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A BRIEF STATEMENT
OF THE
DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD.

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(Translated from the German by W. H. T. D.)

The doctrine taught and professed by our Synod has been repeatedly called *new*. Such has been the experience of the fathers and founders of our Synod, and such is still our own experience at the present time. However, our doctrine is not new, neither wholly, nor in part, but is as old as the Revelation of the Holy Scriptures. Our doctrine is none other than that which God has revealed in the writings of the apostles and prophets, and which the Lutheran church in her public Confessions professes from, and in accordance with, the Scriptures. This fact is attested by every sermon which is preached on Sundays from the pulpits of our congregations. It can also be observed in our periodicals and in other publications of our Synod. Still, it may not be improper, on the occasion of the semi-centennial of our Synod, to present on the following pages a brief statement of our faith and confession, embracing the leading points of doctrine, which we profess over against ancient and modern error.

THE PASTOR IN HIS WORK.

I. The Pastor a Workman.

When a man is called to the office of the Christian ministry he is not called to a life of leisure and the enjoyment of days of ease; he is called to work. The young man who chooses the ministry for his life's calling because he counts it an easy way of making a living will soon find himself sadly mistaken. Much as boys and young men should be urged to study for the ministry, especially in these days when the needs of the Church are so crying, yet they should never be promised a life of ease, because this would be using a delusive argument. The ministry is not an office for the lover of ease; it is an office connected with work, much work, hard work, responsible work, and idlers are not wanted in it. A young man should enter the ministry for the very reason that it brings work, precious work, noble work, the most useful of all work. The man who wants to work, who wants to be of the greatest possible use to his fellow men is the man wanted in the ministry. This office wants workers, and with workers of the right kind it will never be overcrowded.

St. Paul directly calls the office of the ministry a *work* when he writes: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," 1 Tim. 3, 1. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for *the work of the ministry*," Eph. 4, 11. 12. The same is expressed in Acts 13, 2: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." The minister of the Gospel must be a workman. This is his calling. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" said the householder to some on the market-place, and when they said, "Because no man hath hired us," he replied, "Go ye also into the vineyard." When

God calls men into the ministry of the Gospel He calls them to work. With idlers He is not served, neither is the vineyard profited by them. The Lord's vineyard needs workmen.

Nor is the work of the ministry all of one and the same kind. It will not compare with the work of a factory hand who has only one thing to do day after day. It comprises a great variety of work. It demands mental work. Thus Paul exhorts Timothy: "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them," 1 Tim. 4, 13. 15. Besides wanting the whole mind, this office demands also bodily exertion of many kinds. Solomon experienced this, and he wrote: "Much study is a weariness of the flesh," Eccl. 12, 12. And commissioning His apostles, the Lord said: "Go ye into all the world," and this "going" is frequently harder and more dangerous work than log rolling. The ministry requires work of mind and body, hand and brain. It wants the whole man. There is scarcely another calling which requires so many and such a variety of activities as does the ministry of the Gospel. The theological professor writing his lectures by the rays of his lamp and the mountain missionary pushing his way through drifted snows are both in the work of the ministry.

And the minister must be at his work incessantly. The example of his Master is to be his pattern. Now the Master says: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John 5, 17. Again He says: "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day," John 9, 4. When was Jesus Christ idle? "Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," Acts 10, 38. The minister of the Gospel is sent to be a reaper in the Lord's harvest, John 4, 38. What farmer wants harvesters who work one hour and lie down in the shade the next? They are hired to work continuously until the sun sets. The Master wants none of the grain to spoil, He wants His barn filled, and the work must go on continually while the

harvest time lasts. Such a worker was the man who was set apart at Antioch for the work of the ministry. He worked day and night, 1 Thess. 2, 9, and neither hardship nor persecution could induce him to quit the work. This man writes: "Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," 1 Cor. 11, 1. And to his beloved disciple Timothy he gives this charge: "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season. Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry," 2 Tim. 4, 2. 5. As Paul worked night and day, so is the minister of to-day to be at work night and day.

Must not the preacher have time for rest, as well as others? Indeed he must, and the Lord wants His laborers to take the needed rest. God has wisely divided the time, the day for labor, the night for rest, and man is so constituted that by rest his strength is renewed. The pastor, as well as others, should live according to God's order in nature, using the day for labor and the night for rest. Nor is it wrong for a preacher worn in mind and body to take a vacation for recuperation, agreeably to the Lord's own example. When once He was so overrun by the people that "they had no leisure so much as to eat," He said to the disciples: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while," Mark 6, 31. The Lord wants His laborers to work, but He does not want them to overwork themselves. When Jethro saw the labors which Moses had to perform every day, he said: "Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee; for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone," Ex. 18, 18. And when Moses took the advice of his father-in-law and lessened the burden of his labors this was sanctioned by God Himself. The minister who overtaxes his abilities sins in ruining his health and shortening his usefulness. Taking the needed time for rest is a duty.

But needful rest must never be made a cloak for idleness. There is a marked difference between rest and idle-

ness. Rest is cessation from work for recuperation. We rest to gather new strength for more vigorous work. Idleness is simply doing nothing. Being idle is being without occupation. We are here not speaking of squandering time *cum allotriis*, but of idleness in the literal sense. Neither should it be counted entirely needless to warn against idleness among pastors. While it is true that most pastors, especially in our American Lutheran church, are so overburdened that absolutely no time remains for them to be idle, there are some so situated that they *can* idle away days and weeks, and this becomes a source of temptation to many a pastor. The flesh is naturally inclined to idleness. It loves ease, and the old Adam is a veritable genius in the art of inventing excuses for doing nothing. One such excuse is, When a pastor has performed those duties which are specified in the call handed him by the congregation he has done his work and can take his ease. He conducts public worship, he visits the sick as often as it needs must be, he instructs the catechumens more or less thoroughly, and what more has he to do? Instead of regarding the duties named in the call a short outline of his work, which in fact they generally are, particularly when the call was issued by new and untrained congregations, the idle pastor is prone to restrict his work to the very letter of his *diploma vocationis*. The pastor who yields himself to the natural love of ease becomes blind to all opportunities, so that he can find nothing to do. He might, perhaps, do mission work, but he can see no opening, and he has not the enterprise to seek an opening. He might do fireside preaching from house to house, but he is called only to preach from the pulpit. He might handle the pen, but he is too indolent to recognize the gift that is in him. When the common man says, "Preachers have nothing to do," that is but too true of many a preacher. He might have his hands full, and more than full, but—he has nothing to do.

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!” Amos 6, 1. This woe is sure to come on the lazy pastor. He will soon lose the respect of his congregation. People will begin to call him “a doless man,” and before long they will speak of “that lazy fellow,” and if, after idling away a year or two at one place, he must undergo the labor of moving to another it serves him right. The idler in the ministry is a nuisance to the vineyard, an eyesore to the Lord, and his reward will be small.

The very nature of this sacred office requires industrious, persistent work. The minister is the Lord’s steward, appointed to distribute his Master’s goods, 1 Cor. 4, 1, and to him is the word of the Lord: “Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee,” Jer. 1, 17. The steward must be at his work distributing his Master’s goods. This is the Master’s expectation. For this purpose He has provided the goods, and great is the stock which He has provided and great the multitude of those to whom He wants the goods divided out. Art thou a steward in the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Be at thy work distributing the store, lest thy Master find thee idle and say: Why are my goods left to lie idle in the storehouse? Thou slothful servant! Seest thou not those sleepers yonder? Why is not the trumpet of Sinai sounded into their ears to awaken them? Hast thou no eye for those famishing souls? Why are they not fed with the bread which I have provided and placed at thy disposal? Where are those dwellers in the alleys and those hidens behind the hedges hard by thy steward’s dwelling, and why have they never been invited to my supper? If the military steward must be at it three times a day, the steward of the Lord must be at it night and day that he miss not an opportunity to dispose of his Master’s goods.

Neither must the steward of the Lord measure his work by the pay which he receives from men. Alas, that so many congregations pay their pastor a salary which is just enough

to keep him from starving. Congregations that pay their pastor a paltry few hundred when they would well be able to double it should consider that they are throwing a stumbling block in his way. When a certain pastor was exhorted by some of his members to preach better sermons, seeing he was well able to do it, he replied: "Poor pay, poor preach," and probably smitten by their own conscience those exhorters became silent. When penury stares the pastor in the face he may easily be tempted to do little because his pay is so little. But is it right to proportion the work done for the Chief Shepherd to the emolument received from the flock? The pastor who will measure his work by his pay becomes a hireling. He looks to his own, and not to the things which are Jesus Christ's, Phil. 2, 21. The man who is in the ministry from the love of Jesus for the winning of souls should ever be ready to do his best, let the salary received be large or small. And when it is sometimes difficult for us pastors to make ends meet we should remember that the Lord Himself also became poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be rich, 2 Cor. 8, 9.

Pay small, pay large. Thou steward of the Lord, be at thy work. There is a nobility in it. What nobler work under the sun than the winning of souls for the mansions in the skies? The world indeed has small honor for the hard-working steward of Christ. The world knows not the true standard by which the value of his labor must be taxed. It knows only earthly values and taxes only by earthly gain. In a measure the world does give honor to the stewards of Christ. A railroad company composed of infidel stockholders may grant reduced fare to clergymen in consideration that their work contributes to the safety of property or the extension of traffic, but for the true, inward work of the Gospel ministry the world has no valuation. The Gospel is foolishness to the world, and what is the winning of souls for Christ to the wise of this world but hallucination? And

the more zealously a minister is given to the wooing of souls for the heavenly Bridegroom the less honor will he find with the world. "We are made as the filth of the earth," says the apostle, "and are the offscouring of all things unto this day," 1 Cor. 4, 13. But over whom will the angels of heaven have greater joy? Over the millionaire organizing millionaire trusts for the gaining of millions, or over the missionary founding churches in waste places? There is a nobility in the Christian ministry, a nobility exceeding that of the house of Amala, a nobility bestowed on it by the King of kings. The work of the ministry is not like the work of the streetsweep the traces of which are wiped out in a day. "I have chosen you, and ordained you," says the Lord, "that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," John 15, 16. What a glorious day when the hard-worked reaper can present his sheaf at the door of the everlasting barns and can say to the Doorkeeper: In great mercy didst Thou make me a reaper in Thy harvest, and here is the sheaf which I have reaped.

Fellow reaper, have you the blues? Are you acquainted with days of discouragement and despondency? So am I. But let me tell you that you are sinning against your Master. Yielding to despondency is a transgression of the First Commandment, and it is a wrong done to yourself and the Church. It makes the workman like a bird with broken wings, dampens the ardor and hampers the work. In the gloom of discouragement you say, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain." Shake it off as did the Lord who spoke these words by the mouth of the prophet, and rather say, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God," Is. 49, 4. And what is the judgment of the Lord? "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted," Rev. 2, 2. 3. Your heart is drooping because you can see so little fruit

of your work? Learn to walk by faith. That is a very important lesson for your own soul's salvation. Do you feel disappointed, because your work finds little or no recognition with men? Are you thirsting after the praise spoken of by the Lord when He says: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets," Luke 6, 26? Or would you do your own crowning? Remember, it is the Lord who has hired you. You do the work, let Him do the crowning; that is the right division. You are not discouraged, but you are tired, because the years are many and the harness sits hard on the bending shoulders. Lift up thy head, thou father in Israel, and step on lustily. The end is in sight and the reward is coming. Soon the words spoken to aged Daniel, in a sense, will apply unto thee: "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days," Dan. 12, 13.

Unfaltering perseverance in the work is the more necessary because of that roaring lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. There is no man more hateful to Satan than the steward of the Lord who is busily portioning out the right kind of rations. Walking up and down in the earth the evil foe finds little satisfaction in his wide domain. He is mortified at that man Job, and he sharpens his wits to fell him and to destroy the fruit of his labors. When the pastor who has labored long at last yields to the spirit of ease he gives opportunity for the enemy to sow his tares, and may at last lose his labor. The hand once put to the plow, the watchword must be to drive on and on until the evening is come. When you have plowed the acre apportioned you the Master will unharness you, and the souls saved by the instrumentality of your labor shall stand with you in the presence of the Lord. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. 15, 58. VIRGINIUS.