

THE AIM OF OUR SEMINARY: TO TRAIN CONSECRATED MEN OF GOD

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Tangible evidence of the agreement reached was apparent in a decision closely affecting our Seminary. It was agreed that Missouri would utilize our Northwestern College for its pretheological students in the Wisconsin area and supply a professor on the Watertown staff, while our Synod, henceforth employing St. Louis as its theological seminary, would place a man on the St. Louis faculty. We might add that although this did mean the temporary closing of our Seminary, the fact that the agreement was not completely realized, indicates that our Seminary did not actually pass out of existence from 1870-1878.

Again, in all these discussions and decisions our Seminary occupied the position of leadership. That our Seminary in these early years of our Synod's existence made an impact is indeed stating the case mildly. Under God, we truly owe much to our Seminary.

But this is by no means restricted to the first 25 years of our Synodical existence. It was in the second quarter century when again the influence of our Seminary was brought to bear in a controversy which affected virtually the entire Lutheran Church in America, a struggle which sorely tried the recently founded Synodical Conference, of which Prof. August Pieper writes that it shook our Synod to the very foundation. As it will no doubt by now have been recognized, we are speaking about the great Election Controversy.

There was a strong movement among some of the Wisconsin pastors to side with Prof. A. Schmidt of the Norwegian Seminary at Madison and also a Missourian, Prof. F. Stellhorn, in favor of the "intuitu fidei" position on election, namely an election in view of foreseen faith, and to defect to the Ohio Synod, which as a result of this controversy left the Synodical Conference in 1881. In this struggle, which eventually cost our Synod a goodly number of pastors and portions of congregations, our Seminary adhered to and charted an orthodox path and doctrinally saved the day for our Synod.

We are timewise not sufficiently far removed for a thorough evaluation of the part our Seminary has played in more recent controversies in the Church at large and also in our own circles. Yet surely no one would question that our Seminary has continued to uphold the historic position of the Synodical Conference and has served as our vanguard in battling against the attacks, of more recent vintage, on inspiration, church fellowship, the Antichrist. The far-reaching decision resolved upon in this very hall in 1961 certainly gave evidence not only of the sound confessional position held by this institution but also of the fact that its impact still is on no small proportions. The fact that Neo-orthodoxy has found unwilling ears in our midst and that unionism has been resisted with might and main can to a great extent be attributed to the fact that our Seminary has continued to hold to the course charted by its earlier theological giants on the basis of the clear Word of God. In a "sola Scriptura" theology there is no room for theological experimentation and an exploratory type of theology. There the "thus it is written" is accorded the finality and decisiveness which truly is becoming it.

Such, then, is the well, so far as its nature as well as its impact are concerned, which was originally dug at Watertown and now flows at Mequon. Since a fountain does not send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter, it is truly a miracle of God's grace that our Seminary, founded by a church body such as we once were, should become a well giving forth sweet water, the water of life in all its truth and purity.

In reflecting upon this, our sentiments will surely be those of the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Ps. 115:1). Far from assuming any credit for what our Seminary has become and still is, we will, in all humility, con-

fess, "We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly" (Ps. 106:6).

May we, however, never take our Seminary and its sound confessional position for granted! Rather, may the ancient adage, "What you have inherited from your fathers strive to make it your own possession," indicate to us in which way we, at the occasion of our Seminary's Centennial, can render this institution the highest service—that is that we watch our Seminary! The men at our Seminary are also subject to all the temptations which befall others in similar posts. And these temptations are legion. In view of what we through this study have learned, our Seminary professors truly need our watchful prayers. May we not fail them! May we, assembled here, with one heart and with one voice make this our Seminary Centennial Prayer:

"The servants Thou hast called  
And to Thy Church art giving  
Preserve in doctrine pure  
And holiness of living.  
Thy Spirit fill their hearts,  
Endue their tongues with power;  
What they should boldly speak,  
Oh, give them in that hour!"

AMEN.

ROLAND HOENECKE

#### THE AIM OF OUR SEMINARY: TO TRAIN CONSECRATED MEN OF GOD

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." How frequently we have spoken or heard these words of our Savior in recent years, as we considered the vacancies in our congregations and the steadily increasing mission opportunities confronting us at home and abroad! But has there ever been a time in our Synod's history when these words of our Savior did not apply? No, I am not forgetting what happened in the thirties and forties, when almost entire classes of graduates of our Seminary stood idle in the market place waiting, sometimes for months or even years, before they received a call, with the result that some of them drifted into other vocations. Whatever reasons or explanations might be given for this—and the chief reason was lack of funds, due in part to the economic situation—we certainly would not want to say, there were no souls to save, no opportunities to open mission fields, that the harvest of souls was not plenteous during those years.

One thing that cannot but strike us, as we in this Centennial year of our Seminary look back over the past history of our Synod, is the fact that the truth of the Savior's words about the plenteous harvest was very keenly felt at its very beginning by our founding fathers. In convention after convention the complaint was voiced that many requests for preachers could not be met because of a shortage of men. It is therefore readily understandable that the fathers early expressed the need for and the desirability of a school to train men for the rapidly increasing opportunities.

The shortage of men was, however, only one reason why the young synod felt the need for a seminary of its own and early began to think seriously of establishing such a preacher-training institution. Indeed by depending not merely on the limited number of men sent over by the German mission societies, but by using also men from other backgrounds, some of whom were trained by individual pastors, they were successful in plugging up many a

gap in their expansion program. Some of the men, however, in the end proved to be not only theologically unqualified, but actually even morally unfit for the ministry. What was needed, yes, sorely needed, was an institution of their own which would supply the young synod not only with more men, but with the right kind of men, men truly qualified and also properly trained for the ministry in a synod which was rapidly reaching confessional maturity and soundness.

By the grace of God our Synod since those early years has not only grown in numbers, but has maintained its confessional, Scripture-based position. We are, however, living in an age in which the striving for greatness and world-influence, and the resultant urge to unite are increasingly leading more and more churches, also Lutheran, to indifference toward Scriptural truth and confessional integrity. Heretofore conservative, orthodox seminaries are being infiltrated with men with modernistic or neo-orthodox theology. The trend is, to put more and more emphasis on scholarliness and intellectual achievement, to make men specialists in some phase of church work or even in some activity which lies on the periphery of the minister's sphere of work, to enable them to exert more of an influence in the community and make more of an impact on the world.

Living in the midst of such a theological atmosphere, we need more than ever before as a synod to hold fast that which we have, to continue in the things we have learned and have been assured of. And since the future state and confessional position of our Synod will to a great extent be determined by the quality of the ministers it produces, it behooves us to concern ourselves most seriously with the product of our Seminary. Surely it is fitting that one of the three essays about the Seminary, assigned for our convention in this Seminary Centennial year, should deal with this important subject.

We ask ourselves: What must be our objective in training men for the ministry of the Gospel, men who will serve the Lord faithfully, with singleness of heart and purpose, undismayed and uninfluenced by the growing indifference toward at least some of the truths of the inspired Scriptures; uninfluenced by the trend, on the one hand to dissipate the energies of the preacher through nonessentials, on the other hand to use the Lord's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature as justification for violating other clear and just as binding teachings and directives of His Word? In answer we shall sum up our thoughts on this subject in the topic for this essay:

#### **THE AIM OF OUR SEMINARY: TO TRAIN CONSECRATED MEN OF GOD**

- I. Men of God who love their Lord
- II. Men of God who love the Word of the Lord
- III. Men of God who love the Ministry of the Word

##### **I. The aim of our Seminary is to train men of God who love their Lord.**

Though the word "theologian" is frequently used in a more restricted sense, it is not uncommon to speak of preachers or ministers in general as theologians. It is also proper to say therefore that the aim of our Seminary is to train theologians. But what is a theologian? The dictionary says simply "a person well versed in theology, especially Christian theology." In other words, when we know what the word "theology" means, we should know what a theologian is. Yet we shall learn that it is not quite as simple as that.

The word "theology" is a compound word. Its second half, found in many other English words, as zoology, geology, psychology, physiology, comes from

a Greek word meaning "a saying, discourse, or treatise about something," or "a doctrine, theory, or science." Thus geology is a study or treatise of, or, the science of the earth. The first part of the word "theology" comes from the Greek word for God. Theology then is something that is said or written about God, a treatise about God, the science or knowledge of God: His existence, His essence and character, His attributes, His laws and government, His words and works. While this definition seems to satisfy, it is still quite general and could be understood to include no more than what man by nature knows and teaches about God. But man's natural knowledge of God is incomplete, limited to that which he learns from God's creation and from His conscience, as Paul states it, Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." All men by nature have this knowledge of God, and yet no man will or can by nature make the right use of this knowledge, namely to glorify Him as God and give Him proper thanks. Nor can man be saved, even partially, by his natural knowledge of God. Rather does Paul show in the first two chapters of Romans, that natural man either becomes a gross idolator and stoops to the basest kind of sin and immorality, or he becomes a self-righteous, proud, and haughty moralist, who believes he can stand before the holy and righteous God on his own deeds and accomplishments.

When we use the word "theology," we have in mind the knowledge of God which has its source in God's revelation concerning Himself. His inspired and inerrant Word. This revelation by no means contradicts, but rather affirms man's natural knowledge of God. It moreover reveals God as man could never learn to know Him without the Bible. Above all, it contains the Gospel, the good news about the Savior of the world, the wisdom of God of which Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). The Gospel reveals God not only as the almighty, all-knowing, holy, and righteous One, but as the God of infinite love, mercy, and grace, who "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:19). Thus Paul can write to the Romans: "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:22-24), and again in the same letter: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom 5:9, 10). The Gospel further testifies that it is the gracious will of God, who in Christ reconciled the whole world unto Himself, that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4), that to that end the Gospel be preached in all the world until His elect in the four corners of the earth have been gathered in and His table has been filled.

To be well versed in theology means above all to know God as the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the true and strict sense of the word, no one deserves to be called a theologian whose knowledge of God does not include, and center in, this truth. But even this is not saying enough when describing a theologian. For if nothing more were needed, even an unregenerate person might be called a theologian as long as he displays a knowledge and understanding of God as revealed in the Bible. In that case theology would be no more than another science, which could be treated purely in an objective and intellectual way, and the more a person knew about this science, the better a theologian he would be. However, the Bible truth, particularly the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ, is such that man when confronted with it simply cannot remain neutral over against it. He either bows to it

and accepts it to his salvation, or he rejects it to his damnation. There is no middle or neutral ground. Jesus Himself having said: "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30). Paul also attests to this when he writes: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:23, 24). Theology then is not merely a matter of the mind and intellect, but of the heart. Its indispensable feature is faith, personal faith in God as He revealed Himself in the Bible and therefore faith in the Son of God, the Savior, of whom Peter confessed: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Understood in this correct sense, theology is something which man cannot acquire by himself, merely through exercising his mental abilities, as in the case of one of the secular sciences. For faith, though an activity of the one who believes, is not self-created, but is entirely the work of God. As with respect to doing anything good in the sight of God, so also with respect to coming to faith, man is by nature totally corrupt and dead. "No man," writes Paul, "can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3). Or, stating it positively: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10). Jesus Himself said: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," and substantiated this with a word from the Prophets: "And they shall be all taught of God" (John 6:44, 45).

When we now say, the aim of our Seminary is to train theologians, we are by no means presuming to do something only God can do. We rather assume that the Holy Spirit has worked the miracle of the new birth in the students who come to us, that they are in this sense already theologians, men of God, as it can be said of every believer in Christ. We further know and believe that alone the Holy Spirit can continue this good work in them, remembering what Peter said: "You . . . are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (I Pet. 1:4, 5). The Holy Spirit, however, works through the Word, both in preserving faith as in creating it; for Peter also says we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23).

It is with the Word of God that we occupy ourselves at the Seminary and on which all our teaching is based and in which it centers. This is obviously true of the courses in the study of the Bible itself, which concern themselves with the interpretation of the Scriptures; likewise of the courses in preaching and teaching and pastoral care, which have to do with the application of the Bible truths, in public and in private, to old and young. This is no less true of the courses in the Lutheran Confessions, which disclose how the Lutheran Church has expressed its faith in the teachings of the Bible, especially those which were in controversy; and the course in doctrine, which is a systematic presentation of the teachings of Scripture. This, however, applies also to the courses in liturgics, hymnology, and church music, which have to do with public Christian worship, the natural outflow of the Scripture-based faith of the Christians; and to the course in church history, which presents the development of God's plan of salvation on earth, of His great acts of grace and salvation, of wrath and judgment, as revealed in the Scriptures. We might, and properly so, rate some of the courses in our Seminary curriculum more important than others. Yet they are all important, and we want our students to become as well versed and proficient in all of them as is possible according to their God-given talents. In this we are merely carrying

out the Lord's injunction expressed in Paul's words to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). And the best is none too good where the service of God in His Church is involved, for those who are to hold fast the faithful Word as they have been taught, that they "may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

If, however, our instruction at the Seminary is to achieve its purpose, it must ever set as its first objective that the student, to become a true theologian, grow in his personal faith and Christianity. He, as well as those who teach him, needs first of all to apply what he learns about God to himself. He needs to have the Law speak to him, to hold his Old Adam in check, to show him his sin, that his mouth may be stopped, as Paul puts it, and he may become guilty before God, and thus be kept from becoming self-satisfied and self-righteous. But above all will he need continually to apply to himself the comfort of the Gospel of forgiveness through the blood of Christ, as he finds it expressed and offered in the Bible and demonstrated by God's dealing with men in history. Thus he will grow day by day in the joy of his Lord and in the hope of his salvation.

Only if this is kept in mind as the primary objective of our Seminary teaching and training, yes, only to the extent that we succeed not only in educating the mind, but in training the heart, will we succeed in preparing true men of God who love their Lord. And this according to God's own Word is the indispensable mark of His servants. Take the outstanding Old Testament example, Abraham. God had great things in store for Abraham, who was to play a most important role in the promotion of God's kingdom in the Old Testament. In preparing Abraham for this role, God put him to a severe test when He asked him to take his only son Isaac whom he loved most dearly and offer him for a burnt offering to the Lord. What God wanted to establish by this test is told us in His own words to Abraham: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me" (Gen. 22:12). Abraham had demonstrated his great love for God in that he was willing to give up and sacrifice his dearest earthly possession for the Lord. Thus he was ready for the part he was to play in God's Old Testament church.

No less did the Savior consider love for Him an indispensable mark of His New Testament servants. His discourses before His disciples abound with references to His own self-sacrificing love to save them. Without question His intention was thus to fill them with an ever greater love for Him and so prepare them for the task He had assigned to them and the adversities they would encounter in carrying it out. Because Peter's denial of the Savior had revealed a pitiful lack of such love, his reinstatement as an apostle could take place only after Peter had given evidence of his love for Christ in his answer to Jesus' thrice-stated question: "Lovest thou me?"

Jesus' preparation of His disciples for their life's work as His witnesses culminated in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon them on Pentecost Day. When thus filled with the Holy Ghost they now went out into the world, it was their great love for their Lord that made them eager and bold confessors of His Savior name. Not only were they ready even to suffer and die for Him, but they actually rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). Paul reveals the secret of his great missionary zeal, his determination, even in the face of opposition, persecution, and death to know nothing among those to whom he came "save Jesus

Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2), when he wrote: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14).

Luther fully underscored the indispensableness of such love in the Lord's servants when he said: "To be an upright pastor and preacher is a great thing, and if our Lord God Himself did not bring it about, nothing would come of it. A man must have a great soul to minister to the body and soul, the goods and honor, of people and yet suffer the greatest danger and ingratitude for it. This is why Christ said to Peter: 'Peter, lovest thou me?' and repeated it twice. Only then He said: 'Feed my sheep,' as if to say: If you want to be a real shepherd and keeper of souls, you must love only Me, and add this love of Me to your ministry; otherwise your work is impossible. For who is willing and eager to suffer ingratitude, to impair his health and possessions by studying and then put himself into the greatest danger? This is why He says: It is necessary that you love Me" (Quoted in Plass, *What Luther Says*, Vol. II, 2924).

We want our students to be faithful in their work at the Seminary, diligent in acquiring all the knowledge they possibly can, especially in the field of theology, and eventually to become faithful servants of the Lord in whatever phase of the ministry He will be pleased to let them serve, faithful even in the face of contradiction, opposition, and suffering for the Lord's sake. Considering this, it should be self-evident that in presenting the objectives of our Seminary work we state that we aim to train theologians in the full sense of the word, men of God who love their Lord and Savior and are willing to spend themselves and to be spent for Him, in His service.

## II. The aim of our Seminary is to train men of God who love the Word of the Lord.

If now in presenting the objectives of our Seminary training we proceed by saying, we aim to train men who love the Word of the Lord, we are merely following the Savior's example. In answer to the question of Judas, not Iscarioth, in the Upper Room on the evening of His betrayal, He said: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:23, 24).

But what is the Word of the Lord which those who love Him will love and keep? Do we have it, and if so, where? Surprisingly enough, these questions have over the years been answered in various ways. We no doubt are all acquainted, at least in a general way, with the position of the Catholic Church in this matter. According to its teachings God speaks both through the Bible and the church, that is, the Catholic Church. One of the recognized confessions of the Eastern Catholic Church states: "The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Scriptures, but also that which the holy Fathers have resolved in orthodox and local councils is given by the Holy Spirit" (Orthodox Confession of 1640). Another of its confessions says: "Since the Holy Spirit is the Author of both, it is the same whether you hear the Church or the Scripture" (*Confessio Dosithei* of the Synod of Jerusalem, 1672). The Roman Catholic Church teaches similarly, as the following samples from recognized Catholic writings show: "We neither derive our religion from the Scriptures, nor does it depend upon them" (Cardinal Manning in Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost); "It is strange that any reasonable man in the present day can imagine for a moment that Almighty God intended the Bible as a textbook of Christian doctrine" (Engl. Rom. Cath. Journal, *The Month*, 1888); "The Catholic Church existed before the Bible; it is possible for the Catholic Church to exist without the Bible, for the Catholic Church is altogether

independent of the Bible. The Bible does not give any systematic, complete, and exhaustive treatment of the doctrines of Christ" (Thomas F. Coakley, *Inside Facts concerning the Cath. Church*). Thus, while it appears as though the Roman Catholic Church recognizes the Bible also as God speaking, actually it places the church above the Bible and so makes what the church says the authoritative Word of God. In this very thing, of course, it proves itself to be the Antichrist foretold and described by the Lord: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:4).

But while the Papacy through its claim of being the authoritative voice of God on earth has beyond doubt shown itself to be the great Antichrist, there are, as Scripture also foretold, many other antichrists, whose teachings about the Word of God are no more acceptable than Rome's. In fact, one of the basic errors of most false churches is their false teaching concerning the Word of God, specifically, as to whether the Bible is the Word of God, and in what sense. For the most liberal among these there is really no such thing as an authoritative Word of God. Surely it is not the Bible, which for them is simply another human document. The inspiration of the Bible in any form is rejected and denied by them. If they speak of inspiration at all, they at best mean that the Bible has the power to inspire religious experience, since it is really nothing more than a record of past religious experiences of people. Actually, according to them we don't need an authoritative source for our religion outside of our reason. Prof. Schuetze, in an article on Neo-orthodoxy (Wis. Luth. Quarterly, Apr. '63) quotes one of these ultraliberals as saying: "We have learned, not to think of the Bible as the final and infallible authority and have come to see that there is no such authority and that we need none."

Neo-orthodoxy, which came into being in the early part of this century as a reaction to liberal theology and has made great strides in recent decades, even in Lutheran circles, despite its name presents little improvement when it comes to speaking about the Word of God. One difference between it and liberal theology is that it uses terminology that sounds conservative and orthodox, the very thing that makes it more dangerous because more deceptive. When the neo-orthodox theologians speak of inspiration with regard to the Bible, this is very misleading since at best it means for them inspiration of the writers, but not of the content and words of the Bible. Their position respecting the Bible is well summed up by Prof. Schuetze in the article previously referred to: "Scripture is a record of God's acts, which men have recorded. In itself, Scripture is not revelation. But when you concern yourself with Scripture, it may happen that God will reveal Himself to you. The Bible is not the Word of God, but it may become the Word of God to an individual believer through the Holy Spirit." What is at the bottom of this attitude toward the Scriptures, this reluctance or refusal to accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God? Prof. John Koehler sized up the matter well in an article entitled "Our Attitude Toward Scripture," which appeared in the Seminary catalogue for 1907-1908: "Science demands that we do not accord the doctrine of inspiration a place at the beginning of our theological studies, for that would mean death to all independent and free investigation" (p. 17).

Over against this he had said at the very beginning of this same article: "The peculiarity of our work at this seminary is this, that we put the doctrine of the inspiration at the head of all our teaching. This we have in common with a comparatively small portion of the so-called Lutheran

Church, to say nothing of those others which still call themselves evangelical or protestant or Christian." This statement is just another way of putting what I have given as second objective, to this day, of our Seminary, to train men who love the Word of their Lord. We still hold, and may God grant that we will ever hold, to the teaching of Scripture concerning itself, that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21), and that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). Our position on the Scriptures is well summed up in the Statement on Scripture adopted by the Joint Union Committee of the Synodical Conference in 1958 and subsequently by the Synodical Conference itself and its four constituent synods, including our own: "We believe and teach that all Scripture (that is, all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament) is given by inspiration of God and is in its entirety, in its parts, and in its very words inspired by the Holy Ghost.—Their (i.e., the writers') message was thus not their own, but God's Word. They were moved by the Holy Spirit, so that He is the Author of their every word." This was also Luther's position, though some are not ready to admit this. He frequently speaks of the Bible as the Holy Spirit's book and calls it God's Word, as when he writes: "If only we believed that God is speaking to us and that whatever we read or hear in the Bible is God's Word" (Plass, op. cit. I, 172). Yes, he wants this to stand with regard to the very words of the Bible, saying: "Not only the words which the Holy Spirit and Scripture use are divine, but also the phrasing" (Plass, op. cit. I, 186). It is because of his conviction that every word of Scripture is God's Word and therefore inerrant that he would not yield on any point in it, but said in his exposition of Galatians 5:12: "One little point is greater than heaven and earth" (Plass, op. cit., III, 4781), and at another time, in a writing against the enthusiasts: "It is my own experience that every passage makes the entire world too narrow for me" (Plass, op. cit., III, 4787).

Luther loved the Bible as nothing else, and so must every true theologian, every true man of God. For it is the Word of the Lord of our salvation: not merely a record of His revelation to man, but the very revelation itself concerning Himself and His great works, especially His greatest work of redeeming and reconciling to Himself the lost world, in that He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. It is this Word of the Gospel which as the power of God unto salvation works in us the miracle of the new birth, makes us God's children and heirs of eternal life. How can it be otherwise than that we love this Word of the Lord even as we love Him, its sole Author and the Author and Finisher of our faith and salvation!

If we should fail in our Seminary teaching to make this our objective, that those at our feet learn in increasing measure to love the Word of God, we have really accomplished little or nothing. The more we succeed in instilling love for the Word, the better theologians we will produce. True love for the Word, because it is the Word of God that makes us wise unto salvation, will make for men who are loyal to the Word, to every part and every word of it, loyal not only to those parts of the Word that speak directly of Christ and our salvation, but also to those which have only a very remote connection with this central truth. True love for the Word will therefore also keep them from being influenced by the wisdom of men who set themselves above it or in any way tamper with it. True love of the Word will, however, also make for men who need not be driven to the Word, who will not find it drudgery, but sheer delight to search the Scriptures, who will gladly follow Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "Give attendance to reading, to ex-

hortation, and doctrine. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:13, 16).

### III. The aim of our Seminary is to train men of God who love the ministry of the Word.

"In doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." These words of Paul remind us of the work for which we at the Seminary are preparing men, for which also it must be our aim to inspire them with love. We want to train men of God who not only love the Lord who bought them and the Word of the Lord which made them His own, but also the ministry of the Word, through which they shall be privileged to bring salvation to others.

This means that they must, to begin with, be convinced of the universal, urgent need for that ministry. The need for this ministry exists because, as Paul writes, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men because that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12), because as a result "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21) and "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:3). The need for this ministry exists because no man can save himself and "none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Ps. 49:7). The ministry of the Word is needed by those who are in the Church, who through the merits of Christ imputed to them are indeed saints in God's sight, yet because of the Old Adam in them are sinners who are in daily need of forgiveness and of renewed strength to grow in faith and sanctification. This ministry is needed above all by the millions near and far who have no more knowledge of God than their natural knowledge which cannot save them, a need which is described in words of Isaiah that are just as true today as when they were written: "The darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2).

We and the men we prepare for the ministry must be kept keenly aware of this need among our fellow men as was our Savior. Without losing sight of the physical needs and afflictions of the multitudes that followed Him, He was especially and continually conscious of their greatest, their spiritual need. He saw, as Matthew puts it, that "they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). We need to have, and to inculcate in our future pastors, a compassion for the souls of men similar to that of Jesus, a compassion which had moved Him to come to earth and give His life a ransom for them and which moved Him to action in their behalf while He was on earth. We need to train men for the ministry who are so filled with love and compassion for the lost, that like Paul they are ready to go anywhere the Lord might want to send them and to become all things to all men that they might by all means save some (I Cor. 9:22).

If love for the ministry of the Word is aroused by a compassionate awareness of the sad, spiritual condition of men, how much more by the knowledge and understanding that God out of love and mercy has ordained the ministry of the Word as the only solution for that need. For all men there is only one way to be freed from sin and to be saved. This is so clearly taught in Scripture, it is difficult to understand that even many who seem to know the Scriptures from cover to cover don't find it, as the Jews, to whom Christ had to say: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Having quoted Peter's well-known words earlier, we shall here cite only

Jesus' word: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6), and the words of St. Paul: "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision (the Jews) by faith, and the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) through faith" (Rom. 3:30). Nor did God on His part exclude anyone, for Peter writes that God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9).

For this reason God in His infinite love gave command through His Son that the Gospel be preached in all the world, to every creature, or put in another way, He instituted the ministry of the Word. Paul's words on this are well known to us: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:18). Through this ministry, particularly through those who are called into the public exercise of this ministry, He issues His invitation to men to accept His salvation in Christ, Paul himself adding: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20). How indispensable this ministry is if men are to hear, believe, and be saved, Paul also states: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14, 15.)

But God has also guaranteed the success of this ministry, not necessarily in the sense in which men, even those in the ministry, sometimes rate it, but in this sense, that it will accomplish its purpose in the saving of souls. Its success is assured, in that Jesus when giving His commission pre-faced it with His "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and added to it the precious promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18, 20). Its effectiveness is guaranteed by God's personal pledge concerning His Word: "It shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). Considering what God purposes to accomplish and guarantees to accomplish through the ministry of the Word, it is no wonder that He Himself speaks so highly of it, saying: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth" (Isa. 52:7). Luther, in a sermon "On Keeping Children in School" (1530); calls attention to the name of honor God bestows on the ministry: "Scripture certainly praises and lauds this position very highly. St. Paul calls preachers God's stewards and ministers, bishops, teachers, prophets, God's ambassadors, sent to reconcile the world with God (II Cor. 5:20). Joel calls them saviors; David calls them kings and princes (Ps. 68:13); Haggai calls them messengers (1:13); and Malachi says: 'The priest's lips should keep the knowledge... for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts' (2:7)." No wonder Paul says of the ministry: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1).

"A good work," yes, 'tops' among all the professions and vocations on earth! It simply must be a chief objective of our Seminary to instill in its students an ever greater appreciation of the beauty and glory of this ministry for which they are preparing themselves. In it they will have the high privilege and honor of being ambassadors for the King of kings and Lord of lords, yes, "laborers together with God" (I Cor. 3:9). In this ministry they, as really every Christian, are engaged in a work that would seem

more befitting angels than sinful men. With Paul they will therefore at all times humbly confess, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7), and "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (I Tim. 1:12).

Such an attitude of love and appreciation for the ministry will itself go a long way in making faithful ministers. That is what the Lord looks for in His servants, for Paul writes: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2). And that is what it takes to be a good minister. The ministry, if conscientiously carried out, does not insure a life of leisure, but involves real work, much of which cannot be measured in terms of hours, as that of an office- or shopworker. In spite of what some of our members may think and the impression some pastors may give, it takes time and work, real work, to prepare sermons for the many regular and special services, sermons that at least in a measure do justice to the chosen text and meet the needs of the hearers. It takes work to prepare properly for the various classes, meetings, and calls. It takes time and work for the conscientious pastor or missionary to make the contacts which are necessary to gain more souls and to keep those who have been won, especially in a ministry that endeavors to be faithful to all the teachings and directives of God's Word and is therefore not popular. And let us not minimize the great responsibility that rests on the minister, responsibility, as far as it is his, not only for the congregation as a whole, but for the individual members, some of whom at times by their conduct, their indifference toward the means of grace, or their unwillingness to cooperate unnecessarily make the ministry's task more difficult, in complete disregard of the Lord's injunction: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Not only, however, is the ministry made difficult by disappointments and discouragements from within the congregation, but also from without. If he endeavors to carry out his ministry, both in teaching and practice, according to the Word of God and the dictates of his conscience based upon that Word, the minister may well expect to be maligned and condemned, both by the unbelievers and by such in the community who are members of other churches and profess to be Christians. He may at times find even a brother pastor making his work more difficult for him in some way or another. Many hours of precious sleep have been lost over such experiences by ministers who are sincerely dedicated to be faithful to their charge.

When we thus consider the work and responsibility, also the disappointments and discouragements that go with it, it should be clear that this calls for a man who truly loves the ministry; one who never forgets that in it he is serving his Savior and is ministering to the spiritual needs of precious souls for time and eternity; one who ever remembers that his rewards cannot be measured by the salary he receives nor by the acclaim he gets from men, but by the satisfaction of knowing that he is pleasing his Lord and by the assurance that his ministry has the promise of the Lord's blessing in souls won and preserved for heaven.

Such love for the ministry will also fill the faithful pastor with sincere determination to measure up to the qualifications set down for His ministers by the Lord Himself: "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in

subjection with all gravity; . . . not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into the reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Tim. 3:2-7). Accordingly, the conscientious minister will seek to be a credit to his high office and to the Lord who called him into it. This he will set as his goal in all his work, in all his dealings with his people, but no less in his personal life and conduct before his members and those outside of his flock. He will therefore also gladly and studiously seek to avoid whatever might give offense and needlessly impair the effectiveness of his ministry. If through the ministry thus carried out little or no glory comes to the person of the minister, it will not unduly disturb him. For he must feel as Paul: "Do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). His ultimate aim is that his ministry redound to the glory of Him who established and instituted it, from whom also he received it, and to whom alone credit is due for its success.

[No greater joy can come to those who are called to train men for the ministry than to know that they have at least in a small way contributed to the Savior's glory by helping to prepare men to whom the Savior of sinners is all, who treasure His Word as their most precious possession, and whose greatest delight is to be associated with Him in His harvest of souls.] The joy of preparing such men for the Lord's work can, however, also be yours, whether you are a pastor, or teacher, or lay member in the Church. In fact, you are sharing in this joy when you pray for, and bring your offerings to make possible, the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of schools in which future pastors are trained. You can share even more in this joy if you encourage a young lad, whether your son or not, to take up the ministry and personally or together with your fellow members help to support him. Luther in a sermon on Matthew 2:1-12, The Story of the Wise Men, strongly urges this: "God must be especially pleased when we are glad to help supply and provide the churches well with ministers; for, in the first place, this work furthers the glory of God and exalts His name. In the second place, people are thereby helped to be rid of the tyranny of the devil and to be saved. But how could we invest our money better and do more good with it?" (Plass, op. cit., II, 2976.) Luther makes an even stronger plea in his previously referred to "Treatise on Keeping Children in School." I could not think of more fitting words with which to close this essay than these: "You should be heartily glad and joyful to rear by means of your goods and labor a son who becomes a pious, Christian preacher or schoolmaster. By so doing you have reared a special servant of God, nay, as said above, an angel of God, a true bishop for God, a savior of many people, a king and a prince in the kingdom of Christ, and a teacher and a light of the world among the people of God. Who will or can tell all the honor and value a true, faithful pastor has before God? No treasure is more precious, nothing on earth and in this life is nobler than a true, faithful pastor or preacher!" (Plass, op. cit., II, 2941.)

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## THE FIELD FOR WHICH WE TRAIN LABORERS FOR THE LORD'S HARVEST

- I. Jesus Himself has designated the world as the field
- II. He asks us to consider the field very carefully
- III. He encourages us to enter the field for the harvest with confidence and joy

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields;  
 For they are white already to harvest."

John 4:35

It must have been a delightful experience to be with Jesus; His words and works were always a source of wonderment and admiration to those who went with Him.

Thus, four months before harvest time, according to His own statement, He said to His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Obviously, He was not speaking of a physical, but of a spiritual harvest, the harvest of souls like the Samaritans who were even then approaching toward Him across the fields, led by the woman of Sychar whom Jesus had just brought to faith.

The Lord continued, and said to His disciples, "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:36).

Clearly, the spiritual harvest is more wonderful than any physical harvest could ever be, for here one gathers fruit that endures for eternity. Therefore, the sowers and reapers also share in a much greater joy.

That joy is ours today, as we reap souls for Christ through our missionary enterprises.

Some of us may have left fields, orchards and gardens where the harvest for which we have worked and waited the whole year is now going on, to attend this convention.

But we will not be deprived of the harvest joy by being here. In fact, we may hear the soft swishing of ripened grain and the rustle of the drying corn; we may see and taste precious fruit, as the reports from our fields record the bounties with which the Lord has blessed our spiritual labors.

Not only our missionaries and mission boards, but all the departments of the Synod, its pastors and teachers, and the people of our congregations as laborers together share in the joy of this reaping.

This year, however, one team of sowers and harvest hands stands out especially. They are the board and staff of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary which has trained sowers and reapers for 100 years.

"Both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together," the Lord said. The work at the Seminary may appear to be only sowing; yet it is both, as we all know who have been there for our training. Our Seminary staff therefore rejoices with us in our reaping, for this is the very object and purpose of their labor and training. And all of us, to whatever part of the field we may have been assigned, at home or abroad, in the pulpit, in the classroom or the pew, rejoice with them as our fellow laborers, thanking and praising God for the invaluable contribution which they have made to our harvest throughout the years.

Above all, we praise the Lord for His grace in keeping their sowing as a true *semen-ary* of the Good Seed of the Word, faithful to their assignment