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## The Danger of Lowering Professional Standards

P. E. Kretzmann

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

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## **The Danger of Lowering Professional Standards \***

When, at the beginning of September of last year, not only the Fiscal Conference met for its usual fall meeting, but approximately two hundred additional men came to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, as members of a large Centennial Committee to consider ways, means, and plans for the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Saxon immigration, the key-note that was suggested for the protracted celebration was that of *reconsecration*. But it would hardly require the formal resolutions of such a conference nor the special arrangements made by the various District committees to remind us of the lessons which should come to our mind in connection with the centenary of the Saxon immigration. One of the most significant features of the Old Testament festivals is found in the fact that the Lord combined the strictly religious and doctrinal meaning of the festivals with the commemoration of historical events. Thus every celebration of the Passover reminded the faithful Israelite of the redemption of his fathers from the bondage of Egypt; every attendance at Pentecost presented the picture of the establishment of Israel as a nation at Mount Sinai; every observance of the Feast of Tabernacles was intended as a reminder of the fact that the fathers of Israel lived in tents, or booths, in the wilderness. All the festivities connected with these annual celebrations had the definite object of causing the members of the Jewish Church to reconsecrate themselves to Jehovah, the covenant God, and to the high ideals of the agreement made in the course of the forty years spent in the wilderness.

But the word reconsecration presupposes and implies a recognition of shortcomings, failures, sins of commission and omission. It signifies a recognition and a concession of faults and frailties

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\* This is the first article in a series entitled "The Pastor's Professional Growth," which is to run through the entire year.

as well as of an, at least occasionally, conscious neglect of duty. It demands of us that we earnestly consider words such as those which were spoken by Dr. Walther in a sermon delivered in the year 1870. Speaking on the text Gal. 5, 7, he reviewed the chief events in the history of the Saxon Lutherans; he showed that a marked deterioration in faith and in love had taken place and then addressed some powerful words of admonition and encouragement to his audience. Referring to the early history of the immigrants, he said in part: "It is true, at that time we were still sadly deficient in the true knowledge; many and dangerous errors still darkened our souls. But must we not confess to the glory of God that nevertheless our faith in God was at that time living and powerful and our highest possession and treasure? Had we not emigrated on account of our faith? Had we not on account of this faith gladly left house and home, our fatherland, and many of us the dearest things which we possessed in this world? And what did we seek here? Did we, like most immigrants, seek mountains of gold, a comfortable living, glory, and honor? No; our only true object was to save our souls, to live here according to our faith, to establish here the pure and right worship of God, and to have a truly Christian school for our children. We were pitifully poor, but that did not hinder us from streaming into the place of refuge granted to us by men of another denomination to meet there on all Sundays and holidays and gladly to sacrifice our last pennies for the establishment, maintenance, and furtherance of church and school. Although forsaken and covered with ignominy, we did not court the friendship of the world, but were fearful and anxious lest we be contaminated by the world and thus be deprived of our heavenly treasure. With what zeal we at that time read our small, purely Lutheran paper, while we considered it abominable even to admit newspapers into our homes which made mockery of religion, much less to waste our precious time with the reading of their lascivious entertainment!" And then Walther proceeds to demonstrate just how far, according to his observations, his hearers had departed from the high ideals of the early years, in discontinuing the observance of festival days, in neglecting the Word in church and at home, in turning toward the pleasures and honors of the world, in showing a deplorable lack of interest in religious periodicals and in the matters pertaining to the kingdom of God, in the indifference and coldness of Christian love, in the lack of zeal for true mission-work.

As we prepare for the celebration of the centenary of the Saxon immigration, we are bound to make acknowledgments and to utter confessions of a similar nature. For who can be so blind as not to see the growing secularization of the membership of our

Church, the fact that the members of our congregations live in fine and, in part, luxuriously appointed homes, with all modern conveniences, that they own costly cars, which are regularly replaced by newer models, that they invest heavily in life insurance and similar projects, — and all this while the work of the Kingdom is so pitifully neglected? And who would deny that this poison has contaminated also the clergy, that this general lowering of Christian standards is reflected also in the lowering of professional standards? What about the demands, which are becoming more and more insistent, that there be less preaching of justification and more of “practical” sanctification? What about tendencies in teaching and practise that are coming perilously near to the proclaiming and applying of the modern social gospel? What about the insistence upon the letter of resolutions once passed, even though conditions have changed? What about the growing tendency to shorten the instruction for membership in the Church and for admission to the Lord’s Supper? What about the specific instruction and examination of those who wish to partake of the Holy Communion? (Cp. Apol. of Conf. *Trigl.*, §§ 1. 49.) What about the growing laxity in many quarters with regard to being conformed to the world, especially in the matter of recreation and amusements? Are orthodoxism and formalism going to present a twin menace to throttle the inner life and growth of the Church? Are we approaching a state of spiritual ossification, when we shall have the name that we are living but in reality are spiritually dead?

What is to be said in particular of the personal attitude of pastors to their exalted office? Is it nothing but malicious slander when members of our congregation complain that some pastors spend more time at the card table or on the golf course than at their study tables, that they neglect important pastoral work because of a bowling match? Are our people speaking in ignorance when they state that many sermons are shallow and superficial, that “pastors hide the nakedness of their thought under the fig-leaf of glibness”? These and other questions we ought to face squarely if we desire to make the period of the centennial celebration one of reconsecration.

Once more we must become more deeply aware of the responsibility connected with the office of the Christian ministry. The noted Lutheran divine Charles Porterfield Krauth, as reported by his pupil Revere Franklin Weidner (*Theological Encyclopedia and Methodology*, I, 36 f.), remarked as follows: “The office of the ministry involves the supremest exercise of man’s supremest faculties transfigured by the power of the Holy Ghost. The minister should be deep in the knowledge of that Law [i. e., the Word of God] which underlies all law and thus is to be a deeper lawyer



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than the lawyer himself. He should be a true physician, thoroughly understanding men, able to apply the divine remedies for the deepest diseases of the race. He should be a true teacher of that knowledge which is above all human knowledge. His work is the reproduction of the living Christ in the heart. The function of this office embraces all ages and conditions. Into such a profession, so noble, so difficult, so responsible, no man should ever enter unadvisedly." With this estimate of the ministry agrees the declaration of H. B. Smith (*Introduction to Christian Theology*, 23 f.): "If ever the service of the ministry was a mere routine, now it is no longer such. There is no research of scholarship, no philological skill, no power of historical investigation, no mastery in philosophy, no largeness of imagination, no grace of life and character, no practical self-denial, no gift of eloquence to man by the written or the spoken word, no energy of character, no practical sagacity, . . . no living faith, and no large charity which may not, through the length and breadth of our land, find the fullest employment, and which are not needed, by the Christian Church. It wants its men of fire, its men of piety, its men of large discourse, its laborers in our streets and lanes, its minds of calm philosophy, its heroes, and its saints. It needs its trained bands — and needs them in our own country especially — to meet both Pope and pagan."

Few men since the days of the apostles have had such clear comprehension of the dignity and responsibility of the ministerial office as Martin Luther, and we cannot refrain from quoting from one of his great educational classics, namely, from the *Sermon on the Duty of Sending Children to School*. He writes: "We will first consider the subject in its spiritual, or eternal, aspects and afterward in its temporal, or secular, relations. I trust that believers and all who wish to be called Christians understand that the ministerial office was instituted of God, not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood and bitter death of His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For from His wounds (as is shown in the epistles) truly flow the Sacraments, and His blood has dearly purchased for mankind the blessing of the ministerial office, the function of which is to preach, baptize, loose, bind, dispense the Sacraments, comfort, warn, admonish with God's Word, and do whatever else pertains to the care of souls. Such an office not only promotes temporal life and every secular condition, but it also gives eternal life, releases from death and sin, which is its peculiar and distinguished work; and indeed the world stands and abides only on account of this office, without which it would long since have perished. . . . I mean the clerical office, which pays attention to preaching and the ministration of the Word and

Sacraments, which imparts the Holy Spirit and salvation, blessings not to be obtained by means of music and display; which includes the duties of pastor, teacher, preacher, chaplain, sexton, and schoolmaster, and which is highly praised and extolled in the Scriptures. St. Paul speaks of ministers as the stewards and servants of God, bishops, prophets, and also ambassadors of God to reconcile the world to God, 2 Cor. 5, 20. Joel calls them the Lord's messengers; and Malachi says: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts," Mal. 2, 7; as Christ also says, Matt. 11, 10, when He calls John the Baptist a messenger, and also throughout the Book of Revelation. . . . If it is certain and true that God has instituted the office of the ministry with His own blood and death, we may be sure that He desires to have it highly honored and continued till the day of Judgment."

After thus setting forth his appreciation of the ministerial office in the *introduction* of the treatise, Luther follows this up with his customary powerful application, especially with reference to his purpose in writing the "sermon." He writes: "For consider that whatsoever of good is connected with the office of preaching and the care of souls will be accomplished by your son if he is faithful in his ministry, so that through him many souls will be daily taught, converted, baptized, brought to Christ, made blessed, redeemed from sin, death, hell, and the devil, and come to perfect righteousness and eternal life in heaven. Daniel well says: 'They that teach others shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever,' Dan. 12, 3. For since God's Word and office, where they are rightly employed, must always accomplish great things and indeed work miracles, your son will be constantly doing wonderful things for God, such as raising the dead, casting out devils, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lepers to be clean, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. If this is not done in the body, it is done in the soul, which is indeed a greater work, as Christ says John 14, 12: 'He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.' If a simple Christian can do such things in the case of individuals, how much more can a public preacher accomplish, who deals with whole congregations? Not that he does it himself, but his office, which has been instituted of God for that purpose, and the Word of God, which he teaches; for he is but an instrument in the hands of God."

Luther does not hesitate in this connection to speak of the pastor's relation to, and responsibility with reference to, sanctification also in the narrower sense, including the domain of good works in the field of Christian social service, now so called. He says: "We have been speaking of the works and miracles which your son

does in relation to souls, in saving them from sin, death, and the devil. But in relation to the world also he does great and mighty works in that he informs and instructs all classes how they are to discharge their various duties in a manner acceptable to God. He comforts the sorrowing, gives counsel, settles difficulties, calms disturbed consciences, helps to maintain peace, to appease, to reconcile, and similar duties without number; for a preacher confirms, strengthens, and supports all authority, all temporal peace, governs the seditious, teaches obedience, morality, discipline, and honor, and gives instruction in the duties pertaining to fathers, mothers, children, servants, and, in a word, to all secular relations of life. These are, it is true, the least of a pastor's services; yet they are so excellent and noble that the wisest of the heathen philosophers did not recognize or understand them, much less practise them; and no jurist, no university, no cloister, knows of such works, nor are they taught in either ecclesiastical or civil law. For there is no one who recognizes such secular offices as the great gifts or gracious arrangement of God; it is the Word of God and the ministerial office alone that highly praise and honor them. Therefore, if we wish to speak the truth, we must say that temporal peace—the greatest good on earth, in which all other temporal blessings are comprehended—is really a fruit of the ministerial office. For where it perishes, there are found war, hatred, and the shedding of blood; and where it is not properly exercised, we find, if not actual war, at least a constant unrest, a desire for war and bloodshed." (Translation in Painter, *Luther on Education*, 218 ff.; St. Louis Ed., X, 427 ff.; Holman Ed., IV, 142 ff.)

Where is the blame to be laid when such an appreciation of the ministerial office, its opportunities and responsibilities, is absent? Bulletin 11 of the American Association of Theological Schools states that lowered standards are at least in part a matter of lowered ethics. The situation may be accounted for in part by the fact that some pastors did not enter the ministry from adequate motives. As Dr. Krauth suggests, some men are in the ministry although they entered it almost with an aversion. Others are under the constraint of a vow or an earnest wish of a father or a mother or a promise made by themselves in a moment of intense emotion. Still others drift into the ministry by sheer force of circumstances or because they began their preparation for the office and then were ashamed to draw back. All these motives are incompatible with the dignity and purpose of the Christian ministry and are bound to lower the standards of the profession.

But this is only one side of the difficulty, although it will usually give direction to unsatisfactory work in the ministry. Much has been said about raising standards of educational work

within the preparatory schools and the seminaries. But if we merely raise the standards within the seminaries, as the bulletin referred to above states, we shall never completely touch the lowered standards of American pastors. In a survey on *Physicians and Medical Care*, by Esther Lucile Brown (Russell Sage Foundation, 1937), reference is made to the need for systematic post-graduate study on the part of medical practitioners of every kind. Evidently this profession is experiencing the same kind of difficulty, since graduates do not continue their professional training after they have once entered upon the duties of their calling. And yet it is true of every profession what is stated by Bowling, in an article entitled "Getting Educated and Staying Educated," in the *Adult Education Bulletin* of September, 1937: "If it were possible for the schools to send people into the world supplied with glittering prescriptions of how to use unerringly the information they have acquired, then every business man who had been to school would be a successful business man, every professional man a success in his profession. . . . A teacher may outline what he considers the most essential information about a given subject and even suggest how this information may be used, and this suggestion may strike responsive chords in the minds of many of the listeners; but to achieve the best and most enduring results, the person using this knowledge must be able to make his own contribution to it, observable in the way he uses it. Business, industry, and the professions readily supply whatever instances may be necessary to show that the educated mind is better prepared to make this contribution than the untrained mind. . . . Whenever in our intellectual development or technical training we reach the stage at which we consider ourselves educated, then our next big problem is to *stay educated*. A college degree may rightfully be regarded as a badge of learning because it signifies the satisfactory completion of a prescribed program of study. As a badge of learning, however, a degree soon tarnishes if kept from intellectual agitation for too long a time. The person whose knowledge is out of date is much on the order of the driver of a Model T Ford on a superhighway: other drivers in machines of more modern make and design pull around the man in the Model T, leaving him and his outmoded equipment as hazards to the safety and progress of others. Certain aspects of knowledge of course remain constant, but much of the world's knowledge is constantly being changed by the results of new experiments, new findings, new discoveries.\* . . . To stay educated, we must keep

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\* Translated into the circumstances pertaining to the ministry, this would mean that the subject-matter remains the same, but that social conditions and teaching situations are constantly changing.

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abreast of ever-changing knowledge as it applies generally and specifically to our particular field of endeavor, and the task is a lifelong process. The adult-education movement in this country as well as abroad has made it a simple matter for educated persons to stay educated if they will but avail themselves of the opportunities offered."

These statements find their application in the evident lowering of professional standards in the matter of continued private study. And let no one raise the objection that the manifold duties connected with the present-day "waiting-on-tables" busyness of the harassed pastor make it impossible for him to continue his professional studies along definite lines. The faithful pastor's appreciation of his divine calling will demand that he give first place on his program to the preparation of his sermons and his Bible-lessons, to his work for his classes in the Catechism and other teaching duties. And this makes it imperative for him to keep on studying lest he become superficial in his work or depend on preaching and teaching helps prepared by others. In his introduction to the postil published by Mag. Joh. Spangenberg Luther writes (XIV, 397): "On the other hand, a number of lazy pastors and preachers are not to be commended, who depend on such and other good books because they can take a sermon therefrom; they do not pray, they do not study, they do not read, they do not seek for anything in the Scriptures, just as if they were not in need of reading the Bible because of these books. Such men use books of this kind like the formularies and calendars, merely in order to earn their food by the year, and are nothing but parrots and jackdaws, which learn to repeat without understanding, although our intention and that of such theologians is to lead them into the Scriptures and to admonish them to be on the alert in order that after our death they may for themselves defend our Christian faith against the devil, world, and flesh. For we shall not stand at the head forever, as we now stand. . . . Therefore the watchword is: Watch, study, *attende lectioni*. Truly, thou canst not do too much reading in the Bible; and what thou readest thou canst not too well read; and what thou readest well thou canst not too well understand; and what thou understandest well, that thou canst not too well teach; and what thou teachest well thou canst not live too well. *Experto crede Ruperto*. It is the devil, it is the world, it is our flesh, which rage and storm against us. Therefore, my dear lords and brethren, pastors and preachers, pray, read, study, be diligent; truly, there is no time to be lazy, to snore and to sleep, in this evil, infamous time. Make use of the gift which is entrusted to you and reveal the mystery of Christ." (St. Louis Ed., XIV, 397 ff.)

**The Danger of Lowering Professional Standards**

In view of the fact that the languages, which are, at least theoretically, considered essential for adequate theological study, are being so widely neglected today and that the professional standards are thus lowered to a most alarming extent, it will be well to consider and reconsider, study and restudy, Luther's earnest appeal in his *Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of all the Cities of Germany* of the year 1524. There we read: "Therefore, my beloved countrymen, let us open our eyes, thank God for this precious treasure, and take pains to preserve it and to frustrate the designs of Satan. For we cannot deny that, although the Gospel has come and daily comes through the Holy Spirit, it has come *by means of the languages* and through them must increase and be preserved. For when God wished through the apostles to spread the Gospel abroad in all the world, He gave the languages for that purpose; and by means of the Roman Empire He made Latin and Greek the language of many lands that this Gospel might speedily bear fruit far and wide. He has done the same now. For a time no one understood why God had revived the study of the languages; but now we see that it was for the sake of the Gospel, which He wished to bring to light and thereby expose and destroy the reign of Antichrist. . . . In the same measure that the Gospel is dear to us should we zealously cherish the languages. For God had a purpose in giving the Scriptures in only two languages, the Old Testament in the Hebrew and the New Testament in the Greek. What God did not despise but chose before all others for His Word we should likewise esteem above all others. . . . And let this be kept in mind, that we will not preserve the Gospel without the languages. The languages are the scabbard in which the Word of God is sheathed. They are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; the cask in which this wine is kept; the chamber in which this food is stored. And, to borrow a figure from the Gospel itself, they are the baskets in which this bread and fish and fragments are preserved. If through neglect we lose the languages (which may God forbid!), we will not only lose the Gospel, but it will finally come to pass that we will lose also the ability to speak and write either Latin or German. . . . With a simple preacher of the faith it is different from what it is with the expositor of the Scriptures, or prophet, as St. Paul calls him. The former has so many clear passages and texts in translations that he is able to understand and preach Christ and lead a holy life. But to explain the Scriptures, to deal with them independently and oppose heretical interpreters, such a one is too weak without a knowledge of the languages. But we need just such expositors who will give themselves to the study and interpretation of the Scriptures and who are able to contro-

vert erroneous doctrines; for a pious life and orthodox teaching are not alone sufficient. Therefore the languages are absolutely necessary, as well as prophets, or expositors; but it is not necessary that every Christian or preacher be such a prophet, according to the diversity of gifts of which St. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 12, 8. 9 and in Eph. 4, 11. . . . Hence, although faith and the Gospel may be preached by ordinary ministers without the languages, still such preaching is sluggish and weak, and the people finally become weary and fall away. But a knowledge of the languages renders it lively and strong, and faith finds itself constantly renewed through rich and varied instruction." (Tr. in Painter, *Luther on Education*, 184 ff.; cp. St. Louis Ed., X, 470 ff.; Holman Ed., IV, 112 ff.)

Luther was not demanding the impossible when he insisted upon maintaining high standards with reference to the ancient languages in the ministry. Not the least amazing fact in the life of this man, full of unusual experiences as it is, may be found in his being practically self-taught in Greek and Hebrew. In mastering the former language he received some assistance from his friend Johann Lang; but his proficiency in Hebrew was essentially his own accomplishment, although he modestly stated: "I am no Hebrew grammarian, nor do I wish to be, for I cannot bear to be hampered by rules; but I am quite at ease in the language, for whoever has the gift of tongues, even though he cannot forthwith turn anything into another language, yet has a wonderful gift of God." (Smith and Gallinger, *Conversations with Luther*, 182. Cp. St. Louis Ed., XXII, 1542 f.) His knowledge of church history and of philosophical subjects is likewise surprising, and the explanation for this fact may be found, at least in part, in his contacts with other scholars, which is apparent from his voluminous correspondence and the many conferences and meetings which he attended. He not only contributed an amazing amount of material at such meetings, but absorbed at least as much, so that he retained the remarkable elasticity of his mind practically up to the time of his last illness, as his books, treatises, and letters show. This fact might well be kept in mind by many pastoral conferences in our days. What we need is less discussion of peripheral matters and a more thorough study of the Bible and of doctrinal theology. Nor is it sufficient to appoint one or more men as essayists, who will then read papers on subjects of which the rest of the members knew little or nothing beforehand, but the topics should be advertised, at least in outline, to all members of the conference, so that every one present may offer a specific contribution, preferably of a constructive nature, to the discussion of the propositions or theses presented. Scholars in other fields of human knowledge and endeavor find the panel-discussion method exceedingly fruitful; why should it not be more widely introduced into our circles?

And still another point will bear careful study if the lowering of professional standards is not to endanger our scholarship, and that is the professional man's continuation work with the extension division of higher institutions of learning, preferably Lutheran seminaries. Pastors' institutes, summer sessions, correspondence courses — they all, if conscientiously employed, are bound to keep the mind alert and elastic and to offer opportunities for penetrating ever more deeply into the unsearchable mysteries of the grace of God. Bulletin 11 of the American Association of Theological Seminaries, referred to above, rather timidly suggests: "Is it too much to hope that individual seminaries might be willing . . . during the otherwise dormant summer period to pool their faculty resources, rotate the load, so that it would not fall heavily upon individual men, and make possible within the summers . . . opportunities for continued theological education?" (P. 33.) As for us, we need not wait for such projects to eventuate, for the opportunity has been offered in the past and will again be offered to all those who are truly interested and will be ready, if necessary, to make some sacrifices for the sake of maintaining high standards in the profession. The plan ought to be given all the more consideration since it incidentally places the facilities of fairly well-equipped libraries at the disposal of the earnest pastor.

Let us turn once more to Luther, who had such a keen insight into the needs of men in the professional fields. In his *Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen in Behalf of Christian Schools* of 1524 he writes: "My advice is not to collect all sorts of books indiscriminately, thinking only of getting a vast number together. . . . In the first place, a library should contain the Holy Scriptures in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and other languages. Then the best and most ancient commentators in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Secondly, such books as are useful in acquiring the languages, as the poets and orators, without considering whether they are heathen or Christian, Greek or Latin. For it is from such works that grammar must be learned. Thirdly, books treating of all the arts and sciences. Lastly, books on jurisprudence and medicine, though here discrimination is necessary. A prominent place should be given to chronicles and histories, in whatever languages they may be obtained; for they are wonderfully useful in understanding and regulating the course of the world and in disclosing the marvelous works of God. . . . Since God has so graciously and abundantly provided us with art, scholars, and books, it is time for us to reap the harvest and gather for future use the treasures of these golden years." (Tr. by Painter, *op. cit.*, 206 ff. Cp. St. Louis Ed., X, 483 f.; Holman Ed., IV, 128 ff.)

This brief discussion may well close with a few excerpts from



Luther's *Vorrede ueber den ersten Teil seiner deutschen Buecher* of 1539, where he writes: "In addition to this let me show you a proper way of studying theology, in which I exercised myself. If you observe this, you will become so learned that you yourself could (if that were necessary) provide such good books as the fathers and the councils. . . . And that is the way which the holy King David (and which without doubt was observed by all patriarchs and prophets) teaches in Ps. 119. There you will find three rules, abundantly presented throughout the entire psalm, and they read: *Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*. In the first place you must know that the Holy Scriptures are a book of such a nature as to make the wisdom of all other books foolishness, since only this book teaches concerning eternal life. Therefore you must despair completely regarding your own understanding and penetration; for therewith you will attain to nothing, but by such presumption you will precipitate yourself, and others with you, from heaven into the abyss of hell, as happened to Lucifer. But kneel down in your closet and pray to God with true humility and sincerity that He may, through His dear Son, give you His Holy Spirit that He may illuminate and guide you and give you the proper understanding. . . . In the second place you must meditate, that is, not only in the mind, but also outwardly use and apply, read and reread, the exact statements and the specific words (*buchstabilche Worte*) in the Book, with diligent attention and meditation concerning what the Holy Ghost means thereby. And be careful lest you become surfeited or have the idea that one or two readings, with discussion, will be enough, so that you understand it thoroughly; for no worth-while theologian will be developed thus, and they are like unripe fruit which falls from the tree before it is half matured. . . . In the third place there is *tentatio*; that is the touchstone, which will not only teach you to know and understand, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how powerful, how comforting, is the Word of God, wisdom above all wisdom. . . . But if you are presumptuous and entertain the notion that you are in full possession of everything and feel flattered about your own booklets, teaching, and writing, as though you had succeeded in a very fine way and preached most excellently; and if it pleases you much that you are praised in the presence of others and possibly even seek such praise, else you would feel mournful and reduce your efforts: if you are of that sort, my dear fellow, then be sure to take hold of your ears, and if you take hold in the right way, you will find a fine pair of large, long, rough ass's ears. Then you may as well complete the job and adorn them with golden bells, so that, wherever you go, men may hear you, point their fingers at you, and

say: Behold, behold, there goes that fine animal that can write such precious books and preach so unusually well. Then you will be blissful and more than blissful in heaven,—yea, in that which is prepared for the devil and his angels. To summarize: Let us seek honor and be as proud as we may. In this book the honor is God's alone, and it is written: *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam. Cui est gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.*" (St. Louis Ed., XIV, 434 ff.)

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### St. Paul and Woman's Status \*

Under this heading, in the *Woman's Press* (August, 1937), Hazel E. Foster, administrative dean, Presbyterian College of Education, Chicago, has published an article on the subject of Paul's prohibitions in 1 Cor. 11, 3 ff.; 14, 33 ff. (1 Tim. 2, 11 ff.) relating to the veiling and public speaking of women in church assemblies, which, in adaptation, is offered for further theological study in the *Religious Digest* (October, 1937).

Evidently the article has been read with much interest and at least some approval in wide areas, for no sooner had it appeared than the question was submitted to us whether or not it may be accepted also in our circles as essentially correct and Biblical. The problem, we think, deserves attention, since the question of the veiling and public speaking of women in church assemblies is still causing some pastors considerable vexation of spirit, though perhaps more than enough has been written on the topic in our church periodicals, commentaries, and other publications. As long as the earth will stand, coals, it seems, must be carried to Newcastle and theological discussions repeated in order that truth may have her way and prevail. It is in the spirit of willing, timely service of larger questioning groups that the following notes on the matter are offered here.

#### 1

First of all, we readily admit that in Miss Foster's articles there are statements that are not only correct but also most helpful in supplying a proper background and clearing up difficulties which have their source in the peculiar social and religious situation of the Corinthian church. Touching our particular subject, we gladly draw attention to the excellent description of the general importance of the woman's veil in those early times. Miss Foster says:

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\* Cp. Vol. I, 351—359, also IV, 85—95, of this magazine.