

Are There Legal Regulations in the New Testament?

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In an earlier article we expounded the proposition: The law is not meant for the righteous person. In doing so we, first of all, laid down the precise import of the concept of law, concerning which the apostle makes this statement. Then we pointed out the outward and inward basis for this proposition, and subsequently its restriction. Finally we indicated that for the Christian the law of Christ, or the law of freedom, has taken the place of the Mosaic law code.

For the person who has thoroughly absorbed this cardinal truth also the question with which we are heading our present discussion has already been answered. If no law is meant for the righteous person, then no legal regulations are given to him either. For a legal regulation or arrangement is nothing but a species of the genus law.

Nevertheless, it is worth the effort to define this question once very precisely, to make a thorough investigation of the reasons why this question must be negated, and to point out the wide significance which such negation will have for the life of the Christian congregation and the Christian individual. Thereby the glorious freedom of the Gospel will shine forth for us all the brighter.

It is self-evident that the concept “legal” is here taken in the same sense as was the concept “law” in the previous article. It stands in direct contrast to the concept of gospel, evangelical. The essence of the law is not its content but its form, as this is true with all other things and with the Gospel likewise. Also the content of the latter, like that of the law, is righteousness. The difference between law and Gospel is this, that the former demands it, the latter gives, creates and produces it. The *δικαίωμα* of the law (Luther: the righteousness demanded by the law, Ro 8:4), together with God’s will that it become a fact and reality in us, never falls away. “...until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished” Mt 5:18. Quite the contrary, it was for the very purpose that the righteousness demanded by the law might be fulfilled in us through a spiritual conduct that God sent his Son into the likeness of sinful flesh and had the dispensation of faith¹ supercede the dispensation of the law.² Now faith has come; the promised new covenant (Jr 31:31ff and 33:8,15) has become a fact and a reality in Christ. The Gospel through the Holy Spirit’s almighty power now gives, creates and produces in the believers everything which the law, made impotent through the flesh, demanded in vain (Ro 1:3). Thereby the law—namely, the word of God which demands, respectively, curses and damns—has lost its relevance in the new covenant. We believers, we children of the new covenant, we who are spiritual are no longer under the law; through faith we are all free children of God, joyfully crying Abba, dear Father. To the righteous, to the New Testament child of God—*qua tali*, as such—no law is given. Christ is the end of the law, for whoever believes in him is righteous; such a person lives in the Spirit and according to the law of freedom, which constrains him from within—insofar as he lives in the Spirit—to fulfill all righteousness. Briefly stated, the law demands in vain; the Gospel gives, works, produces all righteousness in human beings. That is the essential difference between law and Gospel.

To a further difference between them belongs this, that as far as power and effect are concerned, the law is impotent, unable to produce in man what it demands (Ro 8:3), that, in fact, it increases the evil lust, the enmity against God, that it kills, destroys, curses and damns the spirit, the soul (2 Cor 3:6ff; Ro 5,7); whereas

¹ Ga 3:25: “now that faith has come...”

² Ga 3:25: “But before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.”

the Gospel is the power of God for salvation (Ro 1:16ff) and really effects it and makes it a reality in all its aspects: justification, rebirth, renewal, sanctification, etc.

Finally, with respect to the purpose of both, this coincides in part with their respective characteristics. The law, through that which it can and does do, is to prepare us for the Gospel; it was to be a custodian until Christ came, was to guard and keep under constraint until faith should be revealed. The law is to produce and effect a knowledge of sin, despair, fear and dread so that the sinner may be driven to the revealed Savior, whom it itself prefigured and proclaimed in its ceremonial aspects. But the Gospel is to accomplish the actual work of imparting salvation: justification, conversion, sanctification and preservation.

We thought that we should here once more offer this summary comparison of law and Gospel in advance, so that we might gain a clear viewpoint from which to consider the question whether there are legal regulations in the New Testament.

When we speak of legal regulations we therewith mean divine regulations which in every respect partake of the nature of the law as we here just described it. When we simply speak of the law, we generally mean the law *kat' exochen*, the moral law, which has love as its summary content. Also this law is in Scripture couched in outward precepts, but is in the real and deepest sense something wholly inward, psychical, spiritual. It really does not command any outward actions and performances, but only an inward attitude, love. Where love is present in perfection, it of itself gushes forth in all the actions and activities demanded by the circumstances. But because the love is not there, because the law presupposes unregenerate, ignorant, impotent, immature individuals, God himself has immediately spelled out for man the outward conduct which is appropriate for love. Thus also the Ten Commandments themselves are already outward regulations in the form in which they were given through Moses. Yet we do not call them that, but designate them with the simple term the law, or the moral law, because in an immediate and universally valid manner they express the very kernel of all moral conduct which God demands of all human beings under all circumstances (except where he himself makes exceptions). In the way in which it is stated in the Ten Commandments³ the love toward God and toward the neighbor is to express itself unconditionally on the part of absolutely all human beings and under all circumstances (except if he himself should make exceptions) and not a tittle differently (Mt 5:18ff).

But under legal regulations we understand something different. Thereby we mean such precepts, commands, commandments, laws and regulations of God which are not in themselves, immediately, and under all circumstances moral and express love, but do so more or less mediately, under specific outward circumstances. They are therefore given by God for specific reasons for specific purposes to specific persons at specific times. For the reason that they have been given by God they, of course, obligate as long as they are in force in the same measure as does the moral law itself; but they fall away with their specific circumstances, purposes and reasons. For such legal regulations dogmatics uses the term positive laws or commandments.

In this concept of legal regulations we, to be sure, do not include the thousands of individual divine mandates addressed for specific single purposes to the people of Israel or to individual groups, classes or persons. When God said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh," or to Saul, "Utterly destroy Amalek," or to Elijah, "Go at once to Zerephath," or when the Lord bade two of his disciples to find a donkey and bring her to him, or when Paul wrote to Titus, "Furnish Zenos the lawyer with what he needs," or told Timothy to use a little wine because

³ This strong statement is not to be understood as though August Pieper in any way questioned the abrogation, through Christ's finished redemption, of the entire Mosaic law code, of which the full Mosaic wording of the Ten Commandments was an integral part (Eph 2:14-16; Ga 4:1-7). When Pieper speaks of the Ten Commandments he, like Lutherans generally, is thinking of the Mosaic wording and content in as far as it is repeated and unfolded in the New Testament, e.g. Mt 22:37-39; Eph 6:2-3; Ro 13:9-10, etc. To this understanding Lutherans testify in subscribing to Luther's Small Catechism as one of the Lutheran Confessions. Whatever in the full Mosaic wording and content, e.g. in the first, third, fourth and ninth commandments (Ex 20:17a or Dt 5:21b) is not repeated and unfolded in the New Testament was for God's Old Testament people only, and is not the immutable holy will of God for all people and for all times. (Translator's note: CJL)

of his stomach, or to bring his mantle along from Troas, then no one will get the idea that these are precepts which likewise involve him.

What we understand here under regulations are precepts and instructions given to God's people as more or less general and permanent arrangements and institutions, and for their maintenance. In the old covenant God gave them to Israel in great abundance besides the moral law and together with it. We generally call these regulations the ceremonial and civil law, i.e. the law regulating their worship and ecclesiastical activities, and their life as citizens and as a nation.

In Israel all worship and ecclesiastical activity was regulated by legal precepts in their minutest detail, particularly during the time of the wilderness journey, but also later when Israel inhabited the promised land. Regulated were the places of worship, the tabernacle and later on the Solomonic temple and its divisions, its vessels, the personnel for the worship, high priest, priests and Levites, all the ritual activities: the different types of sacrifices and offerings, the purifications and washings, circumcision, vows, devoted things, fasting, prayer and blessing; the worship cycles: the daily worship, the weekly and monthly Sabbath, the sabbatical and jubilee years, the three great festivals, Passover, Pentecost, the feast of tabernacles, together with the great day of atonement. All of this was directly prescribed by God, or at least carried out in accordance with God's will, down to ribbons and tassels, pegs and hooks; and all of it was legally just as binding as the Ten Commandments themselves and for Israel belonged to the Torah, the law, the law of Moses and of God.

And yet all these laws and regulations were sharply distinguished from the Ten Commandments, the very kernel of the Torah, as the statutes, customs, precepts and ordinances of God, as *mishpatim chukkim, mizvoth*, and the *mishmereth* of God. For they are not in themselves of equal value with the law of love, that law which is likewise already couched in outward precepts. They are not immediate expressions of being holy; they merely belong to the outward dispensation of God in the old covenant, i.e. of the preparatory and pedagogical covenant. They were meant only for this time and these people under these circumstances. They had only the one specific purpose, to prepare this immature and disobedient people for the fullness of time, when Christ, and with him the Spirit and the worship in Spirit and truth would come. They were to symbolize for this people true spiritual worship and true spiritual moral conduct through outward performances. They were to typify the real salvation through the One who would be coming, and through the legal compulsion characterizing these ordinances effect despair in themselves and a longing for the promised Savior—in short, to function as a custodian until Christ would come and prepare for him. That is why it all fell away and lost its validity when the time was fulfilled. Also no Jew was any longer bound to this law.

The question now is whether in the new covenant likewise there are still such or similar outward stipulations, ordinances and arrangements of God, having legally binding force, after those of the Old Testament have fallen away. The pope claims that the church, i.e. that together with the keys he has received the power from Christ to make such laws and ordinances for Christendom; and he has made them by the thousands (the so-called canonical law) and demands strict obedience for them. We do not believe this. But has not the Lord himself in his own person or through the word of his disciples handed down for the New Testament church, apart from the law of love, such ordinances of legally binding force? Do we in the New Testament not have anything in the way of outward church laws? Do we not have anything, large or small, in the way of a divinely prescribed, binding church constitution? Have from the Lord himself, or at least through his disciples, no specific private or public outward ceremonial actions been prescribed for divine worship, no specific outward actions for our ecclesiastical and civic life, no specific times, instruments, places and persons for congregational life? Has no specific external organization been externally prescribed for the government, care and growth of the church?

There can be no doubt about the fact that there are outward ordinances in the new covenant. It could probably be a matter of dispute whether the preaching of the Gospel is an outward institution, inasmuch as the concepts: arrangement, institution, ordinances, generally designate an action with outward things or a complexity of outward actions. But that would be hairsplitting. You cannot dispute the fact that the preaching of the Gospel is in the fullest and most intensive sense an ordinance, institution and institute, indeed the one great general and permanent commission of the Lord in the New Testament. No command of the Lord addressed to

his disciples is as great, as comprehensive, as intensive, as general, as permanent as this one. It is the great kingdom commission of the Lord addressed to every believer, to the entire church, and in effect until his return. This is so much the one great arrangement of the New Testament that one can rightly designate the preaching of the Gospel the one task of the church. All other commands and orders of the Lord are embraced in this great statement. If we have carried out only this command with everything that we are thinking, imagining, speaking and doing, we have fulfilled every will of God.

Likewise the preaching of the Gospel is really an outward institution. In itself the Gospel is, of course, something wholly psychical and spiritual: grace and truth, the truth of grace; but God has expressed it in the “outward word,” in human language and speech. The preaching of it is an outward action carried out—where otherwise with the hand—so here with the feet (“Go ye:”—preaching is leg-work, Spurgeon) and with the speech organs, lungs, and more or less with the whole body, and in addition with the entire intellect, the emotions and the will. Though the preaching of the Gospel is, first of all and principally, vocal proclamation, it nevertheless embraces every other possible manner of proclamation likewise, written material, pictures, drawing, singing, etc. The preaching of the Gospel is the one great outward ordinance of the New Testament.

Added to it are the sacraments. The washing with water in the name of God, the eating and drinking of the consecrated bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ are outward actions, in the first place purely physical manipulations with genuinely physical elements. And both are commanded, prescribed, in the most literal sense institutions of the Lord, “Go and baptize.” “This do:” Both are very general prescriptions meant for all Christians, binding for all places and times. That they were recognized as such is evident from the practice of the apostles and the first church. Of course, that the twelve themselves received this baptism, as many of them as had not been baptized as disciples of John the Baptist, we are nowhere told; also in John 3:23 hardly the disciples of the Lord are meant, as some would have it, but simply the people as such. Instead, with them the direct outpouring of the Spirit took place (Ac 1:5; 2:4,5). But they immediately preach the baptism and carry it out with those who had come to faith. Likewise the Lord’s Supper, in connection with the breaking of bread (agape meal), immediately becomes a general and permanent practice (1 Cor 11:20ff), as it was intended to be in the institution itself: “whenever you do this.”

Thus Gospel, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper are indeed outward ordinances in the New Testament. But the question is not whether they are outward but whether they are legal regulations, ordinances of a legal character, having the same natures same effect and same purpose as the outward regulations of the old covenant. All this is plainly and categorically to be denied. When the Lord says preach, baptize, do this, then these in themselves are neither moral nor ceremonial, symbolic demands through which obedience is meant to be exercised and faithfulness is to be manifested. In the new covenant there is nothing anymore to be symbolized, because it offers the very essence itself of the spiritual gifts. Ordinances not in themselves moral but of a ceremonial nature presuppose unregeneration and immaturity; but the New Testament deals with the regenerate and the mature (Ga 4:1ff). As legal ordinances they would have to lock up and preserve until Christ would appear, and be a custodian until his coming. But the New Testament is the fullness of time, is itself Christ’s appearances. It is just through these ordinances that Christ imparts himself to the world. As legal arrangements the preaching of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord’s Supper would be powerless, impotent ordinances not imparting salvation but killing and damning us; under them we would be frightened and yearn for other, new ordinances giving us salvation.

The proclamation of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord’s Supper are indeed not legal but evangelical arrangements—this the church immediately realized, and has maintained and confessed it with joy to the present day. They are means of grace through which the Savior—none other than the Mediator of the New Testament—actually gives and with power effects what the law of the Old Testament demanded in vain. They are the word of life, are themselves Spirit and life, are themselves the New Testament, grace and truth, the power of God, salvation, blessedness. The preaching and hearing of the word, baptism and having yourself baptized, administering and receiving the Lord’s Supper are in no way meant to be a performance of good works demanded by a new moral or ceremonial law. They intend to be joyful confessing and glorifying, a blessed hearing and receiving of the salvation won by Christ, the glad tidings that God is reconciled to us

sinners, has forgiven our sins, that heaven is open and eternal life is our inheritance. Baptism is not a ceremonial good work but is letting yourself be baptized and having your sins washed away (Ac 2:38; 22:16). The “this do” at the Lord’s Supper has as its real and immediate objective the taking and receiving of Christ’s body and blood as the testament of the forgiveness of sins. It is veritably an annihilation of all Christianity, making an Old Testament out of the New, a law out of the Gospel, a curse out of grace, death and damnation out of Spirit and life, when one demands preaching and hearing the Gospel, baptizing and being baptized, administering and receiving holy communion of people and of Christians as works of the law. Therewith we do not make Christians but hypocrites and Pharisees, and twice damned slaves.

To be sure, the means of grace are unique. There are no others. The fact is, we either enter the kingdom of God through the Gospel, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, or not at all. Whoever does not hear this word, despises this baptism, regards this sacrament [of the altar] to be unclean, despises God’s counsel for his salvation, casts his eternal welfare away, and no longer has a sacrifice for his sins. That is why the preaching and hearing of the word, the reception of the sacraments are a real necessity for everyone who wants to be saved. That is what we also need to tell people, Christians and non-Christians, draw them to word and sacrament, admonish and warn against despising them, rebuke those who do so, indeed pronounce damnation upon the despisers to their face. Yet this necessity is not a legal one, but one that is evangelical. Whoever does not believe will be damned, not because he commits a sin against the law, not because he commits a sin that is all too great and in itself cannot be forgiven, but because he therewith rejects his salvation. After all sins have been swallowed up in Christ’s death, that is, of course, the one great sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts the world as the decisive sin. But not as sin, as transgression of the law does it damn, but as the rejection of the salvation which in Christ is offered and at hand for all. Gospel, baptism and the Lord’s Supper are no legal ordinances.

Likewise the administration of word and sacrament enjoined upon the church and each Christian—we mean the enjoined actions of preaching, baptizing and of celebrating the Lord’s Supper—is not a legal ordinance. To be sure, it is Christ’s clear command: Preach the Gospel, teach all nations and baptize them. For one thing, however, these actions do not belong to the original content of the law. On the contrary, the original demand of the law that we by ourselves are to love God and be holy excludes the Gospel and its proclamation. The law knows nothing about the Gospel. Whoever meets the demands of the law does not need Christ and the proclamation concerning him.

Afterwards, of course, after we have come to know the Gospel in faith, preaching, baptism and celebrating the Lord’s Supper becomes for us Christians not a duty—for duty is a legal concept—but an inner spiritual compulsion. I believe, therefore I speak, says David. We cannot help speaking, says Peter. You will be my witnesses, says the Lord. Yet this is not a legal compulsion, but a compelling force inherent in the Christian’s new spiritual nature. “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt 12:34). Also without the express command of Christ the church, the communion of saints, would have preached and administered the sacrament after the Lord had ordained them as means of grace. The preaching of the Gospel, like prayer, is because of the Christian’s very nature the immediate, most immediate and necessary outpouring of faith. It is so inevitable that the stones would cry out should we keep the Gospel hidden. As Christians our heart would burst if we would not confess our own and the world’s Savior and praise his soul-saving grace. That is why we would not need the command to do so if we were wholly spiritual.

Only because we are not that as yet, but still have the shy, worldly-minded, lazy flesh clinging to us, the Lord has expressly given us the command. Because this command has been given to us, the ones who have been saved, and who still have the flesh clinging to us, is the reason why it belongs to the law of Christ, to the new commandment entrusted to us in which God deals tenderly and considerately with us as a dear Father with his dear children. But the real incentive for preaching, baptizing and administering the sacrament lies in the power and compulsion of the Gospel. Hearing the proclamation of the Gospel, receiving baptism and the Lord’s Supper is a pure taking and receiving of grace.

The work of preaching, baptizing and administering the sacrament is the immediate fruit of faith; the Lord’s great commission for doing this is the battle-cry of the kingdom of grace—the evangelical battle-cry

aiming to inflame all hearts and to enthuse them for the glorification of his name and for the salvation of a lost world. Consequently proclamation of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord's Supper are not legal but through and through evangelical institutions, no matter from which aspect you might consider them.

Are there otherwise still some legal or evangelical regulations in the New Testament? In connection with our theme we cannot bypass treating the question concerning the divine institution of the congregational pastorate (the so-called *Pfarramt*), which has recently been debated in our midst. We want to anticipate it here, to make room for other things. In view of what has already been said, there can be no doubt that the ministry of the church, inclusive of the administration of the sacraments, the public as well as the private, has not only been earned by the blood of Christ and created by the Holy Spirit, but has also been ordained by explicit words of the Lord. This our church confesses clearly and emphatically in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession: "In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted."⁴ "*Ut hanc fidem consequamur, institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*" (Latin text). Cf. *Apology*, Art. 4, pp 168ff; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III, Art. II-VIII; the *Treatise* throughout, and *Augs. Conf.*, Art. 28.

But the ministry of the church and the congregational pastorate are not simply exchangeable concepts. The concept of the ministry of the church embraces absolutely all forms of the administration of word and sacrament, while the congregational pastorate designates only a specific form of the public administration of the means of grace. Not to distinguish these two concepts, the ministry of the church and the congregational pastorate, and simply to identify them with one another means confusing everything and arriving at the ill-boding error that actually only the one form of the congregational pastorate is instituted by God whereas every other form is of human origin. As soon as the two concepts are clearly distinguished as genus and species, and what Scripture actually says is carefully noted, everything becomes clear and lucid. The ministry of the church has not only been earned by Christ, created by the Holy Spirit, but it has also been expressly commanded and ordained by the Lord; and all species and forms of this ministry are self-evidently partakers of the divine institution of the genus, the ministry of the church. Most especially is this true of every public proclamation of the word and administration of the sacraments carried out in the name of a group. But for no specific form of that ministry (the apostolate excepted) can a clear special prescription and ordinance of the Lord be validated from Scripture.

It is explicitly and unmistakably stated: "Preach the Gospel!" "Baptize!" "This do!" But nowhere is it stated as a permanent regulation of the Lord, valid for all times and circumstances that every local congregation is to have a pastor! Even this is nowhere stated either as a general regulation of the Lord or of the apostles: Every congregation is to have a bishop. Moreover, our present-day congregational pastorate is as to form not yet the same as the bishop office of the apostolic age, nor does a practical directive of the apostles automatically have universal validity and divine authority like a general precept of the Lord.

It is factual that the apostles appointed elders, bishops for the congregations which they had founded, that they set specific moral and official requirements for these appointees; and that they demanded of the congregations served by these men love, honor, and caring maintenance commensurate with the service given to them. It is likewise a fact that such elders and bishops are in Scripture expressly declared to have been placed in the congregation by the Holy Spirit. But to construct from these facts a clear, explicit, specific ordinance, valid for all times and circumstances, for our present-day specific form of the ministry of the church, the congregational pastorate, is a complicated exegetical act of violence, a procedure by which our faith is made shaky and Scripture is turned into a wax nose, which can be squeezed into any desired form. In a practical way this contention can only lead to this that those occupying the congregational pastorate will think of themselves as constituting a special divinely ordained station in the congregation, having an exclusive right to the proclamation of the word taking place in the congregation and possessing the exclusive power of mediating

⁴ Translation from *The Book of Concord*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1959. All the references to our *Lutheran Confessions*, as well as quotations taken from them throughout this translation are from this publication.

salvation, while all other forms of the divinely instituted ministry of the church are degraded into mere human offices.

Out of the very same construction would follow a universally valid and binding ordinance of the diaconate for every local congregation; for in mere wording the diaconate has much more for it as a divine institution than the office of a bishop. Not only does Paul in 1 Timothy 3 by the words “the deacons likewise” mention the diaconate with one breath alongside the episcopate and demand of them the same moral requirements that he did of the bishops, but the apostles in Acts 6 arrange for the election of the deacons and specify as official requirements that they were to be endowed with the Holy Spirit and with wisdom, and besides have a good report.

Exactly according to the same logic, according to which the universal specific ordinance of the bishop’s office, binding for every local congregation, follows out of Titus 1, the universally binding ordinance of the diaconate follows out of Acts 6. In Titus 1 an apostle directs one of his helpers to appoint bishops with specific official and moral characteristics in the cities of Crete. In Acts 6 the entire council of apostles unanimously arranges for the engagement of deacons with specific official and moral qualities. The difference is merely the absolutely irrelevant one of cities in Crete there and of the city of Jerusalem here. And if the specific institution of the congregational pastorate follows out of the obligation laid upon the congregations to honor and to provide for those serving in it, then every occupation, every form of work is specifically prescribed by God, for it is stated: The worker deserves his wages, his sustenance. The inculcated solicitous provision for those who labor in the word and doctrine is merely an application of this universally valid moral principle to this particular kind of work. Finally, if the Holy Spirit’s placement of the elders in Ephesus is to prove an explicit, specific institution of this particular form of the ministry, then also every one of the particular gifts named in 1 Corinthians 12, besides the apostles, prophets and teachers, also those with miraculous gifts, gifts of healing, the rulers, helpers, those with the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues are specifically ordained by God as binding for the church of all times and places. For as in Acts 20 concerning the elders in Ephesus, so it is also stated here concerning these gifts that they have been appointed by God.

No, there is in the Scripture of the New Testament no explicit prescription, no word of institution of universal significance and binding force for any specific form of the New Testament ministry of the church, if one excludes the apostolate which is something special. The Lord directly and personally calls and sends and instructs the apostles; but nowhere does he say that in every local congregation an elder, bishop, pastor, evangelist, prophet, shepherd and teacher, deacons, such as admonish, speak in tongues, work miracles, heal the sick are to be elected and engaged. In establishing the various offices the apostles nowhere cite a command, a commission, or an authority bestowed upon them by the Lord to do so. And yet they establish the episcopate and the diaconate, the office of the elder without teaching activity (1 Tm 5:17), and other offices in the church; and the congregations willingly receive them and make use of them for their own edification and for the spreading of the word.

How do they come to do this? Certainly not by virtue of their own flesh and blood. With reference to Titus 1, Luther makes the comment: “Who here believes, that the Holy Ghost speaks through the Apostle Paul...” This is the only proper viewpoint. By virtue of the Holy Spirit the apostles arrange for all kinds of offices and service activities. Through the Holy Spirit the apostle commands Titus to appoint elders morally inoffensive and able to teach in the cities of Crete, and through the Holy Spirit the apostles command the congregation at Jerusalem to engage deacons. By virtue of the Holy Spirit Paul writes (1 Tm 3), what a bishop, what the deacons, what their wives, and respectively what the deaconesses are to be like. Through the Holy Spirit he writes (1 Tm 5) that the elders who do not work in doctrine, and especially those who do work in teaching and preaching, are worthy of double honor. Through the Holy Spirit he writes in the same chapter that no widow under the age of sixty is to be entered into the list of deaconesses and of the beneficiaries of aid, that the young widows are to marry, bear children and manage households, that because of his weak stomach Timothy is no longer to drink water, but a little wine. Through the Holy Spirit he arranges offerings for Jerusalem in Achaia, Macedonia and Corinth. But who would be so naive as to deduce universally valid regulations and arrangements binding for the church of all times and places from these procedures and

instructions! Even so, from the fact that the apostles upon enlightenment or even inspiration of the Holy Spirit arranged for two kinds of elders, for deacons, deaconesses, for men adept at encouraging and other gifts one cannot conclude that the church of all ages and places by divine regulation should and must have these types of offices: two kinds of elders, deacons, deaconesses, men adept at admonishing and giving, and no others.

How then do matters stand according to Scripture regarding the divine nature of the various forms of offices in the church? Thus: while we have no explicit, simple, legal or evangelical regulation for any one of them, all possible forms of the office are not purely of human but of divine origin. We human beings do not govern the church; when we do govern it, it regularly becomes ill-governed; but the Lord, the Holy Spirit governs it, and he governs it in a proper and wholesome manner. He wants his church to be edified by word and sacrament to attain a perfect manly age in Christ. That this may come about, he at all times gives his church just those gifts, types of offices, and men to fill them, which she needs at every place and under every course of events, and which will best serve her edification. That is why at the time of her founding he gave her apostles, evangelists, prophets, shepherds and teachers, elders who labored in doctrine, and elders who did not labor in doctrine, deacons and deaconesses, men gifted in admonishing and adept in giving, miracle workers, men with the gift of healing the sick, of governing, of speaking in tongues, etc. etc., as we find this recorded in 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12.

This is the being appointed, the being appointed by the Spirit and by Christ of the various offices and gifts, spoken of in Scripture. In Acts 20:28 and 1 Corinthians 12:28 it is expressed by *τίθεσθαι*, being made, or being appointed; in Ephesians 4 *διδόναι*, to give, is used. But that with this *τίθεσθαι* no institution through an explicit and formal or written regulation, through a command or precept, is meant is on the one hand apparent from 1 Corinthians 12:18. There it is being used of the members of the body: “But in fact God has arranged, *ἔθετο*, the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.”

This Paul applies to the different members of the body of Christ (v. 28f) saying: “And in the church God has appointed, first of all apostles, etc.,’ But God has not appointed the members of the natural body through precept, or command, or regulation, but “appointed,” created them through his counsel and almighty creative act. Just so he has also “appointed” the various charismata in the spiritual body of Christ. Here we have creation through the Holy Spirit, not external prescription and regulation for the church. The church merely carries out what the Holy Spirit gives and creates. That is why in a similar meaning we have *ἔδωκεν*, given, in Ephesians 4, which cannot be applied to an external regulation. No, the various charismatic gifts, gifts for the administration of the word and gifts for the rest of the service in the church, all office forms, are nowhere prescribed and commanded, but are gifts of the ascended Christ, which he gives to his spiritual body as he does to the human body, just as he wanted.

It is not this way that the church officials listed in Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 are prescribed for engagement to the church or even to each local congregation. Then we would, as the Irvingites want it, at all times have to elect and engage a council of apostles, prophets (immediately enlightened by the Spirit), evangelists, shepherds, teachers, miracle workers, etc. etc. just as well as shepherds and teachers. On the contrary, these were gifts of the apostolic age, in part immediately endowed for its service, Today the Lord gives similar or other gifts, in lesser or greater variety. But we can be certain that today and at all times he gives the church those gifts, offices and office forms, which the church of every age and every place needs. And if today the bishop office of the middle apostolic period has developed into the congregational pastorate, if office types of that time have changed their form, if some have fallen away altogether, if different ones have been called forth by the circumstances of the time, they are for this reason no less gifts of the Lord Christ and products of the Spirit as are those of the apostolic age. Also the persons called in a proper manner by the church for these services and to these forms of ministry are called and appointed to them by the Holy Spirit, by Christ, by God to shepherd the congregation of God, whether they are parsons, pastors, ministers, professors, missionaries, itinerant preachers, or whatever else. As gifts of Christ, appointed by the Holy Spirit, they all carry out the one great ministry of the church, earned by Christ’s blood, revealed by the Holy Spirit, and

expressly commanded by Christ, the office of word and sacrament, through which the lambs of Christ are shepherded and fully prepared for eternal life.

Then probably the church or a congregation could do away with the present congregational pastorate and introduce a Quaker type of proclaiming the word? This certainly does not follow from what has been stated above. As far as the Quakers are concerned, they do not have a proclamation of the word, but an announcement of that which the Holy Spirit is supposed to be imparting to them immediately in the silent gathering. If, however, God would today give a congregation prophets in such great number as he once did to the congregation in Corinth, the procedure of this congregation could be followed, as long as the proper order would be maintained and everything would be done decently and in order, as Paul prescribed under such circumstances. But to give up the glorious divine gift of the congregational pastorate, similar to the episcopate of the middle apostolic age, though not identical, without offering something better and of equal value in its place, would mean despising God's gift for the edification of his kingdom of grace, and would be hindering the same. In view of the fact that God gives gifts to his church, and often gives abundantly, at other times sparingly, it is not necessarily the obligation of the church actually to place every such gifted and richly equipped person into official service—God sometimes lets more bread grow than can be eaten. It is, however, the clear gracious will of God that all such persons and all those gifts necessary for the edification of the church, as described in Ephesians 4, should be used in some way. The church more often has a dearth rather than a superabundance of gifts. It would therefore be an outrageous despising of Christ, of his kingdom and of his Gospel, yes of grace itself, if the church would not at every place fill the public ministry commanded and given to her with the best gifts bestowed upon her by the Holy Spirit. It would indeed be an outrageous despising of Christ and his Gospel if in fleshly arbitrariness the church would abolish the pastors and teachers whom God has made proficient for her in the administration of word and sacrament and would for a change take recourse to inadequate lay preaching.

It is a moral demand that those who want to serve in the office of the word must have the qualifications for it and be blameless in their conduct. Even the respectable world follows this rule in filling public offices; it expects faithfulness of its officers, provides for them in a decent manner, and regards them to be worthy of double honor. It behooves the church all the more to observe these moral demands, something Scripture frequently inculcates.

One matter ought still to be brought out in this connection. On the one hand a little congregation of a few souls in some remote nook of the world ought not to be charged with despising God's gifts or the Gospel if it does not engage a recognized pastor but helps itself with the best gifts which it has in its own midst, as this had to be done by the first congregations founded by Paul in Pisidia. On the other hand, however, it is evidently a curtailment of the edification of the church as taught in Ephesians 4 when a large congregation contents itself with a single pastor, whereas it could have and engage more. And often enough it is not merely financial considerations of the congregations but also monarchical and other fleshly inclinations of the one pastor which stand in the way of the engagement of several pastors. If in our congregational pastorate we have more or less copied the episcopate of the apostolic age, why then do we not also want to imitate the multiple episcopate for large congregations, as it was practiced at the time in Ephesus and other larger congregations? Why do we cling so tenaciously to the monarchical form of the congregational pastorate, also then still, when it is evident that a single man cannot give each of his entrusted souls the proper attention at the right time? This is a clear human intrusion in Christ's government of the church. He gives the necessary gifts for the edification of the church, and we withhold them from her. The monarchical pastorate is not the form of the public congregational office intended by Christ in large congregations, evidently not because it is not in keeping with the purpose of the God-desired edification of all souls.

Indeed, as far as the form of the public ministry of the church is concerned, there is no external regulation, either of a legal or evangelical kind. Here everything is gift, creation and resultant action—through us Christians. Here we have been given freedom. Yet it is spiritual, not fleshly freedom; in the arrangement of offices and forms of offices therefore Paul's word to the Galatians applies: "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather serve one another in love."

Why do we Lutherans not learn something in this sphere from the Reformed churches round about us? They understand drawing the laity into the service of the church, also in the individual congregations, and making them co-workers of the pastor. Remarkable: No church has set forth the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood of all Christians more clearly and emphasized it more emphatically than the Lutheran church, and especially the Lutheran church in America. And no church puts this doctrine less into effect. With us the laity is consigned to listening and doing nothing in the congregation, and the pastor wants to do everything alone. The result is that we often succumb under the work, and many things remain undone. This is to a large extent due to a wrong, monarchical, monopolistic view of the office, according to which the pastor concentrates all church offices, even the purely external ones, from preacher to janitor, in his own person. Let us get rid of this erroneous tradition. Let us recognize that there is no divinely instituted and prescribed form of the ministry, even for the administration of word and sacrament, that the Holy Spirit here works freely through free Christians, that the edification of the church amidst the social development of the world is the real guide for the forms of the ministry of the church. Let us realize that God gives each congregation the needed gifts, gives them also among the laity for the ultimate perfection of the church, and just through us wants to perfect these gifts. Where we do not have people with expertise without our doing, let us therefore for assistance in our office draw in, gifted lay people who can also work in doctrine-better than our present-day Sunday school teachers, taken over from Reformed sects, who are frequently wholly incompetent.

Summary: While the evangelical office of the ministry is of divine institution, the various forms of the ministry are not through explicit regulation, but are gifts of God, immediately and mediately given to the church and therefore to be held in high honor and to be placed into the service of the church upon careful observance of the direction of the Spirit in the Word.

We can also sum up the entire doctrine in this way:

- 1) The office of the word and sacraments (Augsburg Confession V) has been won by Christ and has been explicitly commanded (Lk 24:46,47; Mt 21:18-20; Mk 16:15,16 etc.)
- 2) The various forms of the ministry together with the competent persons to minister in them (Eph 4 and 1 Cor 12:18-11; 11:28-30) have been won by Christ and “placed,” i.e. created and given, either immediately, like the apostles, prophets, those speaking in tongues and others, or mediately, like the helpers of the apostles, the shepherds and teachers, and others (1 Cor 12; Eph 4; Ro 12; Ac 1:26; 15:40; 16:1ff).
- 3) The Lord, the Holy Spirit, God places the persons into the offices created by him (see the passages above), does it either immediately or mediately through the church.
- 4) For the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in every form of the ministry the Lord in Scripture gives the instructions: 1 Corinthians 4; 1 Corinthians 12:1; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Matthew 28, etc. etc.
- 5) For honoring or supporting the servants of the church he gives the necessary admonitions, 1 Corinthians 9; 1 Timothy 5:17,18; 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13.

This in a nutshell is the Scriptural doctrine of the ministry. But one thing is nowhere to be found in Scripture: an explicit, specific legal or evangelical (as for the Gospel and the sacraments) divine precept concerning a specific form of the ministry, also not of the form of the congregational pastorate (*Pfarramt*); it is not to be found even for the episcopate. Paul’s mandate to Titus (1:5ff), given through the Holy Spirit, can, considered by itself, be generalized as little as the command addressed to Timothy (1 Tm 5:9 and 14) concerning the young and sixty year old widows. From our presentation it follows, however, that not only our present congregational pastorate but every other form of the public office of shepherding and teaching (one thing) like the office of a professor, itinerant preacher, missionary, school teacher, high school instructor, and others, according to their content and general nature, i.e. insofar as they involve Gospel proclamation, are instituted and explicitly commanded by God, as to their specific form created and given by the Holy Spirit through the church.

Whoever wants to understand in what spirit the placement of elders, bishops, evangelists, and other servants of the church through the apostolic church takes place dare not leave out of consideration that the New Testament church in its operation on earth is not thought of or prophesied in the Old Testament as a shepherdless flock but as equipped with all sorts of shepherds, servants and helpers of the great arch-shepherd. Both are true, that in the New Testament church “no longer will a man teach his neighbor or a man his brother, saying ‘Know the Lord’ (Jr 31:34), and that “I will give you shepherds after my own heart who will lead you with knowledge and understanding” (Jr 3:15). God wanted and wants his church to be taught and shepherded, led and guided through faithful teachers and leaders. That is why he gave and gives the church such gifts as they are enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12. That is why the apostles through the Spirit appointed all kinds of servants of the church for an appropriate edification of his congregation.

But it is wrong when the matter is presented in such a way, as though God through an explicit regulation had instituted only the one form of the ministry, the congregational pastorate, or also the episcopate, and thereby stamped it as one that is specifically divine and indispensably necessary, whereas all other forms of the public teaching ministry were purely by human right. This viewpoint not only has no basis in Scripture (and thank God also nowhere in our Confessional Writings), but it also brings in a legal element into the purely evangelical economy of the New Testament. This viewpoint can only work harm. It can only lead to an unevangelical overevaluation of the congregational pastorate and to inactivity and immaturity on the part of our Christian people. That is something under which we are already suffering to excess, whereas spiritual maturity is to be the distinguishing characteristic of God’s children of the New Testament.

Herewith we hope to have removed the basis for every accusation, that we had contested the divine institution of the congregational pastorate. What we do contest is the specific, explicit and universally binding divine prescription of this form of the ministry and what goes hand in hand therewith, the humanization of every other form of the public teaching ministry.

It is the same with the doctrine of the local congregation. There are various forms of the church: the home congregation, the local congregation, the institutional congregation (instructors and students), the council or the synod (Ac 15; compare Melancthon’s *Treatise* in the Book of Concord, page 329, paragraph 56, “Since decisions of synods are decisions of the church...”), also conferences (compare *Smalcald Articles*, Part III, chapter IV, page 310, and “finally through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren,” Matt 18:20; ‘Where two or three are gathered,’ etc.”) and many others.

This is not how matters stand, that God through specific ordinance has preferred anyone of these forms of the church before the others and to it alone has assigned the ministry of the keys, the administration of the means of grace, at least of baptism, absolution and excommunication, and thus made it to be the church *κατ’ ἐξουσίαν*, and wholly or at least in part deprived all other forms of their peculiar church power, or at least of the exercise of it, of the use of the means of grace. There is no such ordinance either implicitly or explicitly in Scripture. It is a pure human delusion. The essence of the local congregation is, as our Confessions frequently reiterate, given by the Lord himself in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (compare *Smalcald Articles* III, IV, p. 310; XII, p. 315, *Treatise*, p. 324, par. 24; *Augsburg Confession*, Art. 7,8, etc. etc.).

Wherever therefore two or three are gathered in Christ’s name there is the visible church, there is Christ in their midst, there is absolutely all the power of the church, also all power to exercise it, whether this church is called local congregation or house congregation, council or synod, conference or institution, be it mobile or stationary. The power of the church does not depend on its outward form nor does the right to exercise it; this lies in the essence of the church. Only that everything be done decently and in order, and that one form of the church does not through the exercise of its ministry incur disorder and confusion in the activity of the other. Moral matters, love and order, regulate this exercise, as they do among the gifts given to the church, and in the filling of the office of the congregation likewise.

Also here there is no legal or evangelical regulation. Here we still want to adduce the significant words of the *Treatise*, paragraph 26, page 324: “Besides the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places and

persons, as the Levitical priesthood is, but is spread abroad through the whole world and exists wherever God gives his gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers. Nor is this ministry valid because of any individual's authority, but because of the Word given by Christ."

Apart from the sacraments there is nothing pertaining to the church and its activity which as to outward form has been prescribed, no form for the worship service, the sermon, the prayers, the liturgy, the singing; also no time, no frequency, no duration, no prescribed order of worship. Yes, not even for the worship gatherings themselves, for gatherings of any kind is there any explicit regulation. After the Lord gave the church the Gospel and the sacraments and his Holy Spirit he has left all outward forms and arrangements to the free determination of the church governed by the Spirit.

The Lord's Prayer likewise is not a prescribed form of prayer, but a summary of the essential matters for which we pray, and a practical example of the spirit in which we ought to pray. That is already evident from the fact that the evangelists report the form of the Lord's Prayer diversely, and that it was expressly given to the disciples as a practical instruction concerning prayer (Mt 6 and Lk 11).

Besides the Lord's Prayer one more thing at first sight appears to be an outward stipulation of a form of activity of the church: the brotherly correction and the church discipline in Matthew 18:15-18. There the three steps of admonition and the concluding action of the so-called excommunication are commanded. It is thought that if the threefold admonition has been carried out in vain the excommunication is valid, otherwise not. That may be correct, But this command of the Lord is for this reason not yet a mere prescribed form, which works *ex opere operato*. The excommunication can be necessary and valid also if the steps of the admonition have not been observed, namely in the instance of public sins. In a public assembly Paul wants to excommunicate the incestuous man who has not been admonished according to the first and second step (1 Cor 5:1-5).

And the excommunication can be invalid also if the steps have outwardly been exactly observed. The entire procedure is not a mere outward process, but an admonition to do everything that is possible to bring one who has fallen back upon the proper course again and with a gentle spirit to raise him up once more. Therefore Matthew 18 has not yet been truly observed if the threefold admonition according to steps has only been outwardly carried through, but only then when in a true spirit of brotherly love all means for the conversion of the fallen one has really been exhausted. The admonition under four eyes can and should under circumstances be often repeated, likewise the second step; and before the case is brought before the congregation the elders or otherwise a smaller circle of brethren or pastors might once more attempt what it can do in the matter. Yes, the case may occur in which after fruitless admonition in a narrow circle it is not at all brought before the congregation, and the pastor would have to treat the clearly impenitent person as a heathen and publican.

On the other hand, it should certainly be borne in mind that this procedure of the Lord, described with such detail, is an authentic presentation of how true brotherly love is to show itself in this case in an outward manner, and the threefold admonition mentioned is the minimum basis on which an impenitent person may be declared to be a heathen and publican. Matthew 18 is an authentic explanation how brotherly love is outwardly to occupy itself with continued admonition over against one who has fallen into sin.

But what about 1 Corinthians 11:1-16? If there is anything in the New Testament that appears like an outward precept for public worship and social life, it is that which St. Paul there states concerning the head covering of the woman praying and prophesying in the assembly.

He simply speaks in a general way, *pasa de gune* □, and his proof he takes from the woman's position over against the man according to creation. But we know that this precept is neither a part of the Law nor of the Gospel, but that it was solely Hellenic custom for the woman, whereby her subordination to the man and her modest reserve was to be expressed; that Paul therefore is in no way prescribing a Christian dress code but a twofold moral matter based on God's order of creation: the modest reserve and subordination of the woman over against the man which were endangered in lax Corinth, also within Christendom, that he wants to inculcate. He is not concerned about the observance of a national custom for its own sake, but insofar as it gives expression to something that is universally moral. If the outward custom is different among another people, then this custom takes its place as an outward procedure in the precept, while the actual meaning always remains that which is abstractly moral. The outward action and form is never in itself a moral precept. A fashion for women

which is wholly inoffensive in New Orleans in high summer may be outrightly unchaste in winter in St. Paul. The behavior of a youth which one takes for granted can become the subject of disciplinary procedure in a Lutheran pastor—nationally chaste, nationally unchaste.

The state of affairs is the same with respect to 1 Corinthians 14:34ff and 1 Timothy 2:12ff. Paul does not want to establish the legal or evangelical external regulation that the woman is to be silent in the assembly. In the passage just discussed he is actually assuming that she steps forth in the assembly publicly, prays and prophesies; only she is not to do this with a denial of her modest reserve and her subordination to the man thereby that she prophesies with an uncovered head. In 1 Corinthians 14 we have the precise antithesis in “but must be in submission as the law says.” Where therefore the “being in submission” is not denied by the public speaking, praying, prophesying of the woman, there it is neither immoral nor obstructive for the Gospel.

Also in 1 Timothy 2:12ff he does not want anything else. The woman is not to teach publicly when she thereby becomes Lord over the man. It is against this that also the whole argumentation in this passage is directed. Where therefore dominion over the man and modest reserve do not come into consideration, as for example in the school, or in an assembly of women, or in an assembly of men, or in a mixed assembly, in which there is a lack of men with gifts making them apt to teach and able to pray and prophesy, and a woman has received both—has received the ability of public prayer and prophesy or instruction from God as special gifts—there she not only may, as in 1 Corinthians 11, but according to Joel 3; Acts 2:17; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:16 must pray, prophesy, teach, of course, always with the observance of modest reserve. The public praying, prophesying, teaching of the woman is not in itself immoral or unevangelical (naturally much less that which is done in private). But against both, Law and Gospel, is the emancipation of the woman from the subordination and modest reserve⁵ especially ordained for her, which, besides other things will by and large direct her in a practical way to private life and as a rule exclude her from participation in public life.

The modern emancipation movement among women is a rebellion against the proper submission and modest reserve of the woman. Through this rebellion not only the civil, but also the domestic, and above all the moral relationships will be thrown into disorder. Also the church cannot under ordinary circumstances without harm endure the equalization of the woman with the man in his public activity.

The woman does not belong in the pulpit as long as there are men who are adept for the public ministry of the church. In addition to the reasons adduced above there is this that the woman is not in the same measure as the man instructive, adept at ruling, at punishing, at battling, interested in bare principle, consistent, unyielding and truly pedagogical, even if by way of exception it can also be otherwise. God himself through the creation and the order of creation has made and appointed the male species for the course, heavy and great physical and intellectual work in the world, also in the church. The woman is not to be there as an equally important participant in the work of the world, but as an “*eser k’negddo*”, as a corresponding help beside the man. This order of creation no human being will change. Only to the harm of society can this relationship be inverted.

It is the same in the church. The Gospel does not repeal God’s natural order. It creates no new forms for itself, but fills the existing natural ones with its spirit. Much less does it make a woman into a man, or a man

⁵ The reader will notice that in this section August Pieper repeatedly couples the woman’s subordination with modest reserve (*Shamhaftigkeit*) as a part of God’s order of creation. He does not specifically indicate where in the passages expounded in this connection he finds the feature of modest reserve indicated. Throughout this article Pieper has, however, pointed out from Scripture that the New Testament Christian’s life is more than an outward compliance to all kinds of regulations. There are no such legal regulations in the New Testament. It is therefore with an inward willingness and readiness, born of joyful, God-given faith in the Gospel, expressing itself in modest reserve, that the New Testament Christian woman will want to live the role which her creator has intended for her. Certainly modest reserve is implied when Paul writes that the woman is to be “in submission as the law [here with the general meaning of God’s word] says.” So, too, the New Testament Christian man, motivated by the Gospel, will conscientiously and willingly carry out his headship, yet not chauvinistically, but in the spirit of humble self-sacrificing love. (Again a note by the translator, C.J.L.)

into a woman—physically or spiritually; it makes a man into a Christian man and a woman into a Christian woman. Therefore also for the government and the public edification of the church the Lord, as the head of his congregation appointed men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers, men to admonish, rulers—not women—women apostles, prophetesses, etc. And if now and then he also gives the church a prophetess, a woman evangelist or a woman instructor, he does so very sparingly and, as it were, as an exception. Of course, where he does give them, according to his promise, there their appearance in this capacity is not wrong but God-pleasing, only that thereby the two matters mentioned are not violated.

Should we still test the collection for Jerusalem discussed in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 with reference to our question? It would actually be superfluous because Paul specifically writes: “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love...” (8:8).

The Gospel has been given to us Christians and the love bidden in the natural and the spiritual creation into which God has placed us; nothing else. All positive regulations presuppose ignorance and immaturity, unwillingness and slavery. Only because Israel was immature, ignorant, unwilling did God put them under the discipline of the law. Yet in the new covenant we are no longer servants but in the fullest sense children (Ga 4:7); no longer ignorant, but taught by the Lord (Is 54:13; Jr 31:34; Jn 6:45). It is the Spirit who rules us. The Lord says, John 15:15, to his disciples: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

And Paul preaches the New Testament Christendom’s freedom from all law, and fears to have labored in vain on those who in their conscience still consider themselves bound to a piece of the ceremonial law. It is therefore in principle and a priori impossible that there should be legal regulations of any kind for the children of the New Testament. We have also sought to point this out in a practical way concerning a number of contrary appearing examples.