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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *weiden*, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den *Wölfen wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verführen und Irrtum einführen.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24.*

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle? — *1 Cor. 14, 8.*

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we have the great host of the unionists. The soul of unionism is indifference to doctrine. And here we have the great host of those who no longer believe in the inspiration of Scripture. There is not, and there cannot be, anything positive about their teaching. They do not deal in assertions but in "problems," as Dr. W. Laible said: "Ach, dieses 'Es steht geschrieben,' auch das ist veraltet — 'Bibilizismus'! . . . Indem man aber die Schrift nicht mehr massgebend sein laesst, hat man die Leuchte Gottes verloren, die einzige Hilfe in der Nacht, in der wir stehen, die einzige Wegweisung auf dem Wege der Kirche. Ist es ein Wunder, wenn die 'Probleme' ungeloeset in der Luft wirbeln?" Everything has become problematical, uncertain, because inspiration itself is treated as a "problem." They are telling us: The Bible teaches inspiration, but it does not tell you definitely what inspiration is. — We need to get back to Luther, who taught us to say: "It is written!" It is absolutely true. — The editor of the *Living Church* had protested against promiscuous communion as a *hindrance* to union, and somebody wrote him a letter: "Do we understand that you are dogmatic in your conception of 'Holy Communion'? Do we understand that in the event of a world 'round table' on the subject of church unity you would refuse to budge on your views of Holy Communion to the point of preventing church unity? If you are dogmatic in this matter, just *how* dogmatic?" The editor answered with one brief word: "As DOGMATIC as the Holy Catholic Church." (Dec. 11, 1937.) If Erasmus had asked the "obstinate assessor" Luther: "Just *how* dogmatic are you?" Luther would have answered: "As DOGMATIC as Holy Scripture." We offer no apology for the dogmatic assertions of Luther. We offer no apology for the dogmatism of the Bible.

TH. ENGELDER

(To be continued)

Professional Growth in the Study of the Confessions

1

It is well that, when the "Pastor's Professional Growth" series was planned by the editors of the *Theological Monthly*, there was included in it also an article on the minister's professional growth in the study and knowledge of the confessions, both of our Lutheran Church and of other denominations. We state this because since time immemorial there has prevailed in some circles the false and hurtful notion that symbolics makes an extremely tedious study and that, since it is merely a sort of repetition of dogmatics, it ultimately matters very little whether one knows his *Concordia* or not. Comparative symbolics, of course, has usually been re-

garded in a somewhat more favorable light, since a certain amount of novelty and variety attaches to the confessional writings of other churches and a pastor simply cannot get along without knowing what the other churches are teaching.

In a way, perhaps, our ministry must not be criticized too severely for this rather listless attitude toward the confessions. Law students, they tell us, are not particularly attracted by the study of statutes, nor are students of medicine very much elated over the study of *materia medica*. Every science has, so to speak, its uninteresting parts, which must be taken along with the rest. And yet, as the student of medicine can never become an efficient practitioner unless he masters also the so-called dry subjects of his science, so also the student of theology can never become a truly competent pastor unless he thoroughly and zealously studies the somewhat academic and yet also practical subject of Christian confessions. The successful barrister always has a firm and comprehensive grasp of statutory law; its detailed niceties and subtleties, trivialities though often they may seem, he knows with that admirable certainty and distinctiveness which permits him to judge soundly even when his opponent is trying to screen the issue under the heaviest smoke cloud of rhetorical and logical sophistry. It is strange indeed that, when an Einstein insists upon subtleties and hair-splitting distinctions in physics, and a Hughes in law, and a Calmette in bacteriology, these men are honored by the whole world, while that same world takes issue with the minister who contends that confessional distinctions should be emphasized and doctrinal subtleties must be analyzed. The explanation for this we find in the οὐδέχεται of 1 Cor. 2:14. Far stranger, however, it is that we Christian ministers should be indifferent with respect to the "faith of our fathers" and its preservation in a hostile world. Certainly, if our Church is to remain the faithful witness of Christ which it has been in the past, there must be among our pastors "professional growth" also in the study of the confessions.

2

Whether our own Lutheran Confessions deserve continued study or not depends on what they are *per se* and of *what benefit* they are to us today in this undogmatic age, when creeds quite generally have been relegated to the trash heap. As to the first point, we of Missouri hold neither the historical nor the dogmatical view of our Confessions. By this we mean that in our estimation our Confessions are neither mere relics of a *passé* belief, of no practical significance at all to us today, nor doctrinal norms which independently of Scripture establish the official *corpus doctrinae* of a denomination. In other words, on the point of confessional definition we neither Calvinize nor Romanize; but we accept our Chris-

tian Confessions as a "testimony and declaration" (*Zeugnis und Erklaerung*, Form. of Conc., Epit., 8) of the Christian faith, to which our pious fathers in troubled times were forced by doctrinal controversies that almost destroyed the Church. The symbols constituted their doctrinal challenge to the forces of hell, which had assailed the Church and with the misericorde of false teaching meant to give the death-blow to the almost defeated "body of Christ." But they were more than a heroic challenge; they were the victorious sword by which the enemy was put to rout and, by God's grace, the Church was preserved; for after all is said, the orthodox Confessions are "a comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form wherein is brought together from God's Word the common doctrine, reduced to a brief compass, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion confess" (Form. of Conc., Thor. Decl., *Trigl.*, p. 849 f.). They are God's Word.

So arose the three Ecumenical Creeds, even the *Symbolum Apostolicum*, which was the first challenge of the Christian *baptizandi* to the misbelief of a godless world, the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Formula of Concord, yes, and also Luther's catechisms; for as a church norm they are the challenge of the Lutheran Church over against the devastating errors of Romanism, Calvinism, and Socinianism, or Unitarianism, which today confronts the Lutheran believer in the form of Modernism. Always the orthodox symbols of the Christian Church have been declarations of the Christian faith and, as such, God's own Word, set forth in that particular form in which it best served the paramount purpose of confuting error and defending divine truth. Far be it from us, therefore, that we despise our confessional standards! Whoever contemns the Christian confessions that proclaim the doctrines of Scripture, contemns God Himself, who has given us His Word. Whatever may be feeble or imperfect in their wording or organization (though upon the whole they are better creeds than we could produce today) is certainly of men and must so be acknowledged; but these human, and therefore *in externis* more or less imperfect, testimonies set forth God's unchangeable truth, and that must be sacrosanct to us as "the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have and which sanctifies everything" (Large Catechism, Third Commandment, § 91, *Trigl.*, p. 607). But as such should they not move us to continued study and indefatigable research? Dr. Walther endeavored to study the entire *Konkordienbuch* from cover to cover every two years, though perhaps he knew the Lutheran Confessions better than any other theologian of his time. He is said to have expressed the opinion that, if he failed to read the Confessions regularly and systematically, he would become ignorant of

the Lutheran doctrine in its clearest form and expression and lose for himself their devout spirit of Biblical loyalty. Do we need our Confessions less than this great man of God? In Germany the confessional Lutheran groups have recently returned to a new consideration of the Lutheran Confessions, and they are centering their attention on them more than ever men have done since the passing of the great orthodoxy in the eighteenth century. Should we Lutherans of America remain indifferent to the doctrinal values stored up in our glorious Confessions? It seems egregiously unreasonable.

However, as little as we dare to neglect our own confessional standards, just so little, too, may we ignore those of our denominational competitors. To argue on this point at any length would mean to insult the intelligence of our readers; but let us briefly state that, unless we read Roman dogma in its own confession and writings and cease getting our knowledge of Catholic teaching merely from second-hand sources, we are liable not only to do our antichristian opponent the greatest injustice but also by sheer ignorance of the real issues to carry on polemics which beats the air and hurts no one. So also the Reformed confessions, though the Calvinists themselves, in general, do not give them the attention which they deserve, must be studied by us without fail; for these creeds, though differing from one another in more or less non-essential points, teach and defend the errors of Zwingli, Calvin, and other Reformed leaders. Today the danger threatening us through Calvinistic doctrinal influx is doubly great, since in a way we are fighting shoulder to shoulder with Calvinistic Fundamentalists (though each, of course, in his proper camp) to defend against the ever-increasing multitude of Modernists the basic and distinctive differences of the Christian faith, such as the divine inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, His vicarious atonement, salvation by grace, and the hope of life eternal through faith in Christ's blood. But we agree with the Calvinistic Fundamentalists only with regard to the mere general confession of these doctrines. They say: "The Bible is the Word of God," and so do we. But enter more deeply into the dogmatic contents of the article of Bibliology, and Lutherans and Fundamentalists soon find themselves on divergent paths. Just so it is also with the other essentials just named, the deity of Christ, His vicarious atonement, and the like. The "different spirit" of Zwinglianism and Calvinism causes almost in every chapter of Christian doctrine as deep and wide a gulf as that which exists between Lutheranism and Romanism. No indeed; we must take the doctrinal differences between Lutheranism and Reformed Fundamentalism very seriously and study most earnestly all departures from the Biblical and Lutheran doctrine. If the Lutheran Confessions are true state-

ments and declarations of the Christian faith, in perfect harmony with God's Word, all the confessions of Romanism, Calvinism, and Socinianism opposing that Word are declarations of false doctrine, which, whether the error seems great or small, in the end tends to mislead its adherents into everlasting perdition. Where divine truth and human error contend with each other, there is no middle ground, and there can be no neutrality and, of course, also no indifferentism and syncretism. Confessions certainly deserve our careful study, either because they teach and confess God's Word or because they seek to overthrow it. In the one case we ought to be interested in the better understanding of the divine truth and in the other in the preservation of divine truth against human speculation.

3

When the question is asked of *what benefit* the study of our Confessions may be to us as individuals and, collectively, as a communion of believers in, and witness for, Christ, the reply, in the first place, is the same as that given in answer to the query what the detailed and continued study of the Word of God, or the Holy Bible, itself may help us. Luther's excellent words in his Large Catechism (Third Commandment, § 100, *Trigl.*, p. 609) certainly apply also to the study of God's Word as it is set forth in our Christian confessions: "Such is the efficacy of the Word, whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used, that it is bound never to be without fruit but always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness, and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts. For these words are not inoperative or dead but creative, living words. And even though no other interest or necessity impel us, yet this ought to urge every one thereunto, because thereby the devil is put to flight and driven away, and, besides, this commandment is fulfilled, and this exercise in the Word is more pleasing to God than any work of hypocrisy, however brilliant."

The great Reformer's statement that the efficacious Word of God "always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness" must claim our attention in a special way this year, when we observe the centenary of the coming of our Saxon Pilgrim Fathers. For an entire century ours has been a privilege which very few Christians in the world have ever enjoyed: we have had God's Word in its truth and purity to guide us in our individual and congregational life both in doctrine and practise. But do we as a Church show spiritual understanding, pleasure, and devoutness (*neuen Verstand, Lust und Andacht*) in a very remarkable degree? Do we bear witness of God's Word in a measure agreeing with the greatness of the trust with which we have been endowed? Have we proved ourselves a missionary Church more than others which did not have the pure Gospel doctrine?

In his explanation of the Third Commandment Luther writes these most earnest and reproachful words, which, we believe, adequately characterize much of our own ministerial and congregational attitude and activity today: "Likewise those fastidious spirits are to be reproved who, when they have heard a sermon or two, find it tedious and dull" (sind sie es satt und ueberdruessig), "thinking that they know all that well enough and need no more instruction. For just that is the sin which has been hitherto reckoned among mortal sins and is called ἀκηδία, i. e., torpor or satiety, a malignant, dangerous plague, with which the devil bewitches and deceives the hearts of many, that he may surprise us and secretly withdraw God's Word from us" (auf dass er uns uebereile und das Wort Gottes wieder heimlich entziehe).

We do not care to spend too much time on this rather unpleasant subject; nevertheless, if we would honestly examine ourselves before God on this point, we surely would be obliged to confess in His heart-searching presence that more or less we all have proved ourselves "fastidious spirits," who deserve His censure and severe punishment. What a blessing it would be for our Church if the "new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness" of which Luther speaks in His Catechism would be found throughout our denomination among pastors and laity, old and young, in every sphere of Christian life and work! May we seek it in a renewed conscientious study of Scripture and our precious Lutheran Confessions, the choicest fruit of our fathers' faith and loyalty!

A renewed, conscientious study of our Confessions, however, would not only awaken in our circles "a new understanding, pleasure and devoutness," as we have just heard, but in the same measure it would also bless us with that most profitable and necessary spiritual *solidarity* or *cohesiveness*, without which we cannot hope to fight the Lord's battles successfully, as one united, mighty army of God. Error divides, as the modern *Lehrverwirrung*, or confusion of doctrine, among the sectarian churches, which are disloyal to God's Word, abundantly proves; but God's Word unites. Of the first Christians at Jerusalem we read in Scripture: "And all that believed were together and had all things common," Acts 2:44; and again: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul," Acts 4:32. They kept the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Eph. 4:3. And this they did because "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts 2:42. Here was a sacred fellowship, a holy communion, based upon God's Word and confirmed by daily use of the Lord's Supper and prayer, which was wondrously unique. The believers at Jerusalem were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,

1 Cor. 1:10. They were one in their one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, Eph. 4:5. They had ecclesiastical union in true, inward, spiritual or Spirit-wrought unity of faith and love.

We, too, have enjoyed this wondrous solidarity of faith and spirit in an exceptional way. In fact, we have become so accustomed to it that we are surprised at the very thought that it might be taken away from us. In method and application, in questions of external management, we of course uphold our Christian liberty and, though guarding against a separatistic, schismatic spirit, do things as circumstances and the furtherance of God's kingdom suggest, always of course within the regulation of the divine Word. But in dogma we are unqualifiedly one, standing four-square upon the whole body of doctrine as it is set forth in Holy Scripture. Will this almost unparalleled spiritual and doctrinal cohesion remain ours in the future? Already there are signs intimating Corinthian faults of division and dissension. We need not expatiate on this matter; let every one here contemplate the situation with a view to remedy and to heal. But the healing of the breach lies only in our common study of God's Word, and that also as it is confessed in its purity in our Confessions. If we retain the truth and spirit of our Confessions, if their love and loyalty to Scripture and its teachings will remain ours, then we may defy Satan's attempts to set at variance brother against brother and church against church. Then we will readily subject our personal interests to the common good and in brotherly love seek to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, Rev. 3:2. Let us, then, study our Confessions for continued and yet greater spiritual solidarity or fellowship in the Lord's Word and work. We owe it to our high spiritual leadership to know thoroughly, and be able to give at all times and in every way a good account of, our Confessions.

But what has just been said is true also of spiritual *Anschluss*. The study of God's Word, set forth in our Confession, will foster and cement not only solidarity, but also true Christian affiliation; and by this we mean communion *ad extra*, while solidarity represents communion *ad intra*. Today Lutheran synods more than ever before realize the serious drawbacks of denominational solitariness. It is held that solidarity *ad intra* is not sufficient; *Anschluss ad extra* is also highly desirable. Now, let us for the moment leave out of consideration whether or not God may grant us by grace that Lutheran union which for years has been sought so eagerly both in our own country and abroad. Let us suppose that also in the future Lutheranism will not be united outwardly but will be split into small churches, or denominations. But what of this if the individual loyal Lutheran groups have true, inward or spiritual

fellowship with all the thousands within the general Lutheran pale who are joined together inwardly by the spirit and truth of our Lutheran Confessions? Is not, after all, that which is inward greater than that which is external? Are we, after all, not working for the increase of the *communio sanctorum*, the *ecclesia invisibilis*, rather than for that of an *ecclesia visibilis à la Ritschl* or Rome? The Lutheran believer, though greatly desiring outward union with confessing Christian groups bearing the same name, is not greatly perturbed if outward affiliation in church union is not realized. He is more concerned with the spiritual *Anschluss* of faith, the inward communion, which comes from diligent study and unqualified acceptance of God's Word, and this especially, too, as the Word is presented in our Confessions. We are sure that, if for one year all the eighty million Lutherans (or however many or few there may be in the world) would diligently, prayerfully, and open-heartedly study the *Concordia* and consecrate themselves to the acceptance and confession of the doctrines laid down therein, to the utter suppression of all Pelagianistic, Romanistic, and Calvinistic leaven that has found its way into their midst, there would be such a remarkable agreement in faith and brotherly love that a United Lutheran Church of the World would soon be the outward result of the inward faith-fellowship.

And so, as another fruit and blessing of the consecrated study of our Confessions, we must mention also the *unio ad extra* which it would produce. Very soon, we believe, the inward fellowship of faith engendered by the study of our Confessions would result in the drawing together of the various Lutheran confessional groups. From that point of view especially we desire a universal, earnest study of our Confessions among all Lutherans throughout the world at this time. Could such a merger as a United Lutheran Church of the World be achieved, what a power it would constitute against Romanism, Calvinism, and Modernism! Today the ecumenical character of confessional Lutheranism is quite generally recognized. True Lutheranism is not sectarian, but ecumenical. Wherever church groups have found it necessary to separate from Lutheranism, it was because some sectarian leaven brought about the inward breach of the faith-fellowship. So Romanism is sectarian; so Calvinism is sectarian; so Socinianism is sectarian; so fanaticism in every form is sectarian; so every other separatistic ism is sectarian. Sectarianism is departure from God's Word, while Lutheranism in its real confessional attitude is adherence to God's Word. That is a boast, but a glorious boast, because it is a glorying in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Word is our supreme norm of faith and life and our joy and glory. Now, then, if the Lutheran Confessions (which by their very nature are altogether ecumenical just because

they are thoroughly Scriptural) would be universally studied, believed, and accepted by all Lutheran groups, there would be brought about what the so-called Lutheran world conventions can never bring about if they allow sectarianism to remain and destroy, namely, a spiritually united Lutheran Church truly loyal to Scripture in faith and profession. Alas, because of the perverseness, unbelief, and apostasy of fallen human nature we never dare hope that such a united Lutheran Church will be realized; but if it is not realized, it is not because such a union is theoretically impossible but because practically sectarian, unscriptural considerations thwart the unifying influences of God's inwardly uniting Gospel. At any rate, as eagerly as we desire the boon of outward church union, so eagerly, in the interest of such union, let us study God's precious Word in the truly glorious Confessions of our Church.

Lastly, just as the study of God's Word in our Confessions, unless prevented by Satan and our perverse flesh, produces inward and outward fellowship among Christian believers, so also it bestows that sober-mindedness which, rooted in God's Word, repudiates every kind of fanaticism and enthusiasm that threaten to invade our Church. Of enthusiasm we have every reason to beware today, when "sheer enthusiasm" has gained for itself a place in almost every existing denomination. Briefly expressed, enthusiasm is a going beyond God's Word; and enthusiasm goes beyond God's Word in trying to produce those results which only God's Word itself can accomplish. Enthusiasm therefore is rejection of God's Word. Calvinism, Romanism, and Unitarianism are all enthusiastic in their very nature, just as they are also sectarian in their nature; for enthusiasm and sectarianism go hand in hand, just as in the final analysis they are one. However, enthusiasm does not always appear in the crude form in which it shows itself among some of the lower sects of our religious world. Holy Rollerism is a very boorish form of enthusiasm and so very offensive; but it is doubtful whether really it is more dangerous than Calvinistic and Arminianistic revivalism or Romanistic High-churchism. Here we must beware of the "little leaven" that leaveneth the whole lump; and what will aid us very greatly in this, what will keep us sober and steadfast in the divine truth, is, we believe, the very study of our Confessions, which because of their perfect loyalty to God's Word are the very best antidote against all forms of enthusiasm, both crude and insidious. Also on this point we confine ourselves to only the most necessary principles, since the matter is so obvious that a more detailed discussion is quite unnecessary. But, to speak in review, if we desire the true spiritual understanding, pleasure, and devoutness in the Lord's work and, besides this, true solidarity within our Church and true,

abiding Christian fellowship with other Christians, and in particular with Lutherans not yet joined to us by church affiliation, together with that sacred sober-mindedness which spurns every form and outgrowth of sectarianism and enthusiasm, then we must zealously study God's Word as it is set forth in our Confessions; for there we have the divine means by which all these blessings may be secured, unless, of course, in sheer unbelief and folly we repudiate God's Word and follow our own perverse wisdom of the flesh.

4

However, the question still remains regarding the *manner* in which our Confessions may best be studied. Here, of course, much depends on the personal work method of the individual pastor. Very few of us do our work in precisely the same way, and hence what may help the one may hurt the other. In the end, the only thing that really matters is that the study of the Confessions be actually, regularly, and systematically attended to. And here again it is necessary that a beginning be made, and such a beginning indeed as contemplates persistent continuation to the "bitter end"; for any work irregularly and desultorily executed is as good as useless. Under the circumstances prevailing in most pastoral charges, it may be best for the minister to set aside each day a certain amount of time (and not too much of that either; say about an hour or so) for the perusal of our *Concordia Triglotta*. Let him begin in front with the excellent historical Introductions by Dr. F. Bente and then read, with pencil in hand to underline and note summaries, paragraph after paragraph until a certain part or book is finished. Then let him sum up in outlines what that book teaches, and let him so arrange his material that he may utilize it in his sermons or catechism instruction, also, of course, in conference papers, and the like. Such private, persistent study of the Confessions is absolutely necessary, and there is nothing else that can take its place. If the study should appear "stale" to us at times, let us remember the glorious contents of the Confessions, the stress of the times under which they were produced, and the practical values of the doctrines here presented and defended.

The careful study of the *Concordia Triglotta*, from beginning to end (and let no one slight what has been added in the rear by way of an appendix), with proper underlining and marginal summary and note work, will take about one whole year, provided the pastor can devote to it an hour or a little more a day (excepting, of course, Sundays and other preaching or festival days). But after he has covered the whole ground in this thorough way, he will have acquired so large an amount of practical, every day usable theology that he will not like to ignore the *Concordia* as he prepares for his sermons, instruction lessons, conference papers,

periodical articles, and so forth. He may then in particular make use of the fine comprehensive and detailed Index in the rear of the book and study the heads of doctrine suggested by his special pastoral work *topically*. To aid themselves in this work, some pastors have drawn up for themselves concordances of passages, so that they may be able to find valuable passages of their choice without delay. Of course, very important passages that bear on doctrines to be daily applied, such as justification by faith, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the like, ought to be memorized; for while our Confessions can never take the place of the Bible, the *norma normans*, they, as the *norma normata*, show what is regarded by Lutheranism as Bible doctrine and so also are worthy of frequent quotation [their quotation at times even becoming necessary] both in the pulpit and in instruction periods.

And here we recommend that the minister should endeavor to acquaint his young and old parishioners with the Confessions. This may be done in sermons, but it is best accomplished in special classes. Of our Confessions three especially may be well used for popular instruction, namely, the Augsburg Confession, its history and doctrine; Luther's Large Catechism, in topical presentation; and the Epitome of the Formula of Concord. If our laity would master the contents of these three precious books, they certainly would be much better indoctrinated than they are now, when so many of our adults receive hardly any doctrinal instruction outside the sermon on Sunday. That the study of these three books appeals to our laity the writer himself has experienced time and again when he made them the topics for class study in Sunday-school or congregational work.

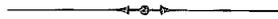
But above all, our pastors' and teachers' conferences must take up the study of our Confessions. Our Confessions present, in the main, central doctrines, and indeed those fundamental teachings which at all times are more or less in controversy. The doctrines of the Augsburg Confession and of the Formula of Concord, and of course also those of the Smalcald Articles and the other confessional writings, are of such tremendous importance that we simply must not ignore them when we meet as brethren in conference to gain new strength and inspiration for our work. We really cannot preach and testify rightly unless we are thoroughly conversant with these great doctrines which the Book of Concord so forcibly emphasizes. Loyalty here compels us to play fair with God, who has placed upon us the sacred obligation to preach His Word in its truth and purity. Unless we study that Word and preach it to the full extent of its deep meaning and wide application, we do not faithfully discharge the holy office which by grace we have received of God. The question is: Are we going to be faithful? Are we going to love God's Word as our fathers have loved it? Upon our reply

to these questions depends our future weal or woe, whether as a Church we shall progress and triumph or whether ultimately we shall go down in doctrinal defeat.

It is very perturbing at times to notice how the spirit of indifference with respect to doctrine is slowly but steadily increasing in our circles. At conferences and synodical conventions the call is for practical discussions rather than for doctrinal presentations. And what is worse still is that the cry is for mechanical "short-cut" methods that simplify and reduce the hard labor which naturally the office of the Christian ministry imposes upon both pastors and elders. By practical "short-cut" methods we desire to enlarge our church and Communion attendance, our Christian giving, our missionary activities, our instruction of young and old catechumens, and the like. Our patterns seem to be the simplified, practical factory methods of the enormous industrial or commercial enterprises of our time; but we forget that there is a vast difference between the work of big business and that of the Church. The Church indeed should be characterized by activity, and by plenty of it; but this activity must be divinely motivated, directed, and sustained through the study and application of God's Word. If we shall let up on God's Word and its study, God will surely let up on us and cease blessing us; for whatever blessings God bestows upon us as a Church, He mediates to us only by means of His Word. On the contrary, if we diligently and prayerfully study the Word of God as it is set forth to us in Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions, we may face the future without fear; for our consecrated pastors, deeply rooted in God's Word, will do their important work with absolute doctrinal certainty, perform their preaching and teaching ministry with true brotherly uniformity in presentation and expressions, and will, lastly, evince in all their pastoral and missionary dealings that valuable Christian sober-mindedness which will keep Lutheranism free from the taint and mold of rationalism, enthusiasm, and sectarianism.

May God in His mercy preserve to us a studios *ministerium!*

J. THEODORE MUELLER



Kleine Danielstudien

In den ersten sechs Nummern des vorigen Jahrgangs dieser Zeitschrift haben wir sechs Kleine Hesekielstudien veröffentlicht. Der Grund dafür war, daß dieses Buch, eine der größten und wunderbarsten prophetischen Schriften des Alten Testaments, aber zugleich eins der schwierigeren Bücher der Heiligen Schrift, besondere Gottesgedanken enthält, die sein Studium für den Theologen sehr nützlich und wertvoll machen, und daß andererseits die Schwärmer alter und neuer Zeit sich gerade auch mit