

Gisbertus Voetius, *Politicae Ecclesiasticae* [Amsterdam, Joannes à Waesberge, 1663–1676], 3:529-543.

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Chapter I. On Internal and Extraordinary Calling.

The calling of ministers is either internal or external.

Section I.

Internal calling is the internal drawing and persuasion of the Holy Spirit in the heart of someone who desires the office of bishop and this good work, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1. It is recognized by a constant drive, desire, aspiration, and intention to serve Christ in this work, to win souls, and to lead them to Christ and salvation.

Observe here:

1. Drive and desire.
2. A right, sincere, and pure intention.
3. Choosing, in the presence of God and in the conscience, this work, occupation, and calling above all other specific callings and occupations in this mortal life.
4. Separation from the desire and intention for honors or benefits; briefly, from anything good, useful, or pleasant: which one would either solely, or primarily, or especially desire, pursue, and prepare oneself for, in this good work of the episcopate.

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Having entirely discarded all thoughts of revenge, the ambition of Diotrephes (3 John 9-10), the disturbance of churches through heresies and schisms, the suppression of piety, the desire to display one's wit, memory, learning, and

eloquence, or the intention to seek popular applause, especially that of the great and powerful. Some preached Christ out of envy and rivalry, not out of love for Christ (Philippians 1:15-16 compared with 2 Corinthians 5:14), but out of contention and spite, so that they might increase the burdens of Paul's imprisonment.

6.

The intention of submission to all the evils that might be inflicted upon them for the name of Christ and this holy work of preaching by declared enemies of the faith or piety, by the ungrateful world, by neutrals, by the lukewarm and carnal, by false brothers. Consider Paul's stipulation of vocation and mission in Acts 9:16: "For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Also, in Luke 12:3-4, where he similarly forewarns his apostles, "What you have spoken in darkness will be heard in the light," etc. "But I say to you, my friends, do not fear," etc. (Matthew 24:9, John 16:1-5). And in John 21:15, where Christ commands Peter to feed his sheep, he stipulates his love for Christ, and in verses 18-19, he foretells his bonds and death. What Paul and other apostles experienced in accordance with Christ's forewarning is described in Colossians 1:24, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions," etc., with 1 Corinthians 4:9-14, 2 Corinthians 11:23-39, Acts 5:17-18, 33, 40-41, and Acts 12:2. In brief, one must feel within themselves the mortification of the apostles (Galatians 1:10): "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ." Therefore, those who have only an external calling and not an internal one should know that they will experience little of God's blessing in their ministry. Such an internal calling is required, as our liturgy indicates when it asks the one being confirmed this question: "Does he not feel in his heart that he has been legitimately called by the Church of God, and indeed by God himself, to this sacred ministry?" The same question is similarly proposed to elders and deacons being confirmed.

Section 2.

External calling is either ordinary or extraordinary. This is further divided into purely immediate or mixed, partly immediate and partly mediate. An example of the former is found in the twelve apostles and in Paul, who were chosen and called

directly by Christ (Luke 6:13: "He called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles." John 6:70: "Did I not choose you, the twelve?"). Paul proclaims his immediate calling in Galatians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father."

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Compare Matthew 4:18-19 and 9:9, John 1:39, and 5, where the special callings of certain individuals are recounted. Examples of this are found in the calling of Elisha in 1 Kings 19:16, 19, where Elijah was involved in the work. This was a mediated calling; yet Elijah was immediately designated and shown by God. And in the case of Matthias in Acts 1:23-26, where the nomination of two candidates was made by the apostles, and the election of one of the two was immediately made by God through the casting of lots.

Section 3.

We now address some questions concerning internal and extraordinary vocation.

1. **Question:** Is any impulse or desire to preach Christ and lead people to faith and piety a certain sign of internal vocation?

Answer: No. For such an impulse, attraction, and will must be constant, not momentary, fleeting, or volatile. Next, it must be deliberate, following careful consideration of the labors, difficulties, and adversities that typically or possibly fall upon faithful workers in this ministry. Thirdly, one must examine their own strengths and weaknesses, both of mind and body, to see if they are fit for the study of languages, arts, and theology, and if they can be adequately prepared for the ministry. Furthermore, one must have some degree of success in memory, understanding, and external pronunciation. There are some whose minds are so limited that they can hardly form ideas, accurately and distinctly comprehend what needs to be understood, much less judge them. There are some with such poor memory that they cannot imprint, recall, or recite scripture texts, and consequently, would barely be suitable for delivering sermons. For it would be improper to read sermons, discourses, consolations, exhortations, and prayers in public or private on any occasion solely from a script or a printed book. Fourthly, one should perceive

within themselves the growth, or at least the beginnings, of self-denial, mortification to this world, heavenly-mindedness (if I may speak thus), and aspiration toward heavenly things, inwardness, devotion, spirituality, and sanctification (1 Corinthians 2:14-15 compared with 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Philippians 3:19-20).

2. Question: Does the consciousness of civil honesty and conduct, or at least the pursuit of certain virtues, qualify one to have a legitimate desire for the episcopate and, consequently, an internal vocation?

Answer: No. The vast difference between civil and moral honesty and the power of Christian piety—between a heart constrained by the love of Christ, detached from earthly things, devoted to God and heavenly matters, living in the Spirit, imitating Christ, denying oneself, taking up the cross of Christ, living in the Spirit, and spirituality, a newness of life, the crucifixion of the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:22-26, Luke 14:26-27 compared with John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 5:14-18)—is taught by writers on repentance or conversion, piety and its practice, hypocrisy, and self-deception. We briefly touch upon these in the second part of the selected disputations on Simplicity, Hypocrisy, and the virtue of faith, and in the Ascetics, where we discuss the practice of repentance and the practice of conscience.

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Hence, we see how poorly those are promoted to the ministry who are scarcely civilly honest, or who are otherwise vicious and scandalous. When, at the time of a calling, public and private admonition, correction, and the threat of rejection and exclusion arise, they abstain for a few months from external, manifest, scandalous, and habitual sins, as though forced. They obtain a testimony of conversion and of being a better person, or at least of being not as vicious and scandalous as usual, from relatives, friends, or acquaintances.

To discern and judge oneself and others, note that there can be five types of pastors:

1. **Carnal, worldly, devoted to pleasures and the pursuit of wealth** (1 John 2:15-16, Philippians 3:18-19): They feed themselves (Ezekiel 34:2, Isaiah 56:10-12).
2. **Vain, boastful, proud, and ostentatious**: Swollen with various sorts of curious knowledge and worldly eloquence, they preach as if acting out a drama or exercising their voice and lungs for amusement rather than speaking to people with authority in the power of the Spirit (Matthew 7:29, 1 Corinthians 4:19-20). In private conversations and discussions, especially with the powerful and honored in this world, they behave more like courtly flatterers or masters of ceremony than sincere, grave pastors of souls or spiritual fathers.
3. **Flatterers**: In their responses to proposed questions, in determining cases of conscience, in giving counsel, and in applying the Scriptures for reproof, exhortation, and correction in their sermons, they say or omit what pleases their audience, particularly those who can harm or benefit them, at least ensuring they do not displease. This is contrary to Galatians 1:10 and Jude 16.
4. **Externally honest and civilly blameless**: They carry out the work of public ministry in a composed, orderly, and diligent manner and conduct themselves modestly and peacefully. They are not disliked by either the people of this world or the formalists and lukewarm members of the church. However, they cannot tolerate those who are inwardly pious and zealous, who go beyond their civil honesty and formal piety (having a form of godliness but denying its power, as in 2 Timothy 3:5), or those who, by their teaching and example, progress and excel beyond their own lukewarmness. In fact, they bear less with such individuals than with carnal Christians or those alienated from the profession of orthodox faith. Thus, they secretly detract from them, and even while praising them, they cunningly add a diminishing comment that makes them odious or suspicious to astute people. Such were the Pharisees described in Matthew 15 and 23. See also Philippians 3:18.
5. **Strong, firm, constant in faith and Scripture, and zealous for piety and the integrity of the church.**

Those who are instructed by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit walk in the Spirit and effectively influence the hearts of the faithful. But renouncing the hidden shameful things, they do not walk in deceit, nor do they falsify the word of God, but by the manifestation of the truth, they commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. They generously bring forth from their treasure both the new and the old and do not cease to teach, exhort, and comfort on every occasion. In short, they can boast in the Lord with Paul, as it is written in 2 Corinthians 4:1-2: "Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart."

Calvin, in his commentary on 2 Corinthians 4:20, describes such a preacher as follows: "He denies that this kingdom is contained in words: for how little is it if someone knows how to prattle fluently and has nothing but empty sound? Let us then know that the external grace and skill of teaching is like a beautiful and well-colored body: the power that Paul speaks of here is like the soul. We have already seen that the nature of evangelical preaching is to be filled with a certain solid majesty within. This majesty is exercised when the minister strives more with virtue than with speech: that is, when he does not rely on confidence in his intellect or eloquence, but being armed with spiritual weapons, he zealously undertakes the work of the Lord with zeal for bringing glory to the Lord, desire for establishing the kingdom of Christ, dedication to edification, fear of the Lord, invincible constancy, purity of conscience, and other necessary gifts. Otherwise, preaching is dead and has no power, no matter how splendid its appearance. Therefore, in his second letter, chapter 5, verse 17, he says that nothing in Christ matters except the new creation, which aims at the same goal: he wishes us not to dwell on any external masks but to rely solely on the internal power of the Holy Spirit. Although he refutes the ambition of the false apostles with these words, at the same time, he rebukes the Corinthians' perverse judgment, who measured the servants of Christ by what was least in their virtues. This is a notable statement, and it applies no less to us than to them. In what do we most pride ourselves concerning our gospel? Is it not in language? Where is the newness of life? Where is the spiritual efficacy? And this applies not only to the common people but to how many, while they seek favor

and praise from the gospel as if it were some profane knowledge, study nothing else but how to speak elegantly and subtly?"

III. Question: Were all callings to the priestly or pastoral office before Moses extraordinary? **Answer:** It does not seem appropriate to affirm this. For we should not think that the church, or particular local churches, then existed without order and prescribed governance in these and other matters, any more than we should think they existed without law and gospel, even though they had not yet been proposed in canonical writings.

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I deduce that absurd and false hypothesis to absurdity as follows: What is not written definitively and explicitly in the form or signified act in the history of the first six chapters of Genesis was not revealed, proposed, known, or believed by the faithful and other children of God and the kingdom in the world for 1,650 years until and including the Noahic flood.

But all the fundamental articles of faith, all the moral and ceremonial precepts, in the history of the ancient or antediluvian world and the antediluvian church (Genesis 2-7), are not explicitly written: Therefore, they were not revealed or proposed to the church of God through the Patriarchs, nor through the mouths of the Patriarchs by the ordinary ministers of sacred things, nor were they known and believed by the faithful.

By a similar argument, one could deny the revelation and proposal of such fundamental dogmas to the church and the faithful, and the knowledge, faith, and profession of these truths in the hearts and mouths of the faithful, from Noah up to Moses.

IV. Question: Were all the extraordinary callings of the Patriarchs (who were prophets, Genesis 20:7 and 5:21-25, compared with Jude 1:14; Genesis 49, with Hebrews 11:21) immediate? **Answer:** It is not clear. However, it is not improbable that the ministry of a departing or deceased patriarch intervened, in which he would designate, ordain, and institute his successor in the name of God. Just as in the ordinary ministry of the high priesthood, Eleazar succeeded Aaron (Numbers

20:26), and in the extraordinary ministry, Elisha succeeded Elijah (1 Kings 19), and in the extraordinary leadership of the people, Joshua succeeded Moses (Numbers 27:16-23), and in the extraordinary office of apostleship, Matthias was appointed (Acts), and the evangelist was constituted in his extraordinary office.

V. Question: Were Job and Melchizedek immediately called and ordained to the extraordinary office of prophets and teachers? **Answer:** It is not clear whether the ministry of any patriarch intervened. At least, it is certain that they were extraordinary teachers but not patriarchs because the sons of God were not propagated from them, nor was the church of God preserved and propagated in their descendants. Although there could have been some who, with their entire family, preserved the true faith and genuine worship of God privately, even when the true worship and communion of the church were lacking.

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Chapter II.

On Ordinary Calling under the Old and New Testaments, and the Examination of Those to be Called.

The ordinary calling of ministers is either under the Old Testament or the New Testament. Regarding the former, there is little to be said in Section 1. It is only to be noted that succession occurred both before and after Moses. Before Moses, it is generally accepted by scholars that the ministry and consequently the calling or appointment of ministers were assigned to the firstborn.

After Moses, the calling related to the High Priesthood was assigned to the firstborn, the priesthood to the family of Aaron, and the other sacred ministries were assigned to the tribe of Levi. However, this was done so that the following negative consequence was valid: "He is not from the family of Aaron or from the tribe of Levi; therefore, he cannot be called and ordained to the priesthood or other sacred ministries, such as those of singers or doorkeepers." However, the positive consequence was not necessarily valid: for example, "He is from the family of Aaron; therefore, he must be ordained as a priest." There could be an impediment, such as apostasy, heresy, mutilation of the body, leprosy, or marrying a prostitute.

The ordinary calling under the New Testament is an ecclesiastical act of free election and appointment or ordination, by which certain suitable persons are assigned and entrusted with the ordinary function of sacred ministries.

In this description, note:

1. It is an act of election, for the calling formally consists in the election. By electing, a minister is ordained, or the sacred function or work of the ministry is imposed, entrusted, and committed to him; and conversely, by ordaining or entrusting, he is elected. By calling, separating, and sanctifying, God ordains and sends; by sending, He calls, separates, and sanctifies.
2. It is an ecclesiastical election or ordination, which takes place in the church, by the church, to which the future minister belongs.
3. It is a free election, not forced or restricted by tribe, family, certain persons, or any order or status in this world.
4. It is the election of a suitable person, which implies the necessary examination and knowledge of the person to be elected, as a prerequisite in the election and necessary for the electors.
5. It is an election to the ordinary function of sacred ministries, to distinguish it from an incidental act of calling and election, by which a particular and provisional act of ministry is requested or imposed on someone in a case of necessity when there are no ordinary ministers available to perform it, or when the church has not yet been gathered and organized.

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In the same way, someone may be invited or admitted to publicly preach a sermon, along with prayers and catechism, to assess whether they are suitable and eligible, or whether they can be chosen as the minister of that church.

Through that election and calling, the ordinary function or work of the ministry is imposed, entrusted, committed, delivered, or assigned. Thus, a legitimate calling binds the one called and imposes a necessity upon them. The Apostle says that the Gospel has been entrusted to him (1 Cor. 9:17; Gal. 2:7; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:7,11) and that necessity has been imposed upon him. And woe to him if he does not preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:16). He also says that he is going to Jerusalem

bound in the spirit (Acts 23:22). When Jeremiah and Jonah tried or were tempted to evade or flee from this work to which they were called by God, they could not obtain immunity or shake off and refuse the burden (Jer. 20:8; Jonah 1 and 2).

The calling of ministers in Scripture is denoted by various synonymous phrases: "sending" (Rom. 10:15; Jer. 23:21; John 20:20); "appointment" or "ordination" or "supervision" (Jer. 1:10); "ambassadorship" (2 Cor. 5:20); "separation" (Acts 13:2); and "sanctification" or "consecration." Metonymically, it is called "laying on of hands" (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22), "anointing" (Lev. 8:12; 16:32).

Section 3. Since prior knowledge and examination of the one to be called, as well as the subsequent confirmation of the one elected and called, relate to legitimate election or calling, these must be discussed here. No one doubts that prior knowledge of the person being elected, as competent and suitable for sacred functions, is necessary. For there is no desire for the unknown. No one can or should wish, elect, or request someone regularly unless they are suitable; no one will judge them to be suitable unless they know them; no one will know them without proper inquiry and examination. The Apostle teaches this necessity (1 Tim. 3:10): "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."

On the Examination of Those to be Called:

In the examination, we consider:

The examiners.

The examined.

What is to be examined.

The acts and means of examination.

The examiners are either public or private. Public examiners are those to whom the examination belongs preeminently and authoritatively. They are either internal or external. The former are those who necessarily, immediately, and primarily

examine; such are the predecessors and ministers in that particular church, considered both individually and, above all, collectively in a synod. The latter are those who cumulatively and subsequently examine; such are the ecclesiastical ministers of neighboring churches more closely united in the same classical correspondence.

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For elections, it is customary (according to our ecclesiastical order, Article 2) for the election and the elected candidate to be offered to the classes or to several neighboring ministers, and for their approval, or at least their non-disapproval, to be sought.

Private examiners are any pious individuals within that church who, out of commendable zeal and diligence, on occasion, and to exercise abundant caution, may inquire of acquaintances, friends, or relatives who know the nominated candidate or minister more closely. If they perceive anything noteworthy, they report it to the synod or to one of its members.

II. Those to be examined include either candidates for the ministry, actual ministers, or resting ministers, whether resting voluntarily, or having been unjustly and forcibly removed (as was the case with Calvin and his two colleagues), or having been legitimately deposed by ecclesiastical judgment, or having been compelled to withdraw due to rebellion, sedition, or the iniquity of their hearers, or because of a schism in their church. The method of examination in these cases undoubtedly varies. We will not explain all methods of examination appropriate for resting ministers at this time. At the very least, concerning those who have been violently expelled or exiled due to their steadfast and faithful profession, tradition, or defense of truth, piety, or ecclesiastical discipline, there is no need to be so anxious: for they should be preferred above other ministers, and therefore, if all other things are equal, they should be chosen before others. Such were Calvin and his colleagues, who were expelled from Geneva. The same should be considered for many theologians and ministers in Germany, who were expelled from their ministries due to the storm provoked by the Book of Concord, as well as for some

ministers in our Netherlands, who were expelled by the Remonstrant faction where it prevailed by secular force.

III. The subjects to be examined, or concerning which examination should be conducted, can be learned from the requisites of ministers, which will be listed below in Treatise 3. Here, I only advise that an accurate inquiry should be made concerning doctrine, gifts, and the ability to preach, as well as faithfulness and diligence in the ministry. Therefore, without proper knowledge of these qualities through a just examination, one should not hastily or confidently rush to a calling simply based on the hearing of one or perhaps two sermons, pronounced in a melodious, sweet, or passionate voice.

IV. The examination should be conducted among those who know the candidate or minister well, either directly or through others. With some, the examination can be confident and open; with others, whom we justly presume to act out of prejudice (1 Tim. 5:22), it should be conducted discreetly and cautiously. Moreover, the examination should also be conducted with outsiders, as it is necessary for the candidate to have a good reputation among them (1 Tim. 3:7). There are also written testimonials that inform us about the candidate. These are either given voluntarily or requested and obtained by the candidates themselves:.....

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...sometimes through the secretive and deceptive prayers or recommendations of parents, relatives, guardians, or patrons. These should be attended to with great judgment and prudence.

But the most certain and safest examination is through personal observation and experience.

Among the parts and types of examination is the Theological Examination, which we shall now discuss.

I. A Theological Examination is required so that the church may know whether a candidate is *didaktikos* (able to teach) (1 Timothy 3:1), whether he is fit to handle the Word of God (1 Timothy 3:2), and to refute adversaries (Titus 1:9). In the

ancient, medieval, and corrupt Papal church, as well as in our own church, some form of examination has always existed. But what kind and to what extent the examination took place in the early church or in the church of the Middle Ages and the corrupt Papal church can easily be inferred from the gross ignorance of the ministers, which we touch upon in Part 3 of the Selected Disputations, Title "On Ignorance," Part 1, p. 601. In the time of Charlemagne, the pastors were so ignorant and lazy that Charlemagne, through Alcuin (or Albinus) Flaccus, arranged for certain homilies to be selected from the writings of the Fathers, which were to be read publicly in the church instead of sermons.

After the Reformation began in parts of Europe after the year 1517, some among the Papists, who were of a better disposition, or perhaps out of rivalry and competition, began to think differently about how to establish the examination; and for this purpose, examinations of ordinands were published by Johann Faber, Georg Witzel, and Johannes Holthusius. One of these was compiled by Nicholas Aurifaber, a Carmelite, and published in Venice in 1570, with a reissue in Douai by Johannes Bogardus in 1588. The Council of Trent, in Session 7, Chapter 13, and Session 24, Chapter 18, appears to have made some decisions concerning the necessity and method of examination. Much has also been debated and determined regarding examination through competition, where many who apply or present themselves for a parish or other benefice are examined simultaneously before the bishop or his vicar, and the most suitable candidate is chosen. On these matters, Barbosa should be consulted in the Collectanea on the Bullarium under the heading "Examination."

Among the Protestants and Reformed, theological examinations were published by Melanchthon and Aretus. However, there is no need for many such books, as since that time until this day, numerous works on commonplaces, syntagmata, systems, institutions, synopses, etc., have been produced.

Much could be said about the method of examination, but we aim for brevity.

The specific method used in the various Reformed churches and academies does not need to be anxiously inquired into or presented here, both for other reasons and particularly because it varies according to the discretion of the classes, synods, and examiners.

Peter Molineus, in his work "De Vocatione Pastorium" (Treatise 2, Chapter 2), describes the method of examination in France. After evaluating ecclesiastical and academic testimonies, the exposition of the Word of God is first heard in French and then in Latin. The candidate is given twenty-four hours to prepare. Afterwards, the candidate's progress is assessed in Greek and Hebrew, and in Philosophy. The candidate is also examined in Theology. Finally, before the church to which he is destined, the candidate must deliver three trial sermons.

I believe the following should not be omitted in the examination:

1. Not only should questions be posed concerning dogmatic and elenctic theology, or the first and second parts of our catechism, but also concerning practical theology, that is, the practical uses of doctrines and articles of faith; such as Perkins in his catechism, Henricus Altingius in his didactic theology, Polanus in his syntagma, Hommius in his catechetical works, and others have noted. Furthermore, questions should address the third part of our catechism and liturgy, as well as the canons of ecclesiastical governance.
2. The candidate should not only confirm definitions given by themselves with clear Scriptural testimonies, accurately pronounced word for word, and Scriptural arguments supporting or denying various theses, and respond solidly to proposed objections; but also refute exceptions raised against Scriptural testimonies and supporting arguments from cited texts, and from the analogy of Scripture.
3. The candidate should satisfactorily address objections and exceptions formulated from the phrasing of the original Hebrew or Greek texts (which I believe is particularly the examiners' task) with genuine interpretations of the original texts. This should not prejudice the praiseworthy institution of presenting academic testimonies of original languages; and concerning reading and expounding a Hebrew or Greek passage before the examiners before the theological examination begins.
4. The candidate should satisfactorily address theological objections concerning controversies with Atheists, Epicureans, Gentiles, Mohammedans, and under the name of Christian, impeded by false

philosophy, rhetoric, and practical logic, and rhetoric. This attempt does not exclude philosophical examination, which Molineus attests to being part of the practice in France in his treatise on the vocation of pastors. It seems this should be maintained everywhere, at least through summary repetition or through select and more difficult questions. For it might happen that a candidate, whom they presume or rather assume to be knowledgeable in Hebrew and Greek letters, as well as Philosophy in the course of Academic study, might have performed poorly or little in these areas; or, if commendable, at least not regrettable progress, where he had studied theology with diligence, or had been presented in the order of proposers.

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.....he might have performed all those tasks and gradually forgotten them with effort; having also alienated all library supplies conducive to those studies, such that after a time in the ministry, he would differ nothing from the unlearned (vernacularly called "Duptsche lercken").

V. The summation and organization of some book of the Old and New Testaments should be according to the discretion of the examiner, e.g., Genesis, Isaiah, the Gospel of Matthew, the Epistle to the Romans, to the Hebrews, etc. Published books, such as those by Moses Flach, Christophorus Ederus Frisius, and others, exhibit the content and organization of individual scriptural books, sometimes through analytical tables, as seen in the work titled *Oeconomia Bibliorum* by Caesar, published in 1582, which treated the matter most exhaustively. Some present the content of individual chapters in Latin or vernacular verse. Such examples include works before and after the Reformation. Among these, the *Memoriale Biblicum* by Himmeli, a theologian from Jena, in 1624, and Matthias Martini's *Memoriale Biblicum* in 8vo are noted. Lucas Trelcatius, a Leiden theologian, began dictating the *Oeconomia Bibliorum* and completed it up to Psalm 19; this work, along with his common places and other writings, was published in 1614. For our students, hypotheses of books and chapters in the Belgian Bibles can be useful. However, it is preferable to imprint the content of books and chapters on memory through personal and diligent reading, meditation, and repetition.

VI. The trial sermons, which the candidates are usually required to prepare according to a specified text, should be carefully examined by the examiners to determine if they meet the required standards. This not only requires a candid declaration from the candidate, as I recall having been done in some classes, but also involves comparison and discussion regarding the material, disposition, and adornment of the delivered sermon. It is possible that the candidate may have delivered a sufficiently well-known and solid sermon, but received the entire sermon or a good part of it, or at least its archetype or manuscript, from a learned preacher, theologian, or proposer. This would certainly cast doubt on whether he is truly learned enough for the heavenly kingdom. This examination would be more conveniently and appropriately carried out if the judgment and assessment of the class regarding the delivered sermon were communicated to the candidate.

I submit a few questions:

I. Should the preparatory examination conducted by academic doctors, classes, or synods, or by both, be considered necessary and mandatory?

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Response. Yes, this is related to the examination of candidates' orthodoxy and their knowledge, as well as the assessment of their suitability for preaching and catechizing through the examination of their sermons and catechizations. They must be fit for the pastoral ministry and sent into the Lord's harvest, as described in 1 Timothy 3:2 and 2 Timothy 2:24-25 and 2 Timothy 2:15. They should be diligent to present themselves approved to God, as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. They should be able to exhort with sound doctrine and refute those who contradict. They must have the tongue of the learned, so that they may speak a word in due season (Isaiah 50:4). It is also an apostolic instruction not to lay hands on anyone hastily nor to share in the sins of others (1 Timothy 5:22). This is contrary to the novel and pernicious opinion of some who seem not to recognize any fixed order, specific office, vocation, or election of ministers; instead, they contend that anyone deemed suitable may strive to preach before the church. This notion is far from the current libertinism and the

Qur'anic and Datanic (Numbers 16) draughts, and from the knowledge of ecclesiastical institutions established by the supreme ecclesiastical magistrate. I leave the judgment to those who are not ignorant of these matters.

Refer to the previous book, chapter 1, page 222. Regarding the assertion that only the suitable should approach public preaching, it is noted that many consider themselves suitable due to an extraordinary charisma, some biblical learning, and memorization ability, alongside fluency in speech and boldness of spirit. Therefore, the necessity of examination and exploration should be observed. Certainly, without examination and proof, doctors, surgeons, lawyers, and philosophers would not advance; not even craftsmen (such as tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, etc.) are admitted to their trade without presenting a specimen of their skill before a guild.

Question. Should those who do not satisfy the examination be promoted to the position of proposer or administrator and publicly introduced?

Response. No, according to the preceding question and the letters to Timothy and Titus cited. Otherwise, the examination would be pointless and ridiculous, and absurd would be the appointment of doctors in subjects they have not learned. However, it might occur that due to carnal mercy, such as a true cruelty towards churches and souls, they are appointed.

1. **Objection.** What if someone is not suitable now, but might become suitable in time?

Response. 1. And what if they do not become suitable? And who will be responsible for future failure, especially if they lack intellectual and memorization capabilities and have not yet demonstrated diligence?

Response. 2. The focus here is not on what they might become, but what they are now. The church rejoices in the present; hope cannot be bought at a price.

1. Question: What if a catechumen, as an ignoramus, were examined on the elementary parts of catechism and could not yet satisfy the examination; should such a person be appointed as a guide for the ignorant? We rightly criticize the Papists for sometimes appointing boys as bishops, and for assigning royal priesthods, dignities (as they call them), and rich canonries to adolescents or to the sons, grandsons, or nephews of princes and nobles.

2. Objection: But if the examined candidates were dismissed, would they not lose the shining hope and opportunity for promotion?

Response: What then? The church cannot provide this. The salvation of the church is the supreme law; it is not appropriate to confer benefits on the unworthy.

3. Objection: Could they be admitted under the condition that they privately attend a selected preacher and be required to study and practice all common places successively, and that the same preacher or appointed examiners review, assess, and correct their sermons before they are preached?

Response: This seems like a remedy and supplement for the defects, but it is not sufficient. It is worth doubting whether the proposed or appointed preacher would make use of this until they obtain an examination. Previous examples have taught us that those admitted under such conditions and having accepted them did nothing more. Whatever may be done or not done, it is better that such a person is not appointed and confirmed. It is preferable for the examination to be retaken after a just period of time, and for the candidate to prepare themselves properly for it; and if found sufficient, they may be appointed to the church as tested. Otherwise, let them be dismissed and the call nullified. These matters (so I speak) are not always to be applied; but in some cases, when the state of the church and other preparatory aspects of the call absolutely demand it, it is better for candidates to be trained there rather than thinking about the election of another.

4. Question: Is it preferable for the examination (as they call it) to be decisive before any ecclesiastical vocation or election of the candidate is completed, or after a certain church's election and acceptance by the candidate?

Response: There are churches that insist on the former, and others that follow the latter path: each has its own freedom. Although the former might seem safer in

some respects, it is not as burdensome with the difficulties and inconveniences indicated in the previous question.

5. Question: Can an examination or discussion on confession and doctrine of faith be instituted for ministers who have been performing their ministry for some time?

Response: Why not? Would that it were annually and ordinarily upheld in all classes! At least if someone had become suspect due to heterodoxy, lack of progress, relapse into ignorance, or almost complete forgetfulness and negligence.

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It is not paradoxical to believe that certain individuals established in the ministry may falter either in orthodoxy or in theological knowledge. This occurs because they do not remain steadfast in prayer, reading, meditation on Scripture, and ecclesiastical practice: contrary to 1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 3:14, Acts 6:4, and Psalm 1:2. Instead, they are often absorbed in sleep, banquets, wanderings, dressings, amusements, gardening, and other trivial or curious pastimes, such as painting gourds, dedicating excessive attention to family affairs, and other distractions. In presumption or ignorance, such individuals often obtain examination. And why not in presumption or relapse into the ancient chaos of ignorance or the darkness of oblivion?

5. Question: Can licentiates or doctors of theology submit themselves to ecclesiastical examination without prejudicing their academic promotion?

Response: Yes. Indeed, it seems wise for ecclesiastical authorities to have an inspection of both orthodoxy and learning based on personal hearing for additional caution. A licentiate or doctor should be allowed to avoid examination if they have some authority in this regard, so that they do not appear as unfair estimators of doctoral learning, if they do not arouse competitors and detractors within their ranks. Pope Paul II is described by Platina as an enemy of academia and all learning. However, where there is no valid presumption of heterodoxy or a paper doctorate, they might be exempt from examination, as exemplified by other churches.

