put the skill to work.”

In another place, he teaches how great an amount of discretion and necessary wisdom is required for this, when he writes: “The others, however, who have already been humbled and are despondent (as Christ in that way calls them a small herd in Luke 12:32 and tells them they should not fear), although they are indeed weak and sin in various ways, they are not yet unrefined or callous. Toward these the preacher should be discerning and faithful so that he applies the right part to them and does not mingle it with foreign parts contrary to the pure

teaching, and so that, as long as they are terrified by the anger and judgment of God, he does not further terrify them, but comfort and lift them up. Such is great wisdom and especially necessary in the *Predigtamt*, namely, that one properly distinguishes between the two kinds of hearers, so that each can hear the word appropriate for him. To the obstinate and hardened, the terrifying examples of the wrath of God, however to the weak and timid, kind and loving comfort. For Christ has established some things for rising and some for falling (Luke 2:34)” (*Commentary on Genesis 19:1*).<sup>15</sup> One thus will want, as Luther has here indicated, to always correctly distinguish between law and gospel and in so doing to demonstrate proper concern, such as requires a righteousness fear and the sincere effort, which wants to make it so and nothing other. Whoever in the first place always employs the law in such a way that through it the sinner is driven to true, genuine purity of heart [*Herzensreine*], but then also in return employs the gospel in such a way that those terrified and destroyed by the law are comforted and lifted up through it, that pastor is by all means faithful in the *Predigtamt*.

It does not suffice, however, that one rightly divides law and gospel; one must chiefly divide each individual *Lehrstuecke* accurately. The word of our fathers applies: *Qui bene distinguit, bene docet*, that is, whoever distinguishes well, teaches well. Whoever does not distinguish the individual *Lehrstuecke* properly will always only complicate rather than teaching.

A pastor who wants to be apt to teach must thereupon further be careful that he first of all brings forth through his preaching what God wants to work and have brought forth through His Word. What is that now? According to Scripture it is first of all that the Word be useful for teaching. The hearer should learn and understand something from it. Knowledge is the first thing

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<sup>15</sup> The AE has translated this portion of Luther’s commentary on Genesis as follows: “This is great wisdom and is very necessary in the ministry. The two kinds of hearers should be properly distinguished, and everyone should hear the words that are intended for him—the obstinate, the awful examples of God’s wrath; but the fearful, the sweet words of comfort. For Christ is set for the rising of some and for the fall of others (cf. Luke 2:34).”<sup>15</sup>

which God wants to have accomplished through His Word and the preaching of it. We hear the venerable Zechariah boasting about his child: “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins” (Luke 1:76,77). Hence, John the Baptist should work the knowledge of salvation through his testimony and his preaching. Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 4 about what God had done for him. He says in verse 6: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” As the Scriptures often want to portray ignorance with darkness, so here knowledge is to be understood by enlightenment. Also the Apostle Paul had already requested and implored in many places in his letter that the dear God would give his reader knowledge. Namely, in the beginning of his letter he comes to that point. Thus we read in 1 Corinthians 1:4.5: “I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way-- in all your speaking and in all your knowledge.” Even the Savior Himself says in His High Priestly prayer in John 17:1: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” To give and create knowledge, that is the proper, very nearest task of a preacher. He wants to be careful, so he must ask himself in each individual sermon: “How can I apply this text so that thereby knowledge is worked in my hearers.”

But what now in particular is necessary in order to bring forth knowledge? The preacher must bring forth the individual *Lehrstuecke* clearly and to that end avail himself of well-defined, unmistakable speech. The sermon must first of all include pieces of teaching.<sup>16</sup> The Word is called living bread. A sermon must now be a compilation of pieces of bread. That is nothing if a half-hour is spent speaking and yet no pieces of bread are therein. What good does it do if

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<sup>16</sup> *Lehrstuecke muss zunaechst mal die Predigt enthalten.*

sermon also yet supplies a great outward noise and nevertheless includes nothing therein. If now a sermon is really full of kernels and productive pieces, still these individual pieces must be clear, not misty. Mist always only conceals. Whoever travels through mist will never obtain a clear of the surroundings. He has indeed seen this or that, but he has not had a clear, whole view. Likewise it goes for the hearer, if he does not get to hear clear preaching. One such sermon, however, in which clarity and articulateness is not lacking, is not accomplished in a few minutes. The same requires faithfulness and sincere work, continuous study. And that is the most holy task of a preacher. And if a pastor is not faithful in his sermon making, in the highest work of his vocation [*Berufswerk*], how can he then still have a good conscience concerning his hearers?

The definitions and explanations in the sermon must be distinguished sharply, indicated and defined precisely. “That is repentance, that is faith, that is sanctification,” thus it must be explained. If that does not happen, if the matters are not made plain and clear, how can the hearer accordingly have a clear conception? In battle the signal is given; it must always be clear, otherwise it is of no avail. It can accordingly not then give any direction.<sup>17</sup> We Christians are also soldiers. Our entire life is a constant struggle with natural reason, which is continually making itself ready. We must always be at loggerheads with it and at the same time with the devil, the world, and the flesh. If now a preacher preaches to us a teaching clearly, so he in so doing gives to us a clear signal, and tells us by it how and where we have to stand and assault in the battle which is prescribed for us. But such instruction is lacking and nothing will go right with the battle where clear teaching is lacking. The apostle asks accordingly also in 1 Corinthians 14:7: “Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?”

It also belongs to clarity that one defines the matter sufficiently. The truth lies herein; what exceeds that, that is untruths and lies. For that reason it also belongs to clarity that one not

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<sup>17</sup> *Es kann sich doch keiner darnach richten.*

only sets forth the pure teaching, but also exposes the false teaching and contradicts the sects and enthusiasts. That makes the matter still clearer and from the outset establishes the definitions correctly.

Luther says in observation hereupon: As a *Pfarrherrn* and *Prediger* it is not enough that he be certain of his teaching, and accomplish the same office faithfully, unconcerned<sup>18</sup> what will hinder him, poverty, contempt, ingratitude, and all kinds of opposition; but it also belongs to that that he can meet the devil, to struggle against error and false teaching (how important it is to gird the Christians properly against the errorists), so that he can resist a false spirit correctly; such equipping is not possible without careful study for the sermon (there a few off the cuff sorties do not suffice), as St. Paul says in Titus 1:9. Both parts are required: that a bishop should not merely be so skillful that he holds he is capable on account of the Word both to teach and to admonish, but also that he be able through the same medicative teaching to chastise the dissenters and to stop the mouth of idle talk. (Ephesians 6:10ff.)<sup>19</sup>

As it is not sufficient merely for a *Pfarrherrn* and preacher's doctrine to be certain and for him to dispense the aforementioned office faithfully irrespective of what will hinder him, whether it be poverty, scorn, ingratitude, and all sorts of opposition; it also necessary that he can meet the devil, error, and false teaching head on (as it is essential that he genuinely, correctly arms the Christians against the errorists) so that his people can properly strive against a false

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<sup>18</sup> unangesehen

<sup>19</sup> "Als einem *Pfarrherrn* und *Prediger* ist es nicht genug, dass er seiner Lehre gewiss sei, und dasselbe Amt treulich ausrichte, unangesehen, was ihn hindern will, Armuth, Verachtung, Undank und allerlei Widerstand; sondern gehoert auch dazu, dass er koenne dem Teufel begegnen, Irrthum und falsche Lehre widerlegen (wie wichtig ist es, die Christen wirklich gegen die Irrthuemer recht zu ruesten), dass sie einen falschen Geist recht koenen widerstehen; solch ausrueten ist ohne tuechtiges Studium der Predigt nicht moeglich, (da genuegen etliche Ausfaelle aus dem Stegrief nicht), wie St. Paulus Titus 1:9. Die beiden Stuecke fordert: Dass ein Bischof soll nicht allein so geschickt sein, dass er halte ob dem Wort, das gewiss is, beide zu lehren und zu ermahnen, sondern auch maechtig sei, durch dieselbige heilsame Lehre zu strafen die Widersprecher, und den unnuetzen Waeschern das Maul zu stopfen." (Zu Ephesians 6: 10 ff.)

spirit; such arming is not possible without thorough study for the sermon (there a few extemporaneous issuances will not suffice), as St. Paul says in Titus 1:9. Both the parts require that a bishop should not only be so adept that he holds on account of the Word what is certain both to teach and to admonish, but also be intent with that same salutary teaching to reprove those who contradict it and stop the good-for-nothing mouth with wash<sup>20</sup>” (Commentary on Ephesians 6:10ff.).

Dealing with false teaching in the sermon belongs to pastoral care. However, in relation to that there is still something else to observe. There are preachers who have too much love for polemics, in return there are others who have too little care for it. There are preachers who do almost nothing else in their preaching than always and only carry on polemics, that is, they deal with and strive against the false teachings of the sects and those of other faiths. Although a good thing, they get carried away with it too much.<sup>21</sup> In former times, when theological disputations were the order of the day and stood so rightly in blossom, preachers had the habit of making a remark in passing regarding their concepts of theology: “This point is disputed.” And now rather than just having further sketched what they perhaps wanted to say, they often employed a half hour with that, to carry out polemics. It is of course also easier to carry out polemics for a half-hour than to preach blissfully and joyfully about faith for two minutes. Excessive polemics at times simply betrays one’s ignorance. It only lightly covers the [sermon’s] poverty in the presentation of the truth and digging into the depths, in really edifying preaching.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Sondern auch maechtig sei, durch dieselbige heilsame Lehre zu strafen die Widersprecher, und den unnuetzen Waeschern das Maul zu stoepfen.*

<sup>21</sup> *Die machen allerdings des Guten zu viel davon.*

<sup>22</sup> *Als einem Pfarrherrn und Prediger ist es nicht genug, dass er seiner Lehre gewiss sei, und dasselbe Amt treulich ausrichte, unangesehen, was ihn hindern will, Armuth, Verachtung, Undank und allerlei Widerstand; sondern gehoert auch dazu, dass er koenne dem Teufel begegnen, Irrthum und falsche Lehre widerlegen (wie wichtig ist es, die Christen wirklich gegen die Irrthuemer recht zu ruesten), dass sie einen falschen Geist recht koenen widerstehen; solch ausrueten ist ohne tuechtiges Studium der Predigt nicht moeglich, (da genuegen etliche Ausfaelle aus dem Stegrief nicht), wie St. Paulus Titus 1:9. Die beiden Stuecke fordert: Dass ein Bischof soll nicht*

A necessary lesson for a faithful preacher is also this, that he rebukes sins and exposes the particular wrongdoings of the congregation. But he should exercise caution in this. It is easy to rebuke sins, to teach morals. Nature and its inclinations come to help us with it. That is now not the case when it comes to preaching the faith. To preach about that [faith] in a way that gives one's hearers understanding and makes them certain, that is difficult. The exposure of foul teaching of error and wicked living must always take place with the proper measure. The chief thing is and still remains the positive explanation of that which saves.

Others do too little in polemics. They shy away from it with all sorts of discretion. They perhaps do not want to offend those who have relatives in the sects.<sup>23</sup> The people also say now and then that instructive preaching [*Lehrpredigten*] is uninteresting, and therefore one casts it off permanently. Indeed, many inform the pastor point-blank that they desire him to discontinue polemics. If they let themselves be persuaded by such considerations, it is entirely wrong.<sup>24</sup> We have in civil life the authorities and police who, for example, have to care for the good ways, order, and the like. Would we now ever indeed say to them: "Do all this, that is, that they exercise that which is beneficial for us burghers; but this, that they expose any wicked, dangerous scoundrels and incarcerate them, that do not do."<sup>25</sup> Most certainly not, but rather we would say: "You do right in so doing, assessing and unearthing dangerous men." It is the same with regard to a pastor. Through explanation of the correct teaching he helps others to faith. In addition to that, however, he has a spiritual policing to carry out, that he should keep tabs on the sectarians and make them known, in that way being able to guard the souls entrusted to him from

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*allein so geschickt sein, dass er halte ob dem Wort, das gewiss is, beide zu lehren und zu ermahnen, sondern auch maechtig sei, durch dieselbige heilsame Lehre zu strafen die Widersprecher, und den unnuetzen Waeschern das Maul zu stopfen." (Zu Ephesians 6:10 ff.)*

<sup>23</sup> *Sie wollen diejenigen, welche etwa Verwandte un er den Sekten haben, nicht verletzen.*

<sup>24</sup> *Sich von solchen Ruecksichten bestimmen lassen, ist ganz verkehrt.*

<sup>25</sup> *"Das alles thut, so uebt ihr das aus, was uns Buergern nuetzlich ist; dies aber, dass ihr irgend einem schlechten, gefaehrlichen Kerl nachspuert und ihn einsteckt, das thut doch nicht?"*

them. That is truly a capable, pious pastor, who understands how to make the way of the enthusiasts and sectarians repulsive to his hearers, at the same time taking the offensive against it with the Word of God and laying bare its horrible, soul wrecking venom. But that should indeed take all the members of the congregation into consideration. The way of God should be entirely clear to them if their pastor does not abandon polemics and is faithful in exposing both the destructive teaching and the evil life.

The clarity in the first place refers to the individual parts. But the entire sermon also, however, must exhibit a clear connection. A preacher is not allowed to come from hundreds into thousands. The Word of God always has a connection, even though it may often be difficult or perhaps we cannot find it. The Word of God is a lovely, flowing melody; it is not bare, individual notes loosely strung together with each other. There is preaching from which one cannot tell what is played on the harp or whistled, in which one cannot perceive any connected melody (1 Corinthians 14:7). That shortcoming is only ever able to be avoided when one prepares and studies carefully. Luther articulates the following on that issue: "When I have that (what I should preach), then I should now care how it will be received by others from me, that so that I consider how I may explain it to them as practically as possible, how I may teach the ignorant, how I may admonish and urge on those who know it; how I may make the troubled conscience stout with appropriate comfort and awaken the careless, sleeping heart, and so hereafter, as St. Paul has done (1 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 4; Titus 3), and command his disciples Timothy and Titus also to do the same. That should be my concern, namely, how others will lay hold of it from me; now then I should study and pray to God. My work is to study, the work he wants that I should do, and if it pleases Him, so He will grant it" (XIV, 305. Ev. 15 p. Trin.).



And in another place he says: “Therefore it means be awake to study, *attende lectioni*. In truth, you can not read Scripture too much, and what you do read you, cannot read too well, and what you read well, you cannot understand too well, and what you understand well, you cannot teach too well...<sup>26</sup> Therefore, dear lords and brothers, pastors and preachers, pray, read, study, be diligent, truly it is not time for procrastinating, snoring, and sleeping” (XXII Anfang 133ff.). Let us heed it well when Luther here says: “you cannot learn too well.” New concern is also indeed always necessary in this part.

Clarity in connection with one’s purpose also belongs to the ability to teach. Our pericope has an overarching, determined aim, upon which it progresses. Luther calls that the armor of the gospel or the epistle. Clarity requires that this is brought to bear with authority, or settles the matter, in the sermon. In rationalistic times, preachers have not understood this. They indeed wanted to make the text useful, and that was correct; for the message of the text surely should be useful. However, how absurd and silly they make it! In the Christmas gospel lesson one preaches about the usefulness of stall fodder, since the word stall appears in that text. So this blind fool considers that God in that Christmas gospel wants to instruct men on that topic. And since he finds the passage in the Easter gospel: “And they came to the grave very early on a Sabbath, when the sun came up,” he preaches another about the benefit of rising early. One in that day called that preaching practically. We need not say much about that, since these people have no idea about what the purpose our aim of the pericope may be.

The present day is indeed not lacking in even cruder methods. Indeed it still happens that preachers do not do justice to their assignment and in so doing do not bring the aim which the Word of God intends to fulfillment. If, for example, the goal is repentance, so one should also

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<sup>26</sup> This must have been one of Hoenecke’s favorite passages because he also quoted this in a Reformation sermon I recently translated.

preach repentance, if the Word teaches about faith, so one should teach about faith. It is not a rare occurrence that one simply lays aside the great heap of faith-nourishment which lies in the text and in opposition to it brings forth a pet theme and seeks to hang on to what is only a little word from the text. Such preachers, who have no aim in their preaching, are completely unqualified to teach. The best preacher is the one about whom it can be said: He has spoken thus. If, however, even attentive hearers do not know after the sermon what essentially has been said, then it is arranged badly for one has certainly allowed it to go without the necessary care.

Father Luther explains this point wonderfully. He says in his *Tischreden*: “And by all means do not judge according to others, to imitate and follow them, you cannot attain mine or another’s preaching word for word; but first lay hold of it shortly and simply, whereupon the entire matter and preaching stands, and thereafter entrust it to the Lord God...A preacher should remain by the proposition and carry out what He intends so that one understands the same well. The aforementioned preacher who wants to speak of whatever pops into his head reminds me of the maid who goes to the market: if she encounters another maid, so she holds a *Taschenmarkt* or *Staenderling* with her, if they then encounter yet another maid, so they hold with her a conversation as well; likewise they do with the third and fourth as well, and thus slowly make their way to the market...The best preacher is the one about whom one can say what he has said when he has heard him...I always take pains in my preaching that I apply a passage to myself, thereby I remain; and since I also inform the people of it and smooth it out for them, they can say: ‘That has been the sermon’; that is, I remain *in statu*, only upon the article, chief point, and material alone, in this way I have undertook speaking.”

The Word, however, does not alone belong to the Means of Grace, but also the sacraments: baptism and the Lord’s Supper respectively. As one now should show pastoral care

in the administration of the former, so also they should also prove in the use of the latter. That is now to be sure again a further prayer, almost more so than concerning preaching. We cannot possibly carefully consider the details of everything, but we should yet still touch upon some things.

baptism and its administration in keeping with its intention belongs as one of the chief concerns involved in pastoral care, so that it is administered in keeping with its institution in Scripture and the practice of the Church, but it is not necessary to handle here that a preacher takes care that baptism—which is indeed a marvelous Means of Grace and a venerable, great gift of God, still now also valuable for the Church—is regarded as great and holy. Whoever allows himself to fail in this area is unfaithful.

Now this is a part of pastoral care, that a preacher takes care that parents bring their children to Holy baptism promptly as they should. A mother, who really loves her newborn child, will thus not say: I yet want to wait a few days before I nourish him. As soon as the child requires nourishment and it is appropriate for him, she lays him on her breast and does not refuse him milk. Were she not to do that when it was necessary, one would deem it repulsive and unmerciful. Yet it is more repulsive and unnecessary when one withholds baptism from the child. It is still even more necessary for the child, yes indeed more necessary than mother's milk. For us men there is already joy when a child is born into the world. But there is yet only flesh born from flesh, that is, it is born into the kingdom of Satan, a poor, lost, sinful child of Man. If it is going to be saved and brought into the kingdom of God, thus it must be born again of water and the Spirit, that is, in Holy baptism (John 3:5,6). How much more reasonable it is for there to be great joy when that child is now also born again spiritually through baptism. Indeed, before the child is baptized, it must be all the more dear to us. It is therefore a shameful misuse that one often

delays weeks in regard to the baptism of a child. One knows how to freely quote all sorts of reasons for that. One says: The mother is not yet well enough in order to be able to make preparations for the baptism party. Such and similar reasons are however meaningless manners. God has not instituted baptism for the sake of baptism parties.

A further part of pastoral care according to the intention of baptism is that a pastor sees that all who are baptized also receive proper, beneficial godparents. Unfortunately, that does not always happen. Often one takes a child who has just been confirmed, and that not too long ago, in whom the proper conviction is yet lacking. The sponsors in the past used to be called *compatres*, that is, co-fathers, who should help with the rearing of the baptized child.<sup>27</sup> A young Samuel of 16 years may already be ready, however that is not yet the standard. But one should not deal with the heterodox in any things. At our baptismal font belongs only such who are one with us in faith, about whom there is no doubt that they will raise the child in our faith, since they themselves regard it as the true one. Therefore, even if we consider one of our relatives or good friends, to whom we could and want to do an honor, yet we should still not let them serve as godparents so long as they are not of our faith. The kingdom of Christ and of God is not of this world. Earthly relations have nothing to do with it.

Further it belongs to pastoral care that a pastor sees to it that the baptism party proceeds in a dignified way. Not each baptismal celebration is to be by all means repudiated. However, if in surprising quantity kegs of beer are rushed to the scene, if immoderate drinking takes place and worldly amusement in the form of dancing and playing deep into the night, indeed that is shameful. In that case one must not marvel if the sects and enthusiasts shake their heads and dwell on such grave excess.

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<sup>27</sup> Oft nimmt man dazu Kinder, die eben erst confirmirt and kaum reif dazu sind, denen es noch an dem rechten Ernst fehlt. Die Pathen wurden frueher *compatres*, d.i. *Mitvaeter* genannt, die die getauften Kinder mit erziehen helfen sollten.

Finally the care of a pastor must also be directed therein so that the parents, when the child grows up, send him to a Christians school, in that way to be reared in a Christian way and to also learn especially what they have in their baptism. To this end, all Christian parents must help to the best of their abilities to build and support Christian schools. The earthly means, which we must here accordingly offer, we do not want to eschew. God will reciprocate it a thousand fold. How, if we indeed want to love our children and see them happy for all eternity, would we then send them to a place where they are yet only poisoned in their souls. It is indeed a lie when it is said that this does not really happen in all public schools. By all means they are inculcated with earthly wisdom there. On this side of the matter many things may well lie. However, there is already an evil running concurrently under that. For what is the incentive in this all? Honor-seeking vanity is most of all the secret of the education in the public school. Each one who has made close inspections knows that. The most shameful thing of all, however, is yet this, that the children in the public schools are brought up without Christ. Jesus Christ, the help of every poor sinner, the Savior, the one who brings salvation, has no place in the public schools. That is also what should be placed upon the conscience of the parents who do not want to allow themselves to be disturbed about sending their children to the public schools and what they should be guided by from God because of conscience.<sup>28</sup> Such parents commonly want to present their behavior in this area as proper and blameless by saying: They will not learn any evil, any unchristian things in the public schools; they will not even say anything against Christ. Supposing that this is the case, the parents must then still concede that nevertheless they will still not say anything at all about Christ in the public schools. And so the most important work for the children, namely their education, will take place for a whole multitude of years, five days in each week and five to six

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<sup>28</sup> *Das ist es auch, was den Eltern, die sich nicht abhalten lassen wollen, ihre Kinder in die public schools zu schicken, ins Gewissen geschoben werden muss, und was sie sich von Gottes wegen zu Gewissen fuhren sollen.*

hours in a day, completely without Christ. The main reason for education is not there: Raise them up in training and admonition to the Lord. Rather, they will raise them so that they lose sight of the Lord. For indeed that cannot fail to happen, even if it is not expressly and deliberately said to the children in the public school: I absolutely do not need any Christ. It is said just by the fact that they educate them without mention of Christ there. It would indeed be a wonder were it not so. It is ever so difficult always to be of the same mind as Christ so that one thinks: I absolutely, necessarily need Jesus Christ; I cannot do without Him; I must always have Him. In that way the Apostle Paul admonishes blessed Timothy: Remember Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:8). And Christ Himself admonished the pious Martha that she had forgotten that the important thing is to have Him Himself, the Lord, and called out in the course: One thing is needful! And so also the children, who now in the public schools are taught so that they regard that “one thing needful” incorrectly, consequently dispensing with Jesus Christ and learning to regard Him as dispensable, should be continually taught in the course of their schooling that they truly never forget it: One thing is needful! and indeed always learn better what is so difficult, namely, to hold the dear Savior in their heart as entirely indispensable. That is the way of destruction. What will the parents yet reply when their children one day accuse them concerning their younger days, saying: You are guilty of the fact that we went astray, because they have neglected and allowed them to miss a Christian education. Our children should in general not attend the public schools. A pastor, if he wants to be faithful, should therefore with all friendliness but also with all earnestness bear witness against the *Unsitte* [*Sitte=custom*], so that one instead sends the children to the Christian day school. Paul says to Titus: “And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good” (Titus 3:8). Not least among the good works is the Christian education of children. As the Father

in heaven treats us, so also we want to deal with the fathers in our congregations and remind them with all diligence and kindness again and again of this Christian duty of theirs.

If a pastor wants to prove faithful in the *Predigtamt*, he must also administer the Lord's Supper with care. And we also leave out of our consideration at this time that the pastor should himself administer the Lord's Supper with care in keeping with the institution of Scripture and the practice of the Lutheran Church. We rather focus our attention upon three parts in connection with the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Here is the first part, that the proper pastoral concern must be shown so that a pastor oversees who is entitled to the Lord's Supper, who are the members who can and are allowed to go to it, and then the ones who, although they do not belong as members to the congregation, still are permitted for the time. This watchman must with diligence first direct his attention toward all those entitled to the Lord's Supper. They should indeed make faithful use of the Lord's Supper. How often should one go? That should not be discussed here. Already it indeed stands firmly established that people are in general inexpressibly careless and lethargic in consuming the Holy Supper multiple times. By a failure to exercise pastoral care it can come to pass in a large congregation that some do not go to communion for an entire year. Therefore it is valuable to apply care so that no member remains far from the table of grace and pays attention to it belatedly, and to admonish them earnestly so that they no longer abstain from the blessed Supper. A pastor must act concerning this from God. Surely it is a difficult lesson. Who does not know that? But it still must be said that God requires this from a pastor. It belongs to pastoral care; in that way the pastor should show his faithfulness.

Further there belongs to proper overseeing that one has regard for whether the dear members of the congregation also have real fruit from the Lord's Supper. Now the inner fruit is

the chief thing: comfort and peace over against sin; and we admittedly cannot see that. However, there are still many kinds of things through which one can observe whether a Christian enjoys the Supper with fruit. It stands out first in weak walking and living, and it remains later on still unchanged, so that the fruit from the Lord's Supper, which nevertheless should be noticeable, is by all means not observed. And that is bad. If anything aids some in eventually falling away, it is the unfaithful, lighthearted, thoughtless use of the Lord's Supper. It is an appalling *Geringachtung* of the *Vatertreue* of God, to make certain of eternal life. Accordingly preaching is already a dear means of grace. Now God has to that end also given the Lord' Supper, in order to make the beloved promises of the gospel more certain than ever. Whoever goes to the Lord's Supper, receives the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, given and shed upon Golgotha for our sins. That is certainly something inexpressibly high and blessed. How must these allow them to forget the general times and hours, how is that yet applied in order to move them to consider, already before and during the use, but also still long afterward, the goodness and grace of their God in humble prayer and quiet consideration and to put this into practice in their behavior.<sup>29</sup> Whoever now only relishes the Lord's Supper as if he receives a rock, or as he otherwise approaches a table, he is thus already a truly hardened man. And indeed the more a Christian becomes accustomed to making use of the Lord's Supper so disgracefully and unworthily, the more he hardens himself and makes himself numb and desensitized toward the most gracious allurements of God. That indeed properly means to seal his destruction. Yet a pastor, a shepherd must take pity on such sheep who are running into destruction. It is surely difficult to do his duty in this regard and to handle one such lighthearted Lord's Supper guest. However, one must

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<sup>29</sup> *Wie muss ihm doch dies etlichermassen die gewöhnlichen Zeiten und Stunden vergessen lassen, wie ist doch das alles dazu angethan, ihn zu bewegen, schon vorher und während des Genusses und noch lange nachher der Güte und Gneade seines Gottes in demüthiger Anbetung und in stiller Betrachtung zu gedenken und ihn in seinem ganzen Verhalten zu bestimmen?*



nevertheless still attempt it. They deal in this way for the sake of the eternal damnation or salvation of a precious soul acquired through Christ.

Furthermore, the care of a pastor must be directed so that only such who really have been authorized to go are allowed to go to the Lord's Supper. This is certain: whoever is not of our faith should also not go to the Lord's Supper with us. Lutheran Lord's Supper for Lutheran Christians. One should, however, also not receive the people upon the bare expression: I am a Lutheran. Here is a time when pastoral care is especially required. This happens, for example, at the time of confirmation. There indeed the parents also tend to go to Communion with the children. Among the confirmands may be such children whose parents do not belong to the congregation. These now also want to commune with their children once. If they have previously shown that they hold to the Word of God and Church, if they have up until now diligently attended the divine service, then one can admit them in circumstances. Have such parents, however, up until then lived worldly lives? Then one should indeed be cautious with admitting them. If one cannot see that they have a real earnestness and that they want to better themselves from now on, then do not let them go there. With frivolous admission here by such people and others one can do unending damage. If such people go without good intention<sup>30</sup> to the Lord's Supper since their child is found among the number of the confirmands, then they will yet enjoy it only for judgment. However, what a nuisance will one who takes this seriously create in the congregation?<sup>31</sup> And what will they perhaps say in the congregation, where one must practice discipline and rebuff them because of their frivolity?

We want to include still one more thing concerning the confession, which indeed is associated with preceding the Lord's Supper. That is indeed not a Means of Grace founded by

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<sup>30</sup> *blos*

<sup>31</sup> *Welch Aergerniss wird man aber nicht erst denen geben in der Gemeinde, die es ernst nehmen?*

God, but still should be retained at all events as a salutary, churchly<sup>32</sup> arrangement. These three points should thereby be touched upon.

What first of all concerns the announcement for confession is that a pastor should see to it that so far as is possible the same takes place personally.<sup>33</sup> That is an important thing, a blessed part of the office of a pastor. Therefore, he should regard it in a truly evangelical way so that the personal announcement may be and remain in gestation.<sup>34</sup>

A further point is the handling of the announcement itself. It is indeed a precious opportunity having been given by God to speak brotherly with each one at a time. One should in that way not let it change so that one simply registers only in the church book, but rather so that one speaks a good word together with them. A large congregation where many go to communion surely makes this difficult for the pastor who will oftentimes not permit it enough time. Nevertheless, one indeed still does not omit it also herein to show faithfulness and pastoral care.<sup>35</sup>

Still a third part should also be brought forth. That concerns the preparation of the pastor himself for the holding of the confession. It is difficult to hold a good confessional address<sup>36</sup> so that one really exposes the sins and fills the sinner with terror, anxiety, and distress concerning their sin with which he has offended and angered God and thereby still also lift him up again with the comfort of the gospel. Whoever wants to be the ambassador of God in that way should indeed thus prepare himself carefully in regard to his confession address.

The question: Whether man and wife should both come to announce for Communion together would be answered in this way: It is certainly beautiful when it happens. It is properly a

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<sup>32</sup> kirchliche

<sup>33</sup> *so soll der Pastor darauf sehen, dass dieselbe so weit als moeglich persoendlich geschehe.*

<sup>34</sup> *im Schwange*

<sup>35</sup> *Aber man unterlasse es doch ja nicht, auch hierin Treue und Sorgfalt zu beweisen.*

<sup>36</sup> *Beichtrede*

matter of the heart that they both come together. Such already long for the good counsel, which they are able to receive from a faithful pastor.<sup>37</sup> A good counsel by which to deal with it for the sake of eternal life is still something very valuable for such souls. –Many families surely allow themselves only to register school children through it.<sup>38</sup> That is not beautiful and worthy. At all events it is better, more seemly, and more beneficial if they each announce themselves. It cannot be placed upon someone as an absolute necessity for salvation that he announce himself.

However, worst of all, whoever would want to refuse to do it without foundation or need would be behaving in an unchristian and godless way. One such person denies the proper Christian sense and it may be good also to proceed to refuse him the Lord's Supper. One should receive the confession announcement<sup>39</sup> uprightly, lest they fall into decadence.<sup>40</sup> If one thereby only goes in the right evangelical way to the work, then one will also accomplish much, without running up against opposition.<sup>41</sup>

It should still be noted from the other side that the entire confession announcement should not therein consist of one saying hello and goodbye. And if one has recourse to do that, one should not wait until the announcement. It is much more advantageous if one settles such matters beforehand. Certainly, one would answer thereupon that [the pastor] should not put off the chastisement of the members of the congregation until they have at sometime reported to confession, but rather admonish and chastise them outside of confession as is indeed according to instructions of the Word of God to practice brotherly admonition and church discipline.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Solche verlangt schon nach dem guten Rath, der ihnen dabei von einem treuen Pastor werden kann.*

<sup>38</sup> *Manche Familie laesst sich freilich nur durchs Schulkind anmelden.*

<sup>39</sup> *Beichtanmeldung*

<sup>40</sup> *sie nicht in Verfall geraten lassen*

<sup>41</sup> *Man gehe nur in recht evangelischer Weise dabei zu Werke, so wird man auch vieles ausrichten, ohne auf Widerstand zu stossen.*

<sup>42</sup> *Kirchenzucht*

We come now to the things that are not at all expressly instituted by God, for example, confirmation, marriage and burial ceremonies. Marriage is indeed instituted by God, but not the handling of the ceremony. So also the burial is not divinely instituted, so far as the form is concerned. There is however a way which alone is right before God for the handling.

What first of all concerns confirmation is pastoral care in confirmation instruction. A pastor should not consider: There I will be able to speak yet three or four hours, beyond that I will not especially prepare myself thereupon. It has been said: "For the children, the best." Much truth lies in that statement. It is difficult to truly speak for the edification of the children. One should indeed not simply preach in confirmation class. Through questions and answers the children should be encouraged in knowledge. Many insufficient answers have only been engendered through insufficient questions. Luther says: Let the question always be practical, clear, distinct; remain always by those same words. One should not seek to come to the foundation of the matters through constant furthering of questions and ever changing forms of the same. In that way one will indeed not only accomplish nothing, but will also waste a lot of precious time. Let one also lay out his instruction thoroughly. If one does not lay out the lesson in an orderly fashion—not blow following upon blow—then the entire class is remiss; the freshness and liveliness which the children will seriously put into the necessary attention for that day is already lost for that pastor. It is unfortunately true that so many confirmed children go astray from the church. That is certainly in a large part due to the parent's household, where soon every seed of the Word of God is again stifled in the heart of the child through the wicked example and model. But perhaps it oftentimes also lies upon the poor and deficient instruction that they received for confirmation.

Further care must be practiced in reference to admission to confirmation. If the child has been first admitted to confirmation, he will indeed later also go to the Lord's Supper. If, however, they may still be immature, if they still cannot yet prove themselves, how would one then want to answer<sup>43</sup> for that? Parents, who have wanted to have children that are as of yet too young and not yet capable by all means confirmed, and have urged the pastor likewise to that end have done nothing good in so doing. Many have themselves later admitted that this was entirely convoluted on their part and that it would have been better for their children if they had heeded the advice of their *Seelesorge* and further delayed the confirmation.

The third is the fostering of confirmation. An important part in this is Christian teaching. A pastor should view it as a sacred duty to himself hold to the Christian teaching and also with all diligence work to the end that the confirmed children will regard the same as a call. A pastor, who has served a large congregation or otherwise must preach out of town on the same day, cannot always serve well always to personally oversee the same. Where, however, no foundation is laid for God, he must himself hold the Christian teaching. Whoever does not do that makes himself guilty of a grievous sin and is certainly unfaithful.

We come now to the marriage ceremony. Thereby it is necessary first of all to pay attention to the engagement. This action itself is indeed that which marriage really instituted after all. And so it has always been viewed by our theologians. When, however, it is understood and viewed frivolously in our times, so is the engagement. Today one meets another and it is thus celebrated as something like an engagement. After four weeks it has already been in return elsewhere entered into and in this way it finally comes to marriage. There one cannot not be surprised if they after four weeks again separate from each other. The disparagement and contempt of engagement is without doubt to a great extent the cause of the frightful condition in

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<sup>43</sup> *take responsibility for*

reference to divorce in our time. A faithful pastor will therefore always take care in this way so that those who want to be married by him have entered into a proper, God-pleasing engagement.

Before all things he should not marry those who cannot be engaged in the proper manner. One speaks now mockingly about a divorce.<sup>44</sup> And one is acting terribly in so doing. Divorces are indeed in large quantities in our day. And upon what grounds will they here be divorced? The Word of God knows barely a reason: established adultery, really malicious desertion. That the man is wild, that he deals with his wife poorly is not grounds for divorce before God. That a wife is extravagant is also not. She indeed makes a cross for the husband in so doing, as the evil man makes a cross for the wife. A pastor should therefore be careful that he does not marry in frivolous ways such people who have been divorced for such invalid reasons and now want to be again married to another. Let him inform himself sufficiently in that matter as to whether he can marry a couple according to the divine law. That one can produce a divorce certificate from a worldly court is not alone sufficient.

Pastoral care also shows itself further in the religious observance of the wedding ceremony. This should take place with the use of the divine Word. One asks sometimes merely according to the legal impediments. If they are not present, then one may carry out the ceremony cheerfully. That is not what is meant by practicing pastoral care and showing faithfulness. If one has godless people before him, to whom Christianity is otherwise comical, and they desire the wedding ceremony, then one should not serve them and bring them before the altar of God. That would be an abuse tantamount to throwing the pearls before pigs. Such people indeed have only wanted to make use of the church in order to have some more pomp by means of the wedding ceremony. A pastor can, to be sure, also in circumstances marry such who are not members of

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<sup>44</sup> *Scheidensmuehle*

the congregation, only he should not make it a habit to marry everyone who comes running his way.

To pastoral care also belongs concern for the celebration following the wedding ceremony. The way in which the many weddings are celebrated is indeed abjectly reprehensible. One in that way gives the greatest nuisance. For many people would still nevertheless rather consider whether they should have one kind of drink for all fourteen days than how to conduct the nuptial celebrations.<sup>45</sup> However, the wedding celebration should be done properly. For what is peculiar to holy matrimony that the entrance into it justifies such rowdiness. As little as such rowdiness otherwise behooves the Christian, so also it behooves him at the wedding celebration.<sup>46</sup> A faithful pastor will always bear witness against it and when he does it only in a proper evangelical manner he will bestow much good.

The last public action whereby a pastor should show a pastoral care is the funeral. Here the pastoral care shows itself first of all in conscientiousness in reference to consenting to funerals. A real pastor should not bury each and every person. He must let himself be guided by the Word of the Savior: "Let the dead bury their own dead," that is, let the unbelieving dead be buried by the unbelieving.<sup>47</sup> That belongs to the pastoral care of a pastor, that he does not conduct a funeral where it involves people who as long as they were alive did not want to bother themselves with the Word of God. If he does bury them, what then may he really expect when he preaches to his Christians: O how important it then is that one prepares himself for the end, etc.

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<sup>45</sup> *Manche Leute wuerden sich denn doch noch bedenken, wenn sie alle vierzehn Tage eine solche Trinkerei wie bei einer Hochzeitsfeier anstellen sollten.*

<sup>46</sup> *Aber bei Hochzeiten soll's nun einmal recht sein. Aber, was ist denn an dem heiligen Ehestand der Art, dass der Eintritt in denselben solch Unwesen rechtfertigen. So wenig es sich sonst der Christen geziemt, so wenig auch bei einer Hochzeitsfeier.*

<sup>47</sup> *Lass die unglaeubig Gestorben getrost von den Unglaeubigen begraben werden.*

How should the hearers regard such a sermon if the pastor allows a man who never prepared himself for the end to nevertheless receive a Christian burial.

It further belongs to pastoral care that a pastor of truthfulness serves for the promulgation of the Word. It is said: One does not preach for the dead. Certainly not. But nevertheless [one does preach] about<sup>48</sup> the dead. Were he a Christian, then one should also not keep that silent. One should surely not unduly extol the separation here and out of a humble Christian life make an exercise of *Gottseligkeit*, but rather one should constantly remain by the truth. Hereby it proves itself to be correct that a faithful pastor cannot bury a godless and unbelieving person. If he does not want to be found to be unfaithful, so he will not be able to dismiss these matters, in order to be truthful. In that way, however, one may certainly be poorly received in the rarest cases. If he would say that before the ones desiring the funeral they would certainly not desire his services. There would also certainly not have been any more unbelief produced if he had at once given honor to the truth in such cases and not denied the truth in a recreant manner.

Finally the faithfulness should make itself evident in attending at the funeral. One has there the excellent opportunity to bring forth a good word. At such an opportunity the people are earnestly tuned in and the Word of God often finds much sooner entrance into the heart there. Let one also faithfully prepare himself for funeral sermons.

*This thesis is reviewed before the second thesis in the subsequent conference lecture. I will be translating that portion in the future.*

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<sup>48</sup> ueber



*The Third Thesis: Faithfulness in the Predigtamt can only be proven for the sake of its seriousness through this, namely that the preacher is made proficient for it by God and is strengthened constantly through the comfort which God gives.*

The preacher must be made proficient. The office is to be established seriously in a careful way which is demanded. We ask the question that Paul did in 2 Corinthians 2:16: “And who is proficient for this [task of the Predigtamt]?”

It is certainly not he who believes that he is able to be proficient on his own, or who thinks he can make himself proficient. It is chiefly not him for this very reason: because he who believes himself to be proficient or who thinks he can make himself proficient is full of vanity and pride. These are not the people with whom God wants to accomplish something. For he says in 2 Corinthians 12:59: “My power is made powerful in weakness.” In addition these people, who are full of conceit and self-assertion on their own and full of confidence in their own proficiency, are already for this very reason not proficient because they do not carry out the chief thing, they do not bear it, tolerate it, or allow themselves to be burdened by it. How quickly the patience is gone of he who thinks that he is proficient and that he must accomplish something. How little such a one understands for himself that which was in part begun with the practice of Paul and which Paul hinted at in Colossians 1:24: “Now I rejoice in my suffering that I suffered for you, and fill up in my flesh, what still lacks in regard to the affliction of Christ for his body, which is the church.” What I mean is this: in the care for souls, in the leading of the congregation to their ideal, a pastor must prove himself faithful, in order to achieve what God wants. That goal one ought never let fall from before his eyes. How a pastor must often be concerned with the smallest thing of all. What they often perceive lightly, he must take seriously. Where they apply themselves a little with spiritual care, he must apply with his whole heart. With many conscience pangs and notes one must often train the people, so that Christ

might take shape in them, so that the congregation might begin to be compared to a bride of Christ. How much more one must risk himself. How much one must carry, endure, and let himself really be pressed. That is such a small part from the quiet heroism of a pastor. But there is almost no recognition or admiration of it on the part of the people. – There are some people, who have one idea of what their pastor's proficiency should be, and even if it is not entirely brought to fruition, this proficiency should be that of the special spiritual work and leading of the congregation. Either they consider the patient cross bearing of a preacher in the structure of the congregation chiefly as missing, as half-way, as undecided, as lacking in conscientiousness, or they think that their pastor is not at willing to do that. The pastors who are persuaded of their proficiency let themselves go, while they may forget about the welfare of their congregation.

However also on other grounds those are not proficient to carry out the office with faithfulness, who think that they are exactly what it needs, so that they are it. – The fact that they think they are proficient is not from the Spirit. That is flesh. That, whereby such a one now thinks himself to have accomplished something, is nothing spiritual, but only fleshly. In some way these are the natural talents: insight, cleverness, resourcefulness, discretion, ingeniousness, malleableness, personal effect, quick-wittedness, and fluency. In and of themselves these are gifts of God. They are fleshly, only when these are to the pastor that with which he wants to accomplish something with proficiency. Is such a one proficient to carry out the office faithfully as God wants it to be? With the question in 2 Corinthians 2:16: "And who is proficient for the task?" Paul referred to what he had said briefly just before, namely that he was to the one an odor of life for life, and to another an odor of death for death. People, who suppose with their own proficiency to lighten their duty, obtain the wanted people, but not in the way that Paul means: "the odor of life for life;" therefore it is does not fail to lose the odor of death for death. On the

contrary they only want to win, to make an impression, to push away no one, to lose for no one the favorable judgment, in order to be a successful, personable, and a popular pastor. It is totally out of the question for this to be the case, namely that such ones do not do the things to which they have been called by God, and as a result that they do not become the *Haushalter* which will be found faithful.

Thus, it is entirely the case with the idea of those who think that they can make themselves proficient.

If the pastors are neither proficient on their own, nor are they able to make themselves proficient, then it is necessary for them to know how God makes them proficient and how they must now consider themselves before God.

We hear first of all how God wants to do this.

When God gives faith through preaching, i.e. through the Word according to Romans 10:17 and likewise when the Holy Spirit gives it through the word of the gospel according to Galatians 3:2,5, then it is clear from the outset, that God also gives the proficiency to be a faithful pastor through the word of the gospel. For faith is the mother of all virtue and proficiency in the kingdom of God. They are of the same lineage; as the mother so the daughter. – And all God-pleasing proficiency must also be truly spiritual and thus can only be on hand through that through which the Spirit comes to us, that is, through the Word.

However, the Holy Scriptures also say it very clearly that God makes pastors proficient through the Word. For from many particular parts the Bible says of this proficiency that it is given through the Word of God.

One part is above all things, namely virtuous preaching, for it has hands and feet. Now, preaching comes out of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). One must not understand ‘preaching’

so narrowly and essentially, that only doctrine comes out of the Scripture. But, when Romans 10:15 says, “how beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim peace,” and places the entire preacher before our eyes, then one sees that the words, “the preaching comes from God’s Word,” also mean this: that a pastor in his preaching is a man according to the mind of God, a proficient preacher. That comes from the Word. That God creates through the Word.

To proficiency also certainly belongs a good portion of wisdom, yes, a powerful portion of true wisdom. For what use is all faithfulness, diligence, and all conscientiousness, when true wisdom is not there? “Ah,” you think, since Paul thinks otherwise. He still places in 1 Corinthians 4:2 the faithfulness of the *Haushalter* over everything. Yes, indeed! Then Paul goes on to say that the *Haushalter* should prove himself. But, before that there is the question about how he should be and how he should be equipped. Paul says even to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2): you are a preacher – take care, that also hereafter there are preachers, and that they enter into that office, and thereby you have to see to it, whether faithfulness is to be expected from them. But he does not say that the only requirement is faithfulness, as if that alone would help, but also that they be proficient to teach others. Thus it does not stand, as if faithfulness, which God certainly stresses so highly and which we pastors ought never forget for our own salvation, were the one thing which compensates for everything else. Certainly not! Thus this ought never be said: “Preaching he certainly can not do, but he is faithful.” In the same way: “With wisdom and discernment he does not carry out his work, rather he often handles it as a right fool, who understand neither how to lead the people according to God’s council, nor knows and sees what in any one case the right, God-pleasing and useful goal for the Christian would be, nor in which God-blessed, wise manner one ought to attain it. However faithful he is, that is true.”

Now then – wisdom is a chief part of the proficiency of a pastor for preaching, for discipline, for care of souls etc. From where do these come? For in Christ are all treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossian 2:3). And how one is to take these treasures from him verse 2 says with the words, “to know the secrets of God,” i.e. the dear Gospel. Thus, wisdom comes through the Word. Even David, the man after the heart of God, says about it: “the testimony of the Lord makes the foolish wise” (Psalm 19:8; 119:4; 130)

A closely related part is this, that one is not embarrassed to receive objective and good advice. David speaks further in Psalm 119:24 about where one is to take it from, and how God gives it: “I have desire for your testimonies, which are my counselors.”

Still another piece of proficiency is right and proper boldness. A preacher must certainly be no man proceeding in blind boldness and proudly, but also must be no man who in thinking he is wise never boldly proceeds and never thoroughly puts his hand to it. True boldness is necessary. We pastors must be after the way of Paul, who said to Timothy: “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of self-discipline.” On that basis then Paul further admonishes Timothy: “So, suffer for the Gospel, as I am, by the power of God.” “As I,” says Paul and calls himself the bound up one, who carries his bands and fetters for the sake of his faithfulness in the office. Thus, he says to Timothy, “you must fear nothing, that is, you ought not carry out your office with a spirit of fear. – God must this give the spirit of fearlessness, of divine courage and godly power and strength. Yes, and we know this indeed, for God gives also this spirit through the gospel. Even Paul indicates that here: “suffer with the gospel.”

There is yet one more piece to be mentioned: conscientiousness. This God also gives. And through what? By what does he drive one to serious, sincere, and pious consideration, so that in any matter one goes with truthful, holy and pious thoughts, so that one places himself

before nothing, and lies about nothing? Through the Word alone, which is like a sword and penetrates through, until it separates soul and spirit, even bone and marrow, and is a judge of the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Yes, the Bible says very clearly by entirely focusing our attention on specific passages, and even by pointing to general passages, that proficiency for carrying out the office is given through the Word. Thus stands 1 Timothy 4:13-16 (namely, verse 15); but especially in the passage from 2 Timothy 2:15-17. Here the Apostle expresses himself thusly: You have known, dear Timothy, the Holy Scriptures from youth on. That is good. They can instruct you for salvation. – Yes, Scripture has all sorts of uses, so that it can make us miserable, inept, and blind men, who are useful for no work of God, into men of God, who are full of wonderful and admirable proficiency and characteristics, full of capability for every good work. Our old Lutheran interpreters say the most: “[Paul says] the man of God and means with that, the preacher.” If this is not the case, then this word says to us at least this much: as the beloved Bible chiefly makes proficient Christians, so also it makes proficient pastors. It creates the proficiency for the office.

But this too is a gift of God. Paul says: “that we are proficient is from God, who makes us proficient” (2 Corinthians 3:5). And in verse 3 he particularly ascribes it to the Holy Spirit, when a pastor accomplishes something or even proves himself as proficient. Thus God gives it, God himself. We know that Paul is no buzzing bee [*Schwarmgeist*], who directs us to expect divine gifts, heavenly treasures without means, i.e. without Word and Sacrament. So, we have certainly heard this previously, namely, that the Scripture makes us inept men proficient for the office of Christ, as he said to Timothy. And now he says it here in 2 Corinthians 3:5 again: “it is from God.”

Yet, we should learn to understand it correctly when it is said according to the Scriptures: God, and especially the Holy Spirit, does something spiritual in us through the Scriptures. We should learn that it does not happen as in temporal things. For then a man may set up a family head for the sake of his own goods, etc. He may set up a man, who has good abilities for it, whom God has equipped with full power, so that he knows it all, and in addition the man may also give to him in his hand a particular order of the house [*Hausordnung*] with a description of every right, duty, and specification for its administration, as well as a description of the losses to avoid and of the winnings to attain; he may also be a man whom God has likewise given a description of the type of attitude that the *Haushalter* should have toward him, the Lord, and a description of his behavior toward him, the Lord, toward all the staffers, to any other people all around, and toward whatever else may stand in such a particular *Hausordnung* for the *Haushalter*. If that has now happened, then the landlord can properly do nothing further. He must turn over everything to *Haushalter*, so that he might properly understand the *Hausordnung* so that he might correctly engrain it, stand by it etc. That must make him proficient [according to temporal things]. The landlord can well assist something, as much as it concerns him, with any possible admonishment, warnings, commendations, promises, and honoring before the people; however, he can not give to the *Haushalter*, his heart, mind, or will, the proficiency, which is well described in the *Hausordnung*. The *Haushalter* must acquire that through thorough and conscientious experience with the *Hausordnung*. If he has proficiency after that, he does not owe anything to the landlord. His gift [of the landlord] was certainly the description of proficiency in the *Hausordnung*, but not the existence of proficiency.

It is entirely otherwise with the heads of the household of the Lord of lords, with the servants of the great God. He has given to them the most majestic, the most exhaustive

*Hausordnung* for their office in the house of God, the church; they should be proficient according to it and they should study well the same [*Hausordnung*]. Yes, he wants to make them proficient through it alone, entirely, only not thus, so that that alone establishes the *Hausordnung* in the Scripture with them and God himself remains now out of the loop, but God himself effects them, not from afar, as a man works through a *Hausordnung* and can live far from the house, but God works as the nearest of all. The proficiency of a pastor is not the attainment of his earnest diligence and conscientious use of the Scripture, but a present, a gift of God. Thus, rightly and clearly teaches 1 Peter 4:11: “so that he may do it as out of the ability, which God administers.” Proficiency should remain also for us a gift of God alone. Always it should be said: What do you have, that you have not received? What should one boast about, if he had not studied it! So that proficiency, a present and gift of God, should never be forgotten by pastors, as perhaps happens more than one should think, we want to deal with and speak about this matter still further.

Now, it is an important question, how pastors must behave toward God, who wants to make them proficient in the previously described way, so that they might establish their office with faithfulness. The assumption is that we have to do this with believers – Here, one can easily go astray and leave behind one of both necessary parts, which we now want to take up. According to that, what was just said about proficiency as a gift of God, one could likewise allow to lack in the proper attitude. So that he takes it seriously with the first part, we want to discuss it. That part is: to work.

Pastors are often called workers in Scripture (Matthew 9:37,38; 2 Timothy 2:15). Where, on what, and how do they work? In the field of the Lord where seed is to be sown and crops are to be harvested (Matthew 9:37,38). In the house of God (Hebrews 3:5); among the peoples in



the world (1 Corinthians 5:10); in the church (Galatians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:12); and in the Word and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17). With the latter we have properly the chief part of the work of a pastor: work in the Word. Naturally, this means teaching, especially preaching. That is indeed work among the people in and with the Word work. One should likewise bring to the man what alone makes one already proficient in Word and teaching. We are certainly not the enthusiasts according to the way of the Methodists and Baptists, who say, "the preaching must give the Spirit at that time;" who then at the very least assert that they regard the learned sermons not as the real sermon. The many sermon books which have come from them and the many testimonies from pastors could conclude yet another thing. Yet, we leave it.

It is certain, that he, who works at the time of his sermon in the Word and doctrines and with the Word and doctrines for the Christians, must have previously worked in the Word and doctrines earnestly and faithfully. He does this, chiefly so that he may have some virtuous thing to give to the Christians and might really prove himself in his sermon as proficient. But, the conscientious preparation of the sermon is not alone what we have here in mind as the work which should lead to the proficiency of a pastor. It is not work in the Word and doctrines on some Saturday or on any other day, in such and so many hours, as is perhaps customary for a pastor to keep up with his preparations for Sundays and festival days, but it is daily work in the Word and doctrines. It is also not work only with regard to the sermon and teaching with articulateness and forcefulness on someone else's sermon, but it is the work in the Word and doctrines with regard to his own sermon and teaching in order to become rich in knowledge and doctrine. It is not the work in the Word and doctrines to this goal alone so that others might live truly as Christians, but it is the work in the Word, with which one might carry out his own quiet, hidden Christian life in God and Christ. This work is the faithful, heartfelt, seeking with hunger

for bread and with thirst for water, being desirous of salvation to conduct one's life day after day with the beloved Word of God for one's own edification for the goal of eternal life – how good it is for those who go about with God's Word! Thus writes Wisdom 14:22. That is an apocryphal book, but the dictum is a truth of God. For the inspired Holy Scriptures say the same thing with other words. Thus, St. Paul says to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:13)<sup>49</sup>: “Keep to the pattern of beneficial teaching.” The teaching certainly declares not only, “always speak as the words do,” but also, “hear constantly what they say to you.” Who then wants to have the former without the latter? But Paul says in other places directly to that point: “he should go about diligently with God's Word.” He says in 1 Timothy 4:13: “Keep to reading, to admonishment, etc,” and then in verse 15: “hold to such things, so that you go about [in them].” – That is certainly also the manner of the pious according to the description of Scripture. According to Psalm 1 they speak about the law of God both day and night, that is, they go about constantly with the Scriptures. One certainly notices this among the pious. Take Paul. What intimacy with the Scripture of the Old Testament! And whenever one who was inspired says, he speaks out of inspiration, then whatever he should say, the Holy Spirit gave to him – indeed, so Paul boasted to Timothy, who knew from childhood the Holy Scripture, and that with believing knowledge. That was the fruit of his going about with the Scripture. And then – then one hears Maria, the mother of the Lord in her short song of praise (Luke 1:46-44). How familiar she was with God's Word! She must have been diligent in going about with the Word, as much as it was possible for her. And – the going about with the Word was not made as easy for them as it is for us. But, wherever the words of Scripture flow today to a Christian, it happens as it did to Mary. But with the words which she had, she went about, and thus she was a proficient prayer, as we have her before our eyes. However, I want to leave these ladies, who the Scripture exhibits. There are even those at

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<sup>49</sup> Text: zu *Timotheus 1, 1, 13*.

Berea. I call a certain man a Lutheran with pride, in whose writings we have in the most marvelous way before our eyes proof of that which we know about him, namely that he went about most faithfully and in a most heartfelt way with the Scripture. What a life and a thorough incorporation of Scripture there is with Luther! There he is, as far as I can determine, singular in his manner. One may compare the man, who stands next to Luther in history and who is exalted by many wherever possible, (I mean Calvin), who one calls the reformer of the reformation church. He speculated and philosophized theologically, but he is through and through not a man like Luther, from whose love flowed streams of living water from the continually opened source of Scriptural. That was the fruit of his faithful and devoted going about with Holy Scriptures. If we, pastors, want to become proficient, then we must likewise go about in this manner with the Scriptures.

Those who think that they can do without it and yet be proficient, will be unproficient. There are certainly such pastors who do not consider necessary an intimate going about with Scripture and a settling oneself into the Scripture. They know the doctrine, have its aptness, are not poor in inventiveness, have their measure of expertness, they even know their people, they know how they must take hold of them, what appeals to them, etc. On that they rely. When the opportunity presents itself, they take from the text the things which are already evident. Yes, their sermons are certainly still considered as quite presentable. In principle they are professional preachers. If one has a few of those tools, then it is not so very difficult to bring the sermon to somebody. The recipe is simple. Make the sermon thus, so that it sets forth what is reasonable, but doesn't go so deeply, so that the people have trouble with the thoughts; make the sermon thus, so that the hearers can remain in the right mind in order that they may be properly lead to piety, but make it not so spiritual, so that the sermon is disconcerting and disturbing.

Give the sermon the tone of spirited earnestness, so that the hearers could boast that they belong to a right, Christian, authoritative congregation, but administer the sharp edge of the Word intelligently, so that no hearer must do himself harm at it. To that yet add small ingredients of things which interest, allure, and so on – and everything else connected with aptitude and executed in worthiness, so that the judgment of many will record: Here we have a right, acceptable sermon.

I repeat: such professional preachers are not the people proficient before God. And as they are not proficient who think that they already have proficiency, just so little are those proficient who think that at least they had those things to make themselves into proficient people; people who think that they need only add their gifts in order to instruct themselves further; people who think they need to learn for instance out of this praised sermon book, the art of division, out of a second, the pleasing execution of it, out of a third, clever embellishment with parables, pictures, histories, etc. Thus one can see that sermon books are of use, and ought in no way be tossed aside. Especially one ought make use of our father Luther with rich studies. For many of the above mentioned people, Luther may not exactly be the master teacher. But one thing he has above all, and plainly above all: the deep spiritual sight, the wonderful penetration into the beloved Word of God. But when one puts it to use properly, above all things for awakening zeal, so that namely one may apply these things, about which his sermon gives testimony. It gives testimony of devotedly going about with Holy Scriptures. That can not even be replaced through other things.

Incidentally, it is astonishing that a preacher, who chiefly wants to preach on the basis of Scripture, and yet has to do with Scripture not that which is within, namely that in spite of everything it would still be necessary for him to go about with Scripture in a true, devoted

manner. He encounters always, and yet not often enough such encouragement and praise of God, thankful doxologies and remembrances of the believers, who all imply, that Scripture is something exceedingly exquisite, that the going about with it is something very refreshing, and that it is certainly not to be declared, what all a man has in the Scripture, and what rich winnings he may pull from it, which will never be able to acquire it anywhere through anything else, except through Scripture alone. We only need to read Psalm 119, where it says: “refresh me according to your Word,” v. 25; “your word is sweeter to my mouth than honey,” v. 103; “if your Law had not been my comfort, then I would have decayed in my misery,” v. 92; “O, how I love your law; daily I speak about it,” v. 97. “with your commands you make me wiser than my enemies; for it is eternally my treasure,” v. 98; “sustain me through your Word so that I may live,” v. 116; “salvation is far from the godless, for they do not esteem your righteousness,” v. 155. – Opposite to such expressions it is in fact highly astonishing, that a preacher, who actually has to do with the Scripture up to a certain point, yet not within, so that he must as a result cultivate an inner sincere going about with Scripture, if he really wants to be something in God.

Thus far about the going about with Holy Scripture, which is so properly the core of the first part, which belongs to the proper attitude of a preacher toward God, who should make him proficient to faithfully carry out his office, namely to work. We have already indicated that a Christian ought not think that there is nothing further except diligent work on his part, if he wants to acquire all proficiency. Certainly not! This is and remains a gift. For this reason to the first part of a proper attitude toward God, namely work, it must come subservient, to that which in the known saying stands as first, namely prayer.

It says: “Pray and work.” Pray first. One must indeed pray before work, so that one does it correctly. And certainly pray afterwards, that it might be blessed. Praying begin, praying

conclude, pray before the work, pray after the work, and pray also during the work – pray and work. Everything, which we have, is a gift of God, and God certainly does not let his gifts be taken. They must be requested. Thus, it is for us pastors with the gift of proficiency. Wisdom is a generous portion of the same; and it is so much lacking to us. Now: “If anyone among you lack wisdom, he should ask God, who gives everyone without judging” (James 1:5). Even Paul knows well, how he can turn his dear Christians to such gift as knowledge and experience from God; “I pray,” he says to the Philippians (1:9) and to the Colossians (1:5), “that your love may become more and more rich in all kinds of knowledge and experience.” – Thus he will also have done it for himself. He also wants the Christians to repay him the same kinds of prayers. When in his letter to the Romans he reminds them of his work, that he wants to carry out still further; and when he also reminds them of the obstacles and how much courage and joy in battle belong to it, he speaks to them (Romans 15:30): “I admonish you, dear brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you might help me struggling with prayers for me to God.” Yes, how shameful it is, that such a high apostle even had to admonish the Christians to pray for him, so that he might carry out his work of preaching. For in Colossians 4:2ff he says, “Continue in prayer and be watchful in the same with thanksgiving; and pray at the same time also for us, so that God may open up for us the door for his word to speak the mysteries of Christ, for which reason I am also bound up; so that I might reveal the same, and how I should speak.” In a very similar way he, who knows well, what belongs to that for courage and spiritedness the whole time, exhorts the Ephesians to preach clearly that which is foolishness to the world and a stumbling to the Jews, and also to the brothers of the world and of the Pharisees in the congregation: “Pray for me, so that the Word which is given by me with a joyful opening of my mouth, so that I might make known the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19). Now, it

is known to each one, how much Paul and all the apostles call all Christendom, teachers and hearers, shepherds and sheep, to pray for every good, and particularly for spiritual gifts. And God even commands it, and gives for that reason promises that are heard and kept.

Now, one may hear much to lament, as if Christendom had no excess. Indeed, there is often much lacking in spiritual gifts. Then, the declaration of James (4:2) is still true yet today: “You have not, because you ask not.” – Who from us teachers of the Word will not have to admit: I am in my prayer life. I do not mean, that we do not have such a sign for prayer in our way of praying, as the Israelites did on our clothing and doors. We hold morning prayer, and evening prayer among ourselves. However, whether or not the rich going about with prayer to God is present, or if it is something according to what one hears from Paul, how he prayed constantly, or from the prayer life of our father Luther – that is still the question. I think that we should humble ourselves then as lazy servants. And I think, dear Christian brothers from the congregations, that you do it and say about it at home so that they do it also. Then it will also be true, that you all forget all too often the admonishment of Paul that you should pray for your pastors. Oh, if only that would happen! I mean this, the dear hearers resent the preacher for the infrequent soft-spoken word, when they themselves prayed for him for this very reason. O how they can often set themselves so heartlessly, so callously, in such an unfriendly way, and bitterly against a faithful pastor, when they in a heart-felt way pray for him to the Father in heaven! Could not both praises and curses certainly come from the same mouth; could they not pray to God for the pastor, and also berate and dispute with the pastor? Let it become better. Diligently let us pray, so that the spiritual gifts may overflow richly according to the saying: “As you pray, so will it be given to you.” Above all things we pastors want to pray diligently for all proficiency for the faithful fulfillment of the office, certainly keeping in mind that we cannot

give ourselves proficiency, nor can we take it from the treasures of God. God allows nothing at all take it, for he wants it to be requested. —

If preachers have proficiency through God's grace for the carrying out of their serious office, then they would certainly and yet scarcely at all be in a position to work and persist in that office with all faithfulness from the bottom of their heart. This is true for there are many sorts of things which can make even the proficient servant of God tired, droopy and despondent. There are things, which do not result from a lack in proficiency, whose power to make a preacher weak can not be overcome by bare proficiency. However, here God has a means to guard his faithful servants from despondency, so that they do not lose, for example, the hand from the plough, a means to strengthen again the lame feet, and the tired hands. That is the comfort of God. That is the threefold comfort, which he gives to the preachers as his servants called by him and in fact it comes straight out of their God-pleasing call.

That is chiefly the comfort in all tribulation, trial [*Anfechtung*], and unpleasantness.

This is, as noted a comfort not only for the proficient pastor, but also for the properly called pastor. The comfort comes from the call. If his call came in a way which is proper, God-pleasing, and desired by God, then this call gives him a rich comfort in all tribulation, unpleasantness, and *Anfechtung* in his office; it is self-evident that this comfort must be lacking for those, who have not come into their office in the way commanded by God.

A pastor, whose call has gone out properly according to God's Word and will, can say for this reason with full right: Here God himself has called and placed you. For this reason he can also rightly say: What you now take up, that God places upon you. It is for you, as preacher, a divine cross of the preacher. For that is indeed the way, which leads one as a Christian and thus also as a preacher to believing and childlike obedience toward God. Those are the ways, on



which God himself leads as Father, for he leads through the Spirit and the Spirit through the Word. As long as one truly remains on such ways, then the leadership of God is also in pure, fatherly grace. If one has tribulation, then it is not something unsalutary, which one has invited on himself. If one has *Anfechtung*, then those are not the hardships, into which one has plunged himself curiously. Rather, one ought to look at everything as a cross from the Father, imposed out of love (Hebrews 12:6). – With that the preacher also receives this rich comfort to enjoy, which all Christians enjoy; therefore they look at, on the certain basis of the divine word, tribulation, unpleasantness, and *Anfechtung* believingly as a cross laid on them out of love from the heavenly Father. Above all things they themselves ought say: “Here the Father in heaven does not want to force evil and rebuke for past guilt, but he wants accomplish much good, peace, and joy for the future for you yourself and then also for others (Hebrews 12:11; Psalm 116:13); the heavenly Father does not want to do you harm, but he wants to bless you (Psalm 116:7).

Let us hear once more the voice of father Luther. He says, “Not only does he seek his honor but he also seeks mine, because I seek his honor, as he says in 1 Samuel 2:30: “‘whoever honors me, should also become honored.’ That is our comfort, so that we can be joyful, even if all the world defiles and dishonors us; thus we are certain that God demands our honor and therefore will avenge, judge and rebuke whoever can believe it and can expect that he certainly will come” (XIV 437. Evang. S. Judica).

Further he says, “Thirdly, thus Matthew has these words: ‘I preserve him;’ or: ‘if I want to hold him, he is outwardly calm.’ That is a comfort to the minister or to the servant, so that he might know that he has God for a protector in his office or mission....Whatever is in the world that plagues the ministers of God. On account of this he makes the promises that he himself wants to be their defender against all of this. Both where he does not do this and where we do

not know that he wanted to do it, who wants to undergo the trouble and the great danger, which one must bear in the teaching office [*Lehramt*]?" (IX., 80. Matth.12,18).

Finally he speaks to Galatians 1:1: "For this reason this is our great comfort, we who are now at this time in the *Predigtamt*, namely that we always have a holy and a heavenly office, to which we were properly and in an orderly way called, which we might well boast about against the gates of hell." – (there you now see, how noteworthy this boast of our office, namely the call is. After that Luther says that he understands now, what he earlier did not understand, namely why Paul made so many boasts about his call.)

The cross makes proficient, firm, and good Christians (by training) (Hebrews 12:11). – trial teaches to keep the focus on the Word (Isaiah 28:19); it drives one properly into God's Word – the cross helps especially to properly understand, relish, and to savor the word of grace. Psalm 119:71: "It was good for me, that you humbled me, so that I might learn your right decrees." – Isaiah 26:16: "When tribulation is present, then one seeks you." – The cross moves to urgent prayer. Need teaches to pray. "When I am distressed, then I call to the Lord, and cry out to my God," says David (Psalm 18:6). And Asaph says, "when I am troubled, then I consider God; when my heart is full of angst, then I speak" (Psalm 77:3). – The cross is the divine school to properly teach one to find nothing in himself and to find everything in grace. Paul, when he speaks about his severe cross, the thorn in the flesh, says that he wanted keep himself entirely in line with the word of the Lord: "let my grace suffice for you." For this reason, he wanted to boast about the weakness, namely, so that grace might be made powerful in him (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). – And closely connected with it, namely that the cross is an excellent school, is always simple, reliable, to be seen without seeing the grace of the Father everywhere, and yet to be believed, as the apostle Peter says to us (1 Peter 1:5,6): "you may now be for a short time,

wherever it may happen, sad in all kinds of *Anfechtung*, so that your faith might be found rightly created and more costly than perishing gold.

Thus, the cross makes proficient Christians. Thus it also makes proficient, solid pastors. And that it should reach the goal to serve according to the fatherly will of God for the best of the pastor, that, even the pastor knows and ought to be comforted because of it. Indeed, for he himself can say: ‘you stand here in your office according to the will of God.’ That gives him great comfort in his tribulation, *Anfechtung*, and unpleasantness of any kind, which serve as a salutary cross. With that are received suffering, tribulation, and also grievousness, which are always there at the outset for us (they seem not to be joy for us, but suffering). Then they certainly do not at all embitter the poor, plagued, servant of God, or make him grieve, so that he almost wants to decay and so that all power and vivacity for the work disappear for him. – Then it goes according to Isaiah 40:27ff, where the oppressed Israel says: “My way is hidden before the Lord.” It is that way with Jeremiah. Zion speaks out in tribulation: “The Lord has forgotten me.” – But, it says to Israel, do you not know? The Lord, the eternal God, will not grow tired or languid. He gives the tired power. For this reason if the servant of the Lord, his servant, just like the slave becomes tired and languid, and brings with that trouble his own weaknesses - and it is certainly that way with all preachers in tribulation and adversity - then there is only one thing necessary. They need to grasp the comfort of the Lord. Those who wait on the Lord grab new strength, so that they ascend with wings, as the eagle, so that they run and do not grow tired, so that they walk about and do not grow faint. Yes, without being strengthened through such comfort, it would not be possible to properly set up his office as a faithful pastor. It would be entirely impossible for a right, true shepherd to keep showing the shepherd’s love, while forgetting himself, under all personal suffering as a Christian and particularly as a pastor. The

bitterness would drive away that which must give power and vivacity to the work as pastor, namely love for the sheep.

Thus, it stands with the preacher, who stands by virtue of a right, God-pleasing call in a congregation. Thus he can pull rich comfort from this pleasing calling. However, that must exclude him who comes into his office through an evil, stained call.

Such a one can certainly not say: "God has called you here." He must say: "You have brought yourself here." Then it will doubtless be for him, wherever suffering, tribulation, *Anfechtung*, and adversity arise, as if a clear voice called to him in his heart: "you have taken that upon yourself." He will never know to look at it otherwise, than that it is bitter for him. Yes, it is so. Certainly it will not be for him in his heart, so that he can say with confident in simple truth, as before God: "That is a fatherly cross." And when it does not take a particular twist, namely through rightly created penance, then it will not go with him according to this divine order for cross bearing [*Kreuzesordnung*]: first, it does not seem to be joy for us, but vain suffering, but after that out of it there are peaceful fruits, that is, peace and joy in spirit and faith as a justified child of God. On the contrary the order is this, that it remains with the first. It seems to us to be only suffering. Now the feeling, which made such an assumption, becomes ever more bitter. And so that such a one is sunk in such bitterness, which is ever more horrible, the conscience is stirred all the more. Luther writes to Galatians 1:1: "In contrast it is certainly a horrid and appalling thing when the conscience says: 'O Lord God! What have you [conscience] made, that you have done such and such without call or command.' Then such terror and heartbreak hoist themselves on the conscience, so that such an uncalled preacher might very well desire, that he had never at all read or heard his whole life that, which he taught. For the disobedient makes all works evil, even if they want them on their own to be so good, in such a

way so that the greatest of all and best works might become the greatest and the worst of all sins.” Such a preacher is lost to comfort in tribulation. In his position he is also not the man to carry out God’s work. He has not the comfort to think that he might want to twist and wrestle down his misery, for as long as he preaches, he always still accomplishes something good before God. Luther says about Galatians 1:1: “It is not enough if one has something alike to the pure, loud Word of God and pure doctrine, but one must also be certain of the call so that he might be in the right.”

The properly called pastor also has from his call, which is so pleasing to God and according to the Word of God a second comfort in all difficulty and toil, which confront him in his office. These are great. With the *Predigtamt* it does not stand thus, as many entirely dear Christian think. They think that it is an easy and cushy office. The Scripture teaches otherwise. If we look at it only in consideration of its chief parts without consideration of particular circumstances, various arrangements and duties bound up together with it, which are outside of the chief part. The chief part for a preacher is the people to whom he is called to bring under the obedience of faith according to the gospel and under the obedience to love according to the law. That he should accomplish through preaching and teaching. Is that easy? The apostle James says (3:1,2): “Dear brothers, not everyone should undertake for himself to be a teacher; and know that we will receive all the more judgment. For we all are lacking in manifold ways. However, whoever lacks in no word, he is a perfect man and can curb the entire body.” After that the apostle begins to address what a judgment the tongue can wreak with evil words, and can kindle a dangerous fire. How finely James here paints the call of a preacher as serious and exceedingly accountable through his comparison with the common call of the Christian. In that, he says, we load through the errors with the tongue and unrighteous words so much liability and

judgment on ourselves because it wreaks so much evil. However, that now applies firstly in the *Predigtamt*, since a single evil and perverted word wreaks much harm in doctrine, and since it can easily kindle the most evil fire. Yes, it can bring a soul into the danger of eternal fire. And for that God makes a preacher accountable. What a serious judgment he can lift upon himself! For this reason James advises and admonishes with reference to the judgment of God: “Not everyone should undertake for himself to become a teacher.” Thus, James truly says to all dear brothers in the congregations: Dear brothers, do not hold the office of your preacher for something so easy; it is rather something entirely serious and highly accountable, alone for the sake of the chief part, teaching. Then it is the goal that no one be lacking in his words, so that the preaching might not be a detriment.

If the office of preacher is serious, bound up with trouble and toil for the sake of the one part, preaching, then it is for the sake of the people, to whom the preacher is to preach. We have already said what we should accomplish with preaching. Is that something easy? Does the preacher have anything to do with the problem, which makes little trouble or toil, or does he keep himself on the other side of it? Yes indeed! Even when we look at only the entire circumstance, or only take into consideration the state of the thing, so that I may thus say, how he is right in line with the guide, namely the rule, that we all are sinners and are all unproficient, that we do nothing good and are fleshly from birth on, full of enmity from nature against all obedience to God, be it according to the gospel or be it according to the law. How things do stand here and always will stand, and what they have entirely in common, that we need not first determine approximately through all kinds of statistics, which can on top of everything be lacking and could be objected to by angered Christian people. Here one who is unaccounting has placed before our eyes the account, which each one will certainly accept, namely our dear Savior

in the parable about the four kinds of fields. Thus, that is the state of things: There is a quarter who are callous, who receive the sermon for themselves as nothing; there is a quarter who are shallow, who are on the surface of their heart a little Christian-like, but underneath are a hard rock of impenitence, and self-righteousness, in such a way so that they do not hook on to the Word very well; there a quarter are mammon seekers, so that they do not allow the Word to flourish; and there is only a quarter with whom the Word finds good absorption. Perhaps one thinks that the accounting may be arbitrary for a quarter. It is possible! If I take another Word of the Lord, then the accounting sets itself as more sorrowful, for example: “many are called, but few are chosen – do you think that he [Son of Man] will find faith on earth – the gate is tight, and the way is narrow, which leads to life, and there are few who will find it.” So what now, when the state of things is thus so regulated? But are there not often enough entirely other circumstances? There are congregations, whose picture is entirely after that manner: They will buy, sell, build and also woo, eat, and drink. In short, they are congregation, thoroughly sunk in what drives the world and in the business of the world, without any visible sense for the kingdom of heaven. They are congregation according to the picture of the guards, who banish Christ from the boundaries for the sake of the cattle population; they are congregations, entirely sunk in pure drive for mammon and seeking after mammon, in stinginess and winnings, a true field of thorns which chokes all seeds. They are congregation according to the picture of the Israelites: That people sat down to eat and drink and stood up to play. They are congregations entirely sunk in amusement, and in every kind of association for every possible entertainment, in constant going about from picnics, and the leading of songs, and everything else, and yet so far from the earnestness of Christendom.

That is hard ground for the sower of God. What toil and difficulty mount up there! There he should now accomplish something; there he should obtain something for God. And there he stands alone. Moses has lamented in Numbers 11:14: "it is too difficult for me; I can not carry the people alone." Now if a preacher stands facing the toil and difficulty, which come out of his task in a congregation, then he often needs to call out in a not halfhearted way: "It is too difficult. What will I accomplish! I stand alone!" Then a glorious comfort comes to him, a comfort, namely out of his calling; a comfort, which takes away the despondency in any kind of success for the sake of the difficulty of the work, and strengthens him in a most majestic way, as often as he might become tired. For from his call the comfort comes: You stand here as a servant of your great Lord as a tool only of the almighty master builder of the church, namely God. It is in truth the great God himself, who here carries out his work through his Word, which is powerful and full of grace, and needs you only as his tool. This is the same thing the apostle says (1 Corinthians 3:5); "Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? Servants are they, through whom you have been saved; and that happens, as the Lord has given to each one. I have planted. Apollos has watered. But God has given the result. Thus neither he who plants, nor he who waters, is anything, but God, who gives the result."

So also it does nothing, if a servant, who should carry out the fieldwork of God on the hard ground, says to himself: "what should I then accomplish? Am I then anything all to do this difficult thing? Only say to yourself: "Yes, I am only a called servant, the tool; the result God gives; in truth God also drives the work. In a comforting way Luther speaks about it. He speaks about Exodus 4:13 (III., 506): "For if one were skilled as Gabriel and all angels, and God did not call him, then he would certainly accomplish nothing. Again, if one is ineloquent and God has



called him, then he carries it out. He is as God wants, so that the world might see, that we are not it, who drives it, but God does it.”

He says further (XII., 582): “Now two things belong to a bishop and preacher. The first: that he is ordained by God. On that much is laid. Then, when God is alongside, so it is God’s power, which today calls one, tomorrow adds two more, and which never ends up empty. For this reason the preacher is so humbled, so that when they know and see their own weakness, and that they are earthen vessels, they commend it all to God and let him do as he wants because they are certain that God does it all.”

Likewise VI., 120 b. in relation to Psalm 55:5: “For this reason I often become discouraged about it, when I see such; it often hits me directly at the heart so that I sometimes consider: If this teaching was not to be spread out into the world, then I would rather do anything else than this carrying out and revealing this teaching to the unthankful world. These are however evil, fleshly thoughts. Let the world be as unthankful as they want; let them misuse the Word as greatly as they can. Either way one should not cease to teach and to preach, but remain steadfast and proceed on with the doctrine, commending to God the result, happiness and increase. For he is such a king, for whom it should and must succeed, who must and wants to have victory over his enemies. If it neither happens in this place, nor at this time, then it will happen in another place and at another time.”

Finally, XIII., 24, Evang. 1. Advent: “This is said as comfort for preachers, lest they should worry about who believes them and absorbs it. For it will certainly happen according to Isaiah 55:11: ‘My word which goes out of my mouth (they are God’s mouth as his messengers) should not come back to me again alone.’ And Paul says in Colossians 1:6: ‘The gospel is

bearing fruit in the world.' For this reason it is possible in no other way, that wherever the gospel is preached, there are some, who grasp it and believe."

Whoever thus looks at himself as a worker and thus at his work, he has a comfort, which truly erects him, lets him go about his work with joy, and buckles down to the work with hope. He, who stands through a God-pleasing call in a congregation, has such comfort, so that he can look at himself as the worker ordered by God and his work as commended to him by God.

Yet, what if the hope, which a preacher grasps, nevertheless comes true as good as if it did not come true? Well, then the proper call contains a great comfort with small successes.

What is a small success? Where can it be said, that a servant of God has no success? Here, the judgments of the undiscerning are very diverse, that is, the judgments of those lacking spiritual insight and of those who are full of insight, gifted with spiritual sense and discernment. The first ones see only the success, when outwardly the congregation makes forward progress. The others see the results above all things when the people make progress in knowledge of the faith and in the life of sanctification. That latter judgment is also God's judgment. His goal is chiefly with his preachers: Make yourself blessed and those who hear you. That Luther accents, when he says against the antinomians (XXI., 347, writing against the antinomians): "...But for the sake of the pious, since they want to be saved, we must live, preach, write, suffer, and do everything."

Now, it may very well happen, that even in the latter way a preacher may be able to see nothing or as good as nothing from the results. He preaches the law for the knowledge of sins, and behold, after a considerable time he must become inward with respect to many kinds of opportunities, discussions and other things so that the people have just about nothing of true knowledge of the depths of their damnable sinfulness. In addition the sermon or the

admonishment, which apply that sinfulness to them, still stand with the quite astonished and suggestive shaking of the head quite opposite; they just put up with it, so that it is said by them but just in the sense as one so often hears it: the priests must preach that way, that is they way they learned it; that is just doctrine. In short, preachers find only too often those who remain so opposed to the intrusive preaching of the law for the knowledge of sins, since that does not concern them at all. O yes, how much remains after all that in the serious preaching of the law, when one thinks that one must now have convinced, remitted and smashed the people, that they must come to recognize themselves in the offered mirror, so that the people say to themselves: “Yes, you are the man. You! You are the deeply corrupted sinner in your heart, and that is the very root of the evil, of the senses of the flesh, and of disobedience.” And how the divine sorrow remains first from the feeling grieved about it! Yes, yes, sighs many a pastor: What hard ground here! It moves and stirs nothing. – Naturally, where he is the right man, as we always presume, then this state of things is not the result of that, namely that he preached always only law. Indeed he perhaps did not do that at all in the above described spiritual way, but what one calls the preaching of the law in the disapproved sense, namely that one constantly demands all possible piety and sanctification with “should” and “must” and suspicion of them as nominal Christians and then after that rebukes, cuts down and shames, so that it becomes nothing.

We set out now that he does his work properly, that he preaches richly and in a comforting way when he preaches the real sermon of grace, the gospel. Then it also happens that after a long time, after real patient waiting, no fruit shows itself. There is nothing to be noticed, at least scarcely anything continuous, showing that the people have genuinely understood the sermon about faith, that they understand the word of grace, that they tasted the gracious word about Christ as the kind Word of God and that they really were comforted, comforted in Christ

on account of their sins. When a preacher looks at this or that penitent child still as most hopeful among many others, and listens at the opportunity to the confession, even if he understands what true, salutary penance is, and he does not lack the chief part, namely faith, which grasps Christ, so that he heals the broken and lays on the wounded conscience for the sake of the sins the balm of forgiveness, and yet beats them with questions such as: "Is it not true that you praise God so that he may bestow such salutary penance for life?" Then he hears the disheartened response: "Well yes, dear pastor! Not to do it again is the best penance." – How unhappy it will be for that one! Or in the case of sickness, where one, as much as he is able, privately yet specially holds out the gospel in its sweetness, which is so very heartwarming; he holds out the free grace, the comfort of the righteousness for life, given without any of our works, and so one hopes to hear something from the form like a happy echo: "The Lord is my righteousness." Then it sounds out the old afflicting song of self-righteousness contrary to the one: "Yes! Yes! If one only does everything, which Christ has commended, then one can surely be comforted. I have always held thus in life, and I can surely say, that I have not let it lack, etc." With that a complacent description of his righteous Christian life follows. One does hear in that, so that such a one recognizes Christ not as a giver of righteousness, but as a giver of law.

And if it now goes on – "I leave that part of sanctification, education and true, God-pleasing living undiscussed, when from the fruit of the preaching, from salutary penance, from true repentance, from divine sorrow, and heavenly joy there is truly just about nothing to be noticed, when there are thus almost no true results." O, that can make a preacher deeply dispirited.

With what will he comfort himself? One could certainly say to himself: "You do not even see where real fruit has occurred." Had not Elijah desponded, because he saw no result

from all his preaching, but only saw the opposite? But what did God say to him in 1 Kings 19:18? “I want to leave reserved 7000 in Israel.” Compare that to Romans 11:3-4. – Now, it can be exactly the same in our day. Where he sees no fruit, there can very well be fruit. The comfort for Elijah is also our comfort. Luther says about Psalm 45:5 (VI., 120): “For this reason he wants to comfort us through faith, so that we should hope, even if we see no fruit of the Word. In addition we should not doubt, because it stands recorded: ‘it should and must succeed for him, so that it can not go away without value and fruit, but the same must certainly follow after it [the Word]....So that the caretaker of souls, who thus stands before the congregation of Christ, should not desist, but should teach and instruct the people with the highest diligence and faithfulness.”

Furthermore, if despondency comes to a preacher with a glance at the great things, then encouragement can come to him with a glance at the smaller things and the smallest things of all. Then we will view it as Luther does, who says about Isaiah 62:1 (VII., 451):

“The Word is held by the world in great hate as a contempt for the Adversary persecutes it with power and guile. The remainder, when they do not persecute it, either despises it or esteems it little, but rather they follow after their own activities and winnings. This dishonor pains and irritates the servants of the Word very much, so that they are sometimes tempted with impatience and would rather remain entirely silent than look at so great a despising of the Word. (Jeremiah 20:8-9; 1 Kings 19:4) It seemed just that way here for Isaiah. However, he strengthened himself against temptation, so that he would not sin by abandoning his call. Even though, he said, the Word is mocked by all, and still suffers persecution by most, yet I will not on that account abandon the preaching. For just as I did not begin preaching because of the godless, so I do not want to cease preaching because of the godless.”

Above all things it is true for a preacher, that he may take this comfort for himself from his God-pleasing calling: God, who has called you here; he is the Lord, and rules everything according to his will. You however, who are called, you are a servant and slave, and not he who rules things and sets out how they should be. Yes, you are not only one time a servant, who was dedicated into every undertaking of his Lord. Indeed, John 15:15 states: “For a servant does not know what his master does. You however I have told that you are my friends because everything which I have heard from my Father, I have revealed to you.” Even so, it does not mean as Acts 1:7 says: “It is not important for you to know the time or the hour, which the Father has set beforehand by his power.” By the form there are many times and hours, which God has reserved for himself, where we are opposed to all kinds of riddles and secrets. Thus, a humble preacher also tells himself:

Since you are not a regent  
 Who should do everything:  
 God sits in authority  
 And does everything well.

Certainly he carries out everything gloriously. But the way is often quite wonderful (Isaiah 28:29). It is a way through the dark. Psalm 97:2 says: “Clouds and darkness are around him.” Isaiah accordingly calls out: “Indeed, you are a hidden God, you God of Israel, the Savior” (Isaiah 45:15). And Paul says in Romans 11:33-34: “O what depth of riches, both the wisdom and knowledge of God! How entirely incomprehensible are his judgments and unsearchable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”

“A distinction must be kept with special diligence between what is and what is not revealed expressly in God’s Word. For beyond that, about which was said so far, as was revealed in Christ, God has kept secret and has hidden still much of this secret, and has reserved his wisdom and knowledge alone, which we should not probe, nor follow our own thought into it, nor draw conclusions or speculate, but hold ourselves to the revealed Word” (M. 715, 52).  
Now the cases are cited.

Again to his point: “Likewise, when we see that God gives his Word in one place, while he does not give it not to a second, when he takes it away from one place and lets it remain in another. In the same way one is concealed, blinded, given in a perverted sense, while another, in just the same guilt, is converted again, and others as well...Because we neither can nor should investigate and find out the basis for everything in this article, the high apostle Paul, who, when he disputed much concerning this article from the revealed Word of God, as soon as he came to it, in order to display what God had planned beforehand from the secret of his hidden wisdom, he quelled and chopped off the discussion with the following words: ‘O what depths of wisdom...who can know?’ and testified, ‘who can know outside of and above that which he has revealed to us in his Word’” (M. 716, 57. 717, 64).

One may think only on our dear Savior himself. How wonderful is the way of God the Father with his Son as preacher, so that the visible fruit and accomplishments of believers are so small, so that the Savior himself, the Lord, to whom everything has gone from the Father, must say to his disciples: “You will do greater works than I” (John 14:12). From that Luther derives comfort for himself and preachers:

“One would almost like to say with Job and Jeremiah: “I wish that I had never been born.” So I would almost like to say: “I wish, that I would never come with my books....again I

must never consider myself better than our dear landlord Jesus Christ, who lamented again and again: without success I have worked and my labor is lost” (XXI. 347, writing against the antinomians).

One can be opposed to the comparison of a preacher, who is a sinful man, with Christ, the perfect Son of God, who can surely pull no one into sin in the direct administration of his *Predigtamt* on earth. For this reason he can be opposed to this comparison, because what can not take place with Christ, can take place with the most faithful preacher, namely, that he through mistakes causes many failures in the office and is guilty in many cases, so that it results in so few fruits with him. Indeed, each preacher must acknowledge that. Yet when hardly any fruit are shown after sincere faithfulness, honest diligence, and wise work, he ought to always make for himself comfort from his call: ‘You are here only the servant and slave; God is the Lord. He has appointed you to preach; he himself gives the Spirit through that, who works faith, wherever and whenever he wants. He is the Lord and his courts are unfathomable and his ways unsearchable. He has his times and hours. I want to be still to what he does, whenever he may say to me: What I now do, that you do not know that I may faithfully work under his gracious help is my concern. What the work should accomplish, I must leave for God as his concern.’”

In this way Luther speaks the following comforting words: “This comfort belongs especially to the bishops and shepherds of souls; these should set themselves up in this way, so that they believe that their office is powerful, whether that is clearly seen according to all outward appearances, or if no fruit resulted. For if anyone wants to be satisfied with his office but not before he converts everyone and has made them into Christians, then he will never have any peace. Just as Abraham found everywhere the despising of God, and yet was not half-hearted, nor did he cease to continue constantly in the true religion with his person, with his



family and to instruct others in it, so also you will not be half-hearted, but will proceed comforted into your office commended to you by God and let God worry about the progress of his Word” (VII, 341. Isaiah 50:1).

On that comfort everything depends for the preacher who can truly say of the power of the divine call: ‘Here I stand for God and as his tool. My mouth is his mouth. I must not complain about a little fruit, nor for many a further comfort. God has his times and at that he lets me aim. Then it is not in vain.

Meanwhile when much misjudgment hits a faithful preacher, when it vilifies his honorable, sincere, righteous work as the case, so that no results are according to their meaning, when these thoughts master his sermon, etc, then he can comfort himself: “O that strikes me not to my dishonor, but to my honor through God’s grace. Here what falls on me, properly falls on my Lord.” Luther says: “Thus it is again before us, who preach the Word, an honor and a comfort, so that we are certainly assured that we are God’s tool; our tongue is God’s tongue and our voice is God’s voice. Then after that we can scorn with great confidence the Despiser of the Word, and say to those mockers: “You do not deride me, I who am a teacher, but you mock yourself; you do it not to me, I who am a man, but you do it to the Holy Ghost; you do not despise my words, but God’s Word. What concerns me, you will see” (XI, 58. Evang. Matth. 10).