Gisbertus Voetius, *Politicae Ecclesiasticae* [Amsterdam, Joannes à Waesberge, 1663–1676], 3:560-573.

560

Chapter V: On the Fivefold Approval

Of the People
Of Neighboring Ministers or the Classis
Of the Magistrate
Of the Minister Called or Elected
Of the Church from Which He is Called
We posit here that the approval and consent of the people is required for the following reasons:

Because this flows from the liberty and power of the people, which was discussed above in Part 1, Book 2, Treatise 1, Chapter 3, and Treatise 2, Chapter 1, and Part 1, Book 1, Treatise 1, Chapter 2.

Because, by the extension of authority, presbyters were appointed in each town by the Apostles (Acts 14:23). In Acts 6:5, where it is said that the deacons were chosen by the whole multitude, the Apostles say to the gathered multitude in verse 3, “Therefore, brethren, choose seven men from among you.” In 2 Corinthians 8:19, it says, "He was chosen by the churches (χειροτονηθείς) to travel with us," etc. See also verses 22 and 23. Thus, elections are called χειροτονία in the Council of Laodicea, Canon 5. The term χειροτονία was derived from the Athenian Republic, where some magistrates were appointed by lot (hence called 'κληρωτοί'), and others by χειροτονία, that is, by the raising of hands, which was customarily done by the people when they approved someone, who were then called 'χειροτόνοι'. Therefore, by χειροτονία is meant, in the cited place, the consent or votes of the people.

Because Cyprian teaches us in his 68th letter to the clergy and laity in Spain that this was the opinion and practice of the ancient church. He praises that the bishopric was conferred on Sabinus "by the suffrage of the whole brotherhood and

the judgment of the bishops who were present." He prefaced these words with: “For this reason, it must be diligently observed and held according to divine tradition and apostolic practice, which is also maintained among us and almost throughout all provinces.”

This text outlines the importance of the people's consent in the process of ecclesiastical approval and elections, emphasizing the basis of this practice in both biblical precedent and early church tradition. It references various sources to establish the legitimacy and necessity of involving the congregation in the selection of church leaders.

561

Pamelius annotates on this passage from Cyprian: "Some wrongly try to confirm from this the secular method of establishing their ministers through the people and lay magistrates. For nothing else can be derived from this than that elections were conducted in the presence of the people, as we have explained above."

Response 1: When he intends to criticize the opinion and practice of the Reformers, he commits a fallacy of generalization and the offense of calumny. We have explained our position above, and will soon explain it below (§3 of this chapter).

Response 2: Pamelius contradicts himself in the immediately following words: "We do not, therefore, deny the ancient custom of the election of bishops, by which they were accustomed to be chosen in the presence of the people and even with the votes of the people."

If they are accustomed to be chosen with the votes of the people (as Cyprian clearly acknowledges here, when he says that the bishopric was conferred upon Sabinus with the suffrage of the entire brotherhood and the judgment of the bishops), how can Pamelius argue that nothing more can be derived from this than that elections were held in the presence of the people? Certainly, if they are accustomed to be chosen in the presence of the people, and indeed with the votes of the people (as Pamelius himself states almost in the same breath), then one

surely derives something more from Cyprian, who praises this as a divine tradition and apostolic practice, than just that the election of a bishop was customarily conducted by bishops in the presence of the people. For it is one thing for a task to be performed by builders and workers in my presence, and another thing for me to be involved in moving or cooperating in the task.

The testimonies of the ancients, which Pamelius adduces, actually support our position, such as Augustine's Epistle 120, Chrysostom's On the Priesthood, Book 3, Isidore's On Ecclesiastical Offices, Book 2, Leo's Epistle 87, and Gregory's epistles (Book 1, Epistles 56, 58, 78, and Book 2, Epistles 3, 6, 19, etc.), as well as the Capitularies of Charlemagne and Louis, and Jerome's letter to Evagrius. Pamelius also says that in Epistle 87, Leo requires the votes of citizens, the testimonies of the people, the judgment of the prominent, the election of the clergy, and the consent of the order and the laity. Pamelius adds: "For the chief concern at that time was to ensure that a bishop was not imposed against the will of the people." Hear Ambrose, describing the custom of his time, in the book On the Dignity of the Priesthood, chapter 5: "You see everywhere in the church those who have been raised to the rank of bishop not by merit but by money; a foolish and ignorant people who have chosen such a priest for themselves." Add Sidonius Apollinaris: Book 7, Epistle 9.

Because, commonly, the doctrine and practice of the Reformers grant some role to the people in the calling of ministers. See, among others, Calvin in Institutes, Book 4, Chapter 5, where he, while accusing the corrupt callings of the Papacy, strongly argues for the liberty and authority of the church. “Now,” he says, in Section 2, “in choosing, the entire right of the people has been taken away; votes, assent, subscriptions, and all such things have disappeared.”

562

Let those read the rest, I beg, who suspect that certain Diotrepheses are constantly working to reclaim elections for oligarchic power, not only removing the people from all voting but also removing certain public ministers from the church. Add Polanus and other writers of commonplaces, as well as commentators from any profession within Christianity on Acts 6 and 14. Especially Blondellus in his

Apology for Jerome concerning Presbyters and Bishops, where in section 3, pages 379 and 549, he reviews the testimonies and practices of the ancients up to the eleventh century and most fully defends the right of the people against Bellarmine.

Because some among the Papists argue this case, like Pamelius in the citation just mentioned and the Canon Law, Distinction 63, Chapter 11, and Cause 22, Question 2, Chapter 26.
How the consent of the people can be known, we have indicated above. At the very least, if it cannot be gathered from a prior examination of their inclination or from their subsequent explicit and open declaration, it may be ascertained from their silence during the public proclamations of the elected and called person, concerning their consent, or rather their non-dissent and non-rejection. And this is what our Liturgy suggests in the chapter on the confirmation of ministers: "Beloved brothers, you know that on three distinct occasions we have publicly proposed the name of our brother N., who is present here, so that we might learn if anyone has anything concerning either his doctrine or his life that would prevent him from being confirmed in the ministry of the word. However, since no one has come forward with a legitimate objection against his person, we will therefore proceed at present, in the name of the Lord, to his confirmation."

Question: What if someone or some people have or think they have reasons why they do not wish to approve the elected person or the election by their consent through silence? What should be done?

Answer: If it is against the election or the manner of proceeding in the election that was followed, the electors could be advised about it; also, if it is of such importance to them, complaints could be brought to the classis and synod to ensure caution in the future. However, this should not be done to prevent the confirmation and induction of the elected person. But if the objection is against the elected person's doctrine, or his gifts in preaching, or his piety of life, integrity, honesty, then one should not publicly contest the proclamation of the elected person in the church, nor should the reasons for dissent and contestation be discussed there (for this would clearly be unseemly and would become a seedbed of seditions, tumults, confusions, and schisms), but the reasons for dissent should be modestly indicated to the synod or the electors, and their judgment should be awaited. If they do not

seem to judge justly and for the edification of the church, an appeal should be made to the classis and synod. The synod, classis, or synod will then consider whether there are only a few or a smaller number of objectors compared to the many who approve; if the objectors are fewer, then not much weight should be given to this objection...

563

...if indeed the greater support of the people is evident, and they eagerly demand the ministry of the elected person or at least willingly accept it. Sometimes, due to the present danger of schism, someone elected by the classis or synod may be introduced into the ministry of that church by the synod, even if some part or the majority of the church reasonably objects to his doctrine, life, or both; however, this happens under the promise made by the church to remove him as soon as he commits anything absurd in doctrine or morals. Sometimes, when two parties in the church are disagreeing and contending about two candidates, neither is approved by the classis or synod, but for the peace of the church and to prevent schism, the election of a third party is prescribed.

Our ecclesiastical order, article 41, requires the consent and approval of the classis or of neighboring ministers either concurrent or subsequent, particularly in those places where this has been customary until now. This is not because it is of the essence of the vocation or an integral part of it, but as a measure of abundant caution and for greater efficacy. Thus, the power in this respect belongs to the classis and is given cumulatively. But concerning the power of governance and ecclesiastical discipline, which can be granted to classes or synods, this will be addressed later in part 3.

The approval of the magistrate was sanctioned in the year 1586 by the National Synod of The Hague, article 4, where it states that the person called or elected should be proposed to the magistrate of that place to investigate whether they have any legitimate reason to object, concerning his life and civil conduct or behavior (in Dutch, Burgerlijcken Handel). This was added at that time due to the dissension between the Illustrious Orders of the Provinces, especially Holland, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, governor of the united provinces of Belgium. The

histories of those times testify that many nobles, politicians, and even some ministers had supported the authority and governance of Leicester, as well as the plans and endeavors of the most serene Queen of England, with some being deceived by Leicester's pretenses, thinking that the Republic and the church would be free and safe in this manner from the threat that the Spanish enemy was posing. Therefore, because the ministers were widely suspected by the Illustrious Orders of Holland and the magistrates of the cities, this article and another of greater importance were added to the ecclesiastical order, article 34, so that, finally, the political approval and confirmation they hoped for might be obtained.

But whatever circumvention was applied then and in the year 1619 in the Synod of Dordrecht, no confirmation followed, except that the churches, previously free from the attendance of certain deputies of the magistrate in synod assemblies, pressed for the addition to article 34 (which in the order of the Synod of Dordrecht is article 37), claiming it to be a statute of divine or ecclesiastical law, not only binding at all times but also binding forever.

564

See above on this addition, part 1, book 1, pages 135 and 199, and below in treatise 2, where it discusses the right of patronage.

Now, let us explain this approval in greater detail by addressing a few questions.

Question: Is such approval a legitimate calling of a minister?
Response: Not at all. A legitimate ecclesiastical calling is its objective and presupposition.

Question: Is it of the essence of calling or election, or is it an integral part?
Response: No. It is an adjunct, either concurrent or subsequent, which can be present or absent. Therefore, it is not an integral part nor of the essence, nor an essential constitutive or consequential element.

Question: Is it a necessary requirement such that the calling would not be valid, or the person called could not be introduced into possession or begin the exercise of his ministry?
Response: No. We can see this from the examples of clandestine churches during the Apostolic period and subsequent centuries.
Add to these the clandestine churches since the Reformation that spread throughout Europe, continuing to the present day.

Question: Is it a necessary requirement where the church and its assemblies, practices, and succession are publicly permitted?
Response: No. General tolerance and permission include the permission of specific callings, governance, discipline, etc. Thus, explicit and specific notification of a vacant ministry or the increase in the number of ministers, or the dismissal of a minister, and the request for a license to call a minister or ministers, or the proposal of nominees or electees, or the positive petition for the approval of the designated or elected minister, or the positive expectation of approval or disapproval, are not required. Examples can be found among the Waldensian churches of Merindol and elsewhere, the churches of Piedmont in the valleys, the churches of the Unity of Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia, the churches in France and Béarn, the churches of the Dutch in Moscow, the foreign churches (namely Dutch and French) in England, the Reformed churches in the principalities, territories, and cities of Germany adhering to the Lutheran profession or the (so-called) unchanged Augsburg Confession, the Reformed churches under the kings of Sweden and Denmark, both past and present, and finally, the Reformed churches under the Turkish Empire, both past and present, which are numerous. These churches are neither required to seek nor expect special permission to call ministers or special approval of an ecclesiastically called minister from the Emperor or Turkish Pashas or prefects. The same can be said of the churches of Christians in Greece, Croatia, Armenia, Egypt, Syria, Persia, etc., which are subject to the Turkish and Persian Empires.

565

"After the capture of Constantinople, Mahomet ordered the Christians to hold assemblies and choose whichever Patriarch they wished for themselves. He stated

that he would confirm the creation of this Patriarch and issue a decree for him to fulfill his duties."

Question V: If a prince or some magistrate, whether urban or local, demands an explicit and special notification to himself of any vacant ministry and a petition for the license to call a minister, as well as a formal approval of the one called, and claims or presently insists on this, leaving all matters to the liberty of the church, what should be done?
Response: These conclusions are reached:

Conclusion 1: The magistrate or prince is not always obliged to specifically and explicitly scrutinize, examine, and after special examination, approve or disapprove the callings and called ministers of that church whose public profession, actions, exercises, and assemblies he permits. Just as in other actions and acts of ecclesiastical governance, he is not always obliged to claim and usurp special knowledge, examination, and approval or disapproval for himself. However, such actions and acts of ecclesiastical governance include public and private catechization of the ignorant, the preparation of the competent, the reception of any member not without such and such confession of faith, witnesses, and testimonies of life, universal visitation of church members as often as annually when the Eucharist is to be distributed; abstention of some from participation in this communion, suspension of others from the use of communion for a time, excommunication of some, and their reception or reconciliation, the selection of books or texts to be explained in the church, the choice of Psalms and ecclesiastical hymns—who, what, when, how often, in what order they should be sung—public prayers—what kind, in what order and manner they should be instituted—preparatory, eucharistic, supplicatory sermons, and so forth, when, what kind, in what order and manner they should be instituted.

Conclusion 2: If a prince or magistrate, whether supreme, subordinate, or local, absolutely insists and demands that such notification of a vacant ministry and such an elected person be presented to him, and that his approval of the same be sought, I would not advise the church to stubbornly insist on preserving its immunity and independence in this part at the cost of losing the magistrate's permission and its liberty. For it is better to endure some burden, undergo some occasion of danger

and inconvenience, or suffer some diminution than to lose everything entirely. For example, if the Ottoman Emperor, or heathen princes, or their prefects, or Christian princes and magistrates alienated from the Reformed religion and church, without any special reason concerning the public governance and preservation thereof, imposed such a thing in the case of a calling, and its execution could not be averted either by prayer or by payment: ……

566

... it would certainly have to be endured, and better times awaited, not unlike the Greek churches endure the exaction and tribute of charatzi and peschesh. This is the case in the election of the Patriarch, so that at least the liberty of elections, other actions, and the entire profession and practice may be retained for themselves. For more on charatzi and peschesh, see below (tract 2, where we discuss the right of patronage) and part 4 of the selected disputes under the title 'On Simony.'

By deciding thus, we do not say that it is honest and lawful in the political court to impose such burdens on churches regarding their callings by unbelievers or by princes and magistrates who profess Christianity (namely, Papists and others alien to the Reformed religion and church, though still publicly permitting it).

3. Conclusion: If, in other actions and acts of ecclesiastical governance and discipline, some of which we have mentioned, magistrates were to impose such foreknowledge and explicit approval, and a request for it from themselves upon the churches: this would be equivalent to breaking off the public and established permission of religion and forcing the churches to adopt the condition of clandestine ones, and to disrupt the public assemblies and exercises usually celebrated openly.
4. Conclusion: If Reformed princes and magistrates were to attribute so much to themselves concerning the calling of ministers and impose these burdensome requirements on the churches without any special occasion or reason seriously concerning the governance and public state of the polity, this would likewise have to be endured. Just as in some places the right of

patronage is exercised in the callings of ministers, which they have not yet been able to free from that burden.

5. Conclusion: Churches are not obliged to defer to or seek this special approval from princes or local magistrates, whether Reformed or non-Reformed, but granting the public freedom of the Reformed religion (as in the Ottoman Empire, Russia, the kingdom of France, some territories of Germany, etc.), if indeed those authorities do not at this time consider it proper to insist on and impose such things on the churches. For neither the essence of the calling nor the church, nor is it necessary for a better state of being; it is not required when matters are tranquil in the church and the polity.

Objection 1: By the right itself of the magistrate, this special knowledge and explicit approval of the called or elected minister belong to the prince, governor, or any local magistrate. Therefore, such explicit approval is necessary and should necessarily be given to, requested from, and awaited from the magistrate, even if he is unwilling, negligent, or indifferent. The reason is that each person should be given his due right.

Response:

1. Regarding the antecedent: This right belongs to them by the law itself, not absolutely, but on occasion, out of necessity, as the public good may require."

567

"Just as it belongs to them (magistrates) to deprive any subject of life, or of dignities and offices, or of goods; to confiscate the goods of citizens into the treasury; to search any rooms, tables, banquets, account books, chests, and vaults, pockets, barrels, letters, and secret papers; and to remove, transfer, abolish all these things, and even to deliver some of them, along with their owner, to the flames at the hands of the executioner. Additionally, to dismiss wives and children of citizens who are grieving, to expel those who are unwilling, when a city is besieged; to prohibit, in cases and states of war, the importation of certain goods and the

exportation of others, including money; to forbid, during times of war, the movement of citizens, inhabitants, and foreigners from the city into enemy territory, and from enemy territory into the city.

Therefore, this right is hypothetical and particular, not absolute and general; it does not need to be observed and exercised by all, everywhere, and always, without any reason or special necessity.

Response 2: With the antecedent explained by such a distinction, the consequence collapses. If, therefore, by right due to necessity and imminent dangers, magistrates prohibit some citizen or some foreigner, an exile, wandering with uncertain dwellings, even a prince, a supporter, or a friend, from entering as a guest, who would then infer from this: Therefore, always, and absolutely, without any reason of necessity or imminent and unforeseen danger, all foreigners and exiles (even if innocent) must be prohibited and expelled; and if the magistrates did not want this or hesitated, they must be warned and compelled to do so. For, indeed, each one must be given his due right.

Objection: If that magistrate's right does not contradict divine and natural law: Then the magistrate is perpetually bound to exercise that right concerning the calling of ministers, and the exercise of that right must always be demanded and expected from the churches concerning their calling.
Response: I deny the consequence. Because it is a hypothetical right, not an absolute one; the necessity of exercising the right is hypothetical, not absolute. Just as a magistrate has the right over the life and death of subjects; and has the power to deprive any subject citizen of city rights, dignity, office, or goods, or even life (hypothetically, that is, if the conditions are met); however, he does not have absolute rights; nor can he deprive any citizen of goods or life outside of that hypothesis, much less ought he to do so. It was King Solomon's right to deport Abiathar to Anathoth, which necessarily resulted in the cessation of his priestly functions (1 Kings 2:26-27). But neither Solomon nor any other prince or magistrate has the absolute right to deport Abiathar to some island or to expel him from the kingdom, region, or city without cause or necessity.

To approach our case more closely: when, in the year 1581, the Belgian churches were about to celebrate the National Synod in Middelburg, for reasons suitable to

that time and the state of affairs, they requested the Illustrious States of the United Netherlands to appoint some of their own as spectators and witnesses of the synodal actions."

568

"But since that appointment did not occur, the synod was nonetheless legitimately convened. For it is not the magistrate who constitutes a synod, as canonists say of the Pope, that he constitutes a general synod. It would seem all the more absurd if a certain synod, having been legitimately gathered, were to cease all synodal actions just because one of the political deputies left early, was summoned elsewhere, or arrived late due to impediments. See the response given by the Illustrious States of the Netherlands to the ecclesiastics in the year 1581, in the excellent apology of the Synod of Holland held in Haarlem in the year 1582 against the remonstrance of the Senate of Leiden, published in Utrecht in 1660 by Meinardus van Dreunen, the academic printer.

Second Objection: This right has been acquired through custom, as if it were law, so that the exercise of the right should be demanded by the church and granted by the magistrates, and that the calling (of ministers) is null without such explicit approval, which is considered its soul and form. Now indeed, does form give being to a thing?
Response 1: I deny that there is such a necessity for this explicit and special approval. It can either be absent or present, just as it was absent in the callings of the Apostolic Church, which were nevertheless very well-ordered and legitimate.
Response 2: I deny that custom establishes law. This is proven elsewhere, especially in controversies with the Papists. Christ did not say, "I am custom," but rather, "I am the truth" (John 14). Surely, the Pope could allege custom and the prescription of long time in the conferring of bishoprics and other benefices, in the creation of cardinals, in the confirmation of bishops, in granting the pallium to archbishops, in receiving annates, in granting indulgences, favors, and dispensations.

Third Objection: If such special approval is not absolutely necessary, it is at least necessary for the well-being and for abundant caution, because not only is the one

elected or to be elected, along with his qualifications, examined by the synod and the classis, but also by the magistrates. It is credible that magistrates are less prone to emotional biases, less inclined to factionalism, less likely to act here with bias, and less likely to be deceived or willing to deceive than ecclesiastical electors.
Response 1: I deny that such approval contributes anything inherently to the well-being or improvement, either of the church or of the constitution of ministers. If it has ever contributed something somewhere to the prevention or removal of abuses, this is accidental. This collection is similar to the other: Pastors, bishops, and other ecclesiastics involved in political governance, and indeed even in the administration of war, especially defensive war, have sometimes, through their fidelity, prudence, and courage, prevented or removed abuses and harms, and have exceptionally promoted the public good, more so than all other ministers of the kingdom and of kings, not even particular magistrates."

569

Therefore, for the sake of well-being and abundant caution, pastors and other ecclesiastics should be employed in ordinary political and military affairs, so that either beforehand, afterwards, or concurrently with other politicians and magistrates, they may deliberate on these matters, decide on them, and execute them. Hence, to these same ecclesiastics (without regard to politicians) should be entrusted the public seal, the public treasury, the keys to the forts and borders of the kingdom or region; and furthermore, the offices of chancellor, secretaries, military forces, fleets, courts, dikes, and forests: we know that something like this has happened at times, and that it still wishes to obtain these offices even now, as John Mariana mentions in *De Rege*, Book 1, chapters 8 and 10, where he also notes the involvement of ecclesiastics in military matters in his *Defence of the Papacy*.

Response 2: We deny the reason given, namely, that when the qualities of the ministers to be appointed are particularly scrutinized and examined by the magistrate—this is, by the prince, or the local ruler, or the governor, or the consuls—one can more reliably hope that those to be appointed will be the most excellent and most suitable for promoting orthodoxy, piety, good order, and ecclesiastical discipline. I will not speak of what experience has shown, but princes, local rulers, governors, and consuls are not always equally devoted to the

purity of doctrine, the zeal of piety, or to ecclesiastical governance and good order. Indeed, quite a few of them support neutrality, or Catholicism, or Arminianism, or libertine views, or Epicurean irreligion; some even openly declare and practice these views. And granted that they profess the Reformed religion and pledge their commitment to embracing, promoting, and defending it: if their actions are contrary to these promises, what benefit will those promises bring us? Should we not recall the old saying here about some people's idle effort and philosophical sentiment? Anyone with even a moderate understanding of human affairs and actions can consider whether more harm is to be feared from what might emerge here than the good that is expected to be hoped for.

Who can deny that there is a greater risk of generating dissent and contention, of impeding and rejecting an election (even if it has been conducted with the unanimous votes of the synod and with the approval and applause of the faithful), and of rejecting the most outstanding candidates, especially when they think about promoting someone else, either from their relatives, friends, or associates; or someone recommended to them by a person to whom they dare deny nothing (for to recommend is to command); or someone who is recommended through a 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' kind of arrangement? What if, when the chosen candidate is formally proposed and approval for the election is requested, they delay the response; and after repeated public prayers to God in the church, after repeated or a repeated solicitation by the synod, after some drawn-out period, they finally reject the candidate; and do the same for two or three or more successively chosen candidates: shall we believe that this repeated abortive calling, this anxious waiting, this unworthy rejection of the most worthy candidates, will promote the peace and edification of the church?"

570

What if, after approval of the matter, someone recommended by himself and personally favored for reasons of gratitude, is rejected in favor of all other candidates, with all major exceptions and with the synod being reduced to absurdity and despair, and is forced, whether willingly or unwillingly, to choose that recommended and approved individual, or someone similar to him? Such a risk of all those dangers, inconveniences, and difficulties is not given where that

special approval of the chosen candidate, notification, and petition is not in effect: as with the infidel magistrates, Papists, and others alien to the profession and church of the Reformed, as noted above. To these, add all our Reformed magistrates in Belgium, who have never required special notification, petition for calling, or approval of the candidate for a vacant ministry.

Furthermore, in Utrecht, where the public exercise of Papacy prevails, all priests and clerics coming from elsewhere, who perform divine services there temporarily or permanently, are explicitly and specially not approved. They should have been first examined and approved by the magistrate, both due to the status and condition of the city, the betrayals fabricated by clerics there, and the doctrines of treachery, conspiracy, and perjury specific to the Papacy. These are discussed in Part 2, Selecta Disputationum, title on the Roman See's incompatibility, etc.

I add that you might be more surprised that magistrates strongly inclined to Remonstrantism in Rotterdam, Alkmaar, Hoorn, etc., while tolerating Anabaptist, Remonstrant, and other sects in the years 1616, 1617, 1618, never sought special knowledge and approval of ministers who were called to perform ministerial functions there either temporarily or permanently.

The Zeelandic church, in order to be freed from the burdensome and dangerous work of approval, preferred to withdraw from the full election order of 1586 and the law of complete election; and admitted some magistrates to participate in the election votes with the synod: as is evident from the order of the year 1591 established in the Middelburg synod (articles 3 and 4), and confirmed by the Illustrious Estates of Zeeland, which is still observed today in that province. You can see what they considered better and more advantageous in Zeelandic approval, as they preferred to avoid it and any kind of preliminary examination and approval of the candidates, which might be claimed by the magistrate, as too prejudicial to the freedom of calling, and to instead accept the elected magistrates' suffrages and complete the entire calling process in a qualified college (as they call it)."

I say all this not to move from the ecclesiastical order or established position in this or other provinces approved by supreme authorities, but to show and make clear that, as a hypothesis and regarding the rationale of that statute, the special approval of the local magistrate should be explained and demonstrated. The magistrate, without harming his own conscience, power, and rights, can, if deemed appropriate, refrain from pressing or exercising such approval, just as he does not press or exercise it in the appointments of Anabaptists, Remonstrants, etc.

Regarding the instances, exceptions, and objections previously raised by Remonstrants, Erastians, and Apapists (those advocating the Papal tyranny) and often revisited by some, responses have been given elsewhere.

Now, a Christian prince or magistrate, in his intrinsic, direct, and immediate ecclesiastical power, is under Christ and from Christ; thus, he is immediately subordinate to Christ, the head of the church and spiritual king. Therefore, he has the power to appoint and dismiss ministers, and if he grants or permits powers to synods, councils, or ecclesiastical ministers, this is by his own concession or delegation. The magistrate is a supporter of the church: the magistrate is a guardian of both tables (the civil and ecclesiastical laws); he is the lord of the church and ecclesiasticals. Hence, all ecclesiastical matters, business, and causes depend on him: He provides stipends for ministers and covers all expenses for ecclesiastical exercises, business, and activities. The church and religion, which are public, and which holds public temples, benefits from public stipends, and which the magistrate approves and makes his own, must be distinguished from religion and the church outside of which the magistrate seeks and permits only what is in separate places (temples, chapels, houses) according to his own expenses. The prince or magistrate is a principal member of the church; therefore, if alone, he does not appoint ministers but rather participates with ecclesiasticals, principally in the election of ministers. These and similar matters, discussed above in Part 1, Book 1, and Book 4, will be addressed again; and below in Treatise 2, applied to the appointment of ministers, some aspects will be revisited.

The approval of a candidate or proposer or minister, to whom the call is offered, must necessarily precede the acceptance of the offered call, and this presupposes or includes it. For no one can accept and follow a call in good conscience unless he is sure that the call is legitimate and made in the Lord. When a minister is called to

another church, the call is offered, and he is solicited for acceptance; this reasoning is placed in the forefront, that the call made in the Lord and legitimately. The called minister, even when he professes his inclination to accept the call before the synod and class, usually cites this reason among the foremost ones

This same matter is discussed in our liturgy under the title 'On the Confirmation of Ministers,' where the minister to be confirmed publicly requests responses before the church to three questions, the first of which is: 'I ask you, whether you, in your heart, believe that you have been legitimately called by the Church of God and therefore by God Himself to this sacred ministry?'

The subsequent approval of the church from which the minister is called is necessary and is presupposed or included in the legitimate dismissal; without which the minister cannot be confirmed in the ministry to which he is called, nor can he transfer himself there to lawfully assume and carry out his ministry. It seems contrary to ecclesiastical order, as well as to all humanity and fairness, if someone who is a deserter, defector, or renegade, without forgiveness and honorable dismissal from his own church, transfers himself to the ministry of another church; nor is it right for the church to accept such a person without the testimony and formal dismissal of his own church. Certainly, if any minister dared to do such a thing, he would not escape ecclesiastical censure. It is known that a certain deserter from the church was suspended from ministry synodically for half a year.

1. **Object**. Churches are often difficult, indeed completely stubborn, and indeed without reason. Therefore, response. Neg. Consequence. No one should be a judge in his own case: but it must be appealed from him or from the calling church to the classes and synods; and their judgment must be awaited. This path was followed by pious and outstanding ministers who were called elsewhere, as is evident from the synodal records.

Instance. When time is drawn out by prolonged dismissal and appeal, the vacant and calling churches suffer loss. For the church does not benefit from the necessary

work of that minister as long as the vacancy is not filled. That church receives little benefit from the work of a minister who is no longer inclined or devoted.

Response 1. Although some inconveniences accompany the order of dismissal, it must still be observed. Just as there is hardly any human law that is particular and positive, which does not claim to have something unjust in it, and thus the supreme law is said to be supreme injustice: yet the law, justice, and practice must not be disturbed by impatience: so that it is not said to such a person that you hastened too much, etc.

Response 2. At least those who abandon their position without the church's permission and dismissal, and for whom no legitimate call from elsewhere has been offered, nor even initiated; cannot cover their nakedness with such pretexts.

11. **Object**. Whether a prince, king, regional magistrate, or private patron's pupil, without the church's public or private dismissal, is obliged to follow the call and jurisdiction of his patron or guardian and to relinquish his position.

573

Response. Whether it be new law, whether canonical or civil, if someone under their own pretenses makes claims or pretends, it must be borne with; however, it should not be approved. Our order, Article 10, prohibits the acceptance of another ministry and the desertion of the present one without the consent and approval of the synod, deacons, elders, former deacons, classes, and magistrates. Likewise, the magistrate prohibits the acceptance of such a minister by the calling church before the exhibition of legitimate testimony. Here, no exception or exemption for alumni is apparent.

3. Object. Someone who has not been a pupil of a church, magistrate, region, or private patron, but has completed their studies at their own or their parents' expense, can, according to their own or their parents' discretion, leave the present ministry and church; when it seems fitting to them and to their parents.

Response. This right, whether written or unwritten, is not proven. Therefore, it should be relegated to abysmal and unclear matters. Some think that pupils of churches or magistrates in callings to churches of this district should be preferred over others proposing or non-alumni ministers (on this case, see below in tract 3). And what if they also say that alumni should be granted the right to leave the ministry and church without dismissal, especially if they are called to that church where deacons, elders, orphanages, or magistrates have supported their studies? As far as matters stand! But further on this in tract 3.