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## The Seminary and the Church

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## The Seminary and the Church

Paper read at the free conference of Lutheran seminary professors, held at Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, Ill., June 9—11, 1943

In beginning the consideration of the theme before our meeting this morning it is well for us to bear in mind that the seminary is not so necessary for the existence of the Church as we teachers at the various Lutheran seminaries are perhaps wont, or at least inclined, to assume. It may be conducive to humility on our part if we reflect that the Church existed and flourished once upon a time without such schools, and if that thought pricks some bubbles of self-importance which we may have fondly permitted to float about our heads, I would say we have made a good start in our discussion. The briefest kind of historical survey will suffice to show that the Church's life does not absolutely depend on her being provided with theological seminaries. I am here not thinking of the era of the Old Covenant, when there were vast stretches of time during which, at least as far as we know, the children of God did not have schools for the training of spiritual leaders, but of the early years of the New Testament. The Church, as we are all aware, came into existence without the aid of institutions of learning. It was quite a number of years after Pentecost that the first theological school was established.

Of course, there was teaching, teaching of theology, and teaching such as the world has never seen again. Our Lord Himself instructed a group of twelve men, some of them for about three years. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" they say, when to the right and to the left people showed disappointment and departed, and they were asked whether they, too, wished to leave Him. "Lord, to whom shall we go; for Thou hast the words of eternal life." We think likewise of the inspired teaching that was given by the Apostles to their pupils after Pentecost, when Paul attached men like Timothy, Titus, and Luke to himself, and Peter in a special way became the teacher of John Mark, and John the Evangelist the teacher of Polycarp. Much blessed, glorious instruction was given, we can be sure; far more than the isolated notices that have reached us record. But the Apostolic Age did not see the establishment of any theological schools, and hence it is clear that the Church can live and grow without them. This observation, of course, must not be interpreted as denying that such schools are a most desirable and helpful means for the development of the Church—a matter on which I shall have more to say by and by.

It would be fascinating for us, as a body or individually, to trace the development of ministerial education and to speak of the establishment of the theological schools in Alexandria and Antioch,

the marvelous training of church workers by St. Augustine in Africa, the convent and cathedral schools of the Middle Ages, the rise of the universities and their role in this field, the methods employed by Luther and his co-workers, especially Melancthon, in supplying the Church with pastors and teachers, the provisions made in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries to secure the needed clergy, the history of ministerial training in the United States, the instruction given by consecrated pastors in a private capacity to promising young men that desired to take up the Gospel ministry, the first Lutheran Seminary here in America, and in general the founding of our theological schools, bringing before us scenes both touching and edifying. While a historical survey including the matters mentioned could well be brought within the scope of my theme, I believe that our discussion will be more profitable if we confine ourselves to the important doctrinal and practical questions that present themselves when the relations between the Church and the seminary are studied.

## I

To get a good start in our discussion, let me state that to all of us, I believe, it is an axiomatic proposition that if it wishes to follow God's directions, a Church has to have ministers and teachers. It might be thought by somebody that our having the office of the ministry is an arrangement which Christians have arrived at without divine direction and sanction, merely by the exercise of their own consecrated intelligence and wisdom, perceiving that it would be wise and profitable to entrust certain people with the teaching function. We have, for example, quite generally in our churches the position of organist. Everybody considers the service rendered by such a person useful; but I have not heard it said that this position rests on a divine provision or ordinance and that the Church would be sinning against the definitely expressed will of God if it endeavored to do without it. That the preaching and teaching of the Word by special persons is something that God Himself directs us to have and foster, we see, for example, from what Jesus says to His disciples in the well-known passage Matt. 9: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." Certainly, if we are to pray for a certain service, that service must be something that God desires us to have and cultivate. Our dogmaticians point particularly to Titus 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." In the churches on Crete, founded by Paul, there were things that were still wanting when he departed. The churches were not yet completely equipped as Paul

desired them to be, and a factor still lacking was a duly authorized and properly equipped ministry, and Titus is told by Paul to see to it that this want be supplied. I may add that this view of the position of Christian pastors and teachers is the one which throughout the centuries has quite generally been taken by Christians. They have not looked upon such a position as a convenience with which the Church provided itself, but as a divinely instituted service which the Church cannot neglect to introduce and maintain without disobedience to her Master.

## II

Another proposition axiomatic to all Lutherans must at once follow. It is this: The Church has not received any direction from its divine Lord and Master as to the precise way in which its workers are to be trained and prepared, whether in special schools or some other way. On this head, too, not much need be said. Though many erroneous notions have risen in the course of time touching the office of the ministry, I do not recall having read that any Lutheran theologian has maintained that Christ or the Apostles have given us instruction on the question as to whether ministers have to be trained in what we call schools or in some other manner. We see that here, as in other spheres, Christ has treated the New Testament Church like a man having attained the age of majority, when he can himself make decisions and chart his course. It is true that there are church bodies which are opposed to having a school-trained ministry. Their position is not, if I understand it correctly, that Jesus has expressly forbidden the Church to have schools in which ministers and teachers are educated, but rather that since in the early days of Christianity there were no seminaries, we must assume it to be God's will that we should not have any either. This argument has been exposed so frequently that I need not dignify it by presenting counterarguments. In brief, God has not commanded the establishment of theological seminaries, neither has He forbidden it. Here we move in the realm of that glorious liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free (Gal. 5:1).

## III

When in the usual way we say that the Church looks to the seminary for its pastors, another truth must be adduced to put our statement in the right light. I refer to the Scriptural teaching that pastors are gifts of the exalted Christ bestowed on the Church. The seminary is a nursery according to the etymological meaning of the word. It is the place where the seeds are put into the ground and from where, after the plant has developed, it can be taken to the location of its permanent usefulness. According to this

etymology the name is to signify that at the seminary young men are to be trained and prepared who, when this process has been completed, can in the various communities fill the teaching positions for which men are needed. When Paul looked upon the Church of his day, supplied as it was with church workers, leaders, teachers of various types, he was moved to utter words of admiration and joy. "But unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," Eph. 4:7-13. The reason why I quote this passage here is to bring out that Paul regarded the church workers whom he enumerates, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, as gifts which Christ, who had ascended above all heavens, granted to His Church here on earth. I am convinced that we are not reading too much into these words of the Apostle when we say that wherever we meet a true Christian pastor and teacher, we behold a gift of God. The brother may be lacking in some social graces; his accent may vex some people; his knowledge of sociology and economics may be rather embryonic; and there may be certain best sellers that he has never looked into: if he preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness, purity, and sweetness, and is totally, body and soul, devoted to the service of his Master, he is one of the jewels of the Church, a real gift from above. If he was graduated from our particular seminary, then, while we rejoice, let us bear in mind that our school was merely the instrument of Christ in preparing this man for his important and glorious work. It is not necessary to labor the point; but it had to be mentioned because we are in danger of forgetting that, after all, it is Christ Himself who moves men's hearts so that they become willing to be His messengers, and that it is He who through His Spirit grants them faith, devotion, a spiritual understanding of the saving truth, patience, zeal—all of them possessions without which the mere acquisition of intellectual knowledge and mental brilliancy would be of little avail. The recent attempts made by all seminaries, I suppose, to achieve if possible a more satisfactory scholastic foundation and in an increased degree to do work which does not have to fear com-

parison with that done in theological departments at famous universities here and abroad are laudable. But these efforts must not obscure for us the truth that in the last analysis it is Christ on whom the success of our educational endeavors depends. The seminaries, then, must proceed on their way not in the spirit of haughty pride, which glories in the high scholastic standards of the particular school and in the distinction it has attained among the educational institutions of the country—desirable though such things may be—but in the spirit of humble trust which prayerfully looks to the risen and ascended Savior to make its service to the Church satisfactory, important, and vital.

#### IV

When we look a little more closely at the relations between the seminary and the Church, we shall have to say that under present conditions it would be extremely difficult for the Church to do its work without the seminary. In the Colonial days, as we now think exclusively of our own country, we find that it was possible for a Christian minister to conduct a little ministerial training school in his own home. I imagine in the instances where this was done the pastor and his good wife, in an admirable spirit of unselfish devotion, resolved to undertake the utmost in the sphere of Christian hospitality and took in the lads that were eager to be instructed. Since the success or failure of a school does not depend primarily on the equipment it can boast, but on its teacher or teachers, it may be that by the method mentioned some exceedingly good results were achieved and excellent ministers provided for the Church. Alas! in the days in which we live, days of hurry, haste, and worry, of multifarious activities for the pastor and endless social obligations for his wife, this method is out of the question and can be mentioned merely as a historical curiosity or phenomenon, reminding us that there were initiative, enterprise, achievement, and true consecration in that early period as well as now. Just as we have placed almost everything else on a joint social basis, for instance, the practice of charity toward the poor and the aged, so the churches feel, and justly so, that the training of pastors and teachers, if it is to be efficiently done in our complex age, must be a joint undertaking. It would be difficult to find a pastor competent to teach all the subjects which present-day conditions prescribe; and if you found such a person, you would probably discover that he does not have the time for the herculean labor that would be involved. Hence we regard the seminary, modern life being what it is, as almost indispensable to the churches in their efforts to provide for themselves and for the mission fields a properly equipped ministry.

## V

If what has just been said is tenable, it can be argued with a good deal of cogency that the Church should control the seminaries on which it depends for its pastors and teachers. I referred before to private enterprises, undertaken by God-fearing, devoted pastors, to train future ministers. It is worthy of note that a goodly number of our theological schools were founded not by church bodies, but by one or several theologians who, acting in a private or semiprivate capacity, planted an urgently needed tree. By and by the church body that was being served was ready, or a church body came into existence prepared to give the school an official status and to adopt it as its own institution. As far as I can observe, the opinion has always been strong in the Lutheran Church of America that, to do its work properly, the Church should be in control of the schools on which it relies for its supply of spiritual leaders. That we are here treating of a subject possessing not merely academic interest, but having practical importance and implications is quite evident. As we all know, there are a number of seminaries and divinity schools in existence which are not controlled by a church body, but are conducted by a private corporation, and the question arises whether, after all, such a status of independence from church control is not the one a seminary should aspire to have. These schools, as, for instance, Union Seminary, New York, are heavily endowed; the funds are sufficient for the maintenance of the institution; no more or less painful solicitation of the moneys required to staff the school and to keep the library and other equipment up to date is needed. Perhaps to one or the other of us a seminary thus situated appears as a veritable haven of refuge, especially if it has been our lot in a representative capacity to experience cruel financial agonies as we were fighting for the very life of our school. But while the financial worries of a seminary which has to rely entirely on the direct support of its church body are in many instances only too real, vexing, and discouraging, and while at times other uncomfortable conditions may arise from church control, I hold that it would be a mistaken course if we sought to achieve for our theological schools a position of freedom from the governing control of their church bodies. The Church, needing the Word of God and the Sacraments, should be able to erect and govern the institutions furnishing it dispensers of the Word and Sacraments. What a precarious situation for a city to be in if it has to depend for its water supply on the good will of an individual who owns the lake in the mountains from where conduits take the water to the city! Since it cannot exist without the means of grace, the Church is most vitally interested in the character of the schools where the men are trained that will ad-

minister these means. It must have the Word and the Sacraments pure, unadulterated, as they came from the hand of God, not a substitute for them, no falsification. Hence it cannot well afford to leave the preparation of its ministers to an outside or private agency. If that means struggles, heartaches, and disappointments for the seminary authorities, we feel sorry for them, but declare the hardships must be borne for the sake of the well-being of the Church itself. That besides the vital point mentioned there are other advantages connected with church control of the seminaries, that, for instance, the interest of the church members in a school of which they are part owners and part governors, is likely to be more real and active than in a school with which they have no organic connection, needs no demonstration.

## VI

Quite naturally the question arises, how this control of the seminary by the Church is to be exercised. Is the Church to elect the members of the faculty directly at its conventions, or should it entrust these elections to a committee? Should the board of managers be chosen by the Church for life, or should the members of this board serve merely from one convention to the other? Should the Church at its regular meetings determine the curriculum of the school? To what extent should the faculties be permitted to introduce and mold the courses of study that are to be offered? In looking at these and similar questions one will say that no hard and fast rules beyond those prescribed by a loving interest of the Church in the seminary and by sanctified common sense should be laid down. The Church that legislates too copiously concerning its theological schools will probably find that it defeats its own purpose, just as much as the Church which is too hesitant to occupy itself with the affairs of the school and grants too much authority to the board of directors and the faculty. Let the Church adhere in its supervision and guidance to the fundamentals, the broad general principles, and leave the details to competent committees and individuals.

## VII

We are at this conference, I am quite sure, not so much concerned with the attitude of the Church toward the seminary as with that of the seminary toward the Church. We represent primarily the seminary, and what we desire is to see to it that our own house has been, or will be, set in order. Naturally, we shall not begrudge the church authorities, if any of them are present, a word of good advice, either. As members of the faculties of Lutheran seminaries we should all have the strong conviction that next to our exalted heavenly King the Church is our superior, to whom we



owe allegiance, service, and obedience. These are hackneyed phrases, I realize, but owing to the difficulty of the fulfillment of our duties in this sphere, I hope you will not object to my mentioning the subject. It is quite easy for theological professors, owing to their special training, the leadership they have to assume in the classroom, and the many times they are appealed to for counsel and direction by former students and others, to fall into the error of looking upon the Church as a mere adjunct of the seminary, instead of always bearing in mind that the seminary exists for the benefit of the Church, that the latter is the mistress, the seminary the servant. Whoever accepts a call as professor at one of our Lutheran seminaries is not thereby authorized to follow any course whatever which a scholar's whims and inclinations may dictate; he is not put into a laboratory where he may experiment and speculate to his heart's content. He and his colleagues, together with the student body and the board of directors, are not sovereign; they are servants of the Church which called the professors, elected the board of directors, and is sending its consecrated young men that have the ministry in view to the institution. That there may come a time when a seminary for reasons of conscience will refuse to follow the mandate of its Church, is conceivable; but of such exceptional situations I am not thinking now.

### VIII

What must be the chief aim of the seminary in its endeavor to serve the Church? The answer is, of course, obvious. Its aim must be to furnish the Church the kind of pastors it requires for its life and development. Here we again can and hence should place ourselves on the definite foundation of Holy Scripture, because God Himself through the Apostles has told us what the qualifications and characteristics of a Christian minister should be. The Church naturally wishes the seminary to furnish it candidates of this kind. If you scrutinize the chief sections of the New Testament in which these things are listed, 1 Tim. 3, Titus 1, 1 Pet. 5, you at once see that you can divide the requirements into three classes, such as pertain to the intellect, such as belong to the heart, or the spiritual life, and such as have to do with the special "skills" (to use this modern term) of a pastor and teacher. It is when we survey these passages of Holy Writ that the magnitude of the task confronting a seminary becomes an appalling reality to us, and we exclaim, Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor. 2:16.) It is not my intention to give a comprehensive exegetical discussion of the respective Scripture passages, beneficial though such an undertaking would be, but merely to select a few representative terms to guide us in our thinking of ministerial qualifications.

I alluded to intellectual requirements. Our pastors are to be teachers of their flocks. As teachers, they must have something they can teach, knowledge that they can impart to those that are entrusted to their care. They are to be preachers. The first requisite for anybody that is to assume the role of a preacher is that he have a message which he can proclaim. In the catalog of characteristics of elders or bishops given Titus 1, Paul says, v. 9, that the bishop must be "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." You have to grant an old grammarian a few words of technical exegesis on this passage. The faithful word (*pistos logos*) is evidently the Gospel message as Paul had preached it. It is *pistos*, it can be relied on; it is worthy of all credence. Paul adds a modifier: *kata teen didacheen*. The reliable word which is in keeping with the teaching is to be adhered to. A person might, on account of the position of the prepositional phrase, be inclined to view it as belonging exclusively to the adjective *pistou*, so that the meaning would result, "Adhering to the word which, as my teaching has shown, is reliable." There is nothing wrong with such a construction, except that, so it strikes me at least, the noun "teaching" in that case should be followed by the possessive *mou*. I prefer to take another possible view, which regards *pistou logou* as one term and the prepositional phrase as belonging to that term. The meaning resulting under such a view is, "Let him adhere to the reliable word in the form in which it has been taught," or, as others translate, "according to the Christian doctrine." Newport White, in the *Exp. Gr. N. T.*, translates: "the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching." We need not, for our present purpose, go into further details. It is evident that the candidate for the holy ministry is, according to St. Paul's specifications, to have acquaintance with the message that the Apostles had proclaimed. The emphasis which St. Paul in the Pastoral Epistles puts on "sound doctrine" or "sound words" abundantly testifies that to be properly equipped for the Gospel ministry, a person must know the doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures. He must know them so that he can properly instruct and exhort, on the one hand, and, on the other, oppose successfully those that refuse to bow to the Word.

What has just been said indicates that we have to lead our students to have acquaintance with the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. They must know what the doctrinal sections of the Bible inculcate, and in order to understand these sections, they must become acquainted with the Bible in general, the historical sections included. In other words, to comprehend the meaning of a text, you must study the context, too. If now and then, as it is

charged, our Lutheran dogmaticians disregarded this principle, the fault lay not so much with their rules of hermeneutics as with their application of these rules. All this implies that the view to be taught the students must be that of the Scriptures themselves, which is that the Scriptures are the inerrant, infallible Word of our great God, given us for our guidance and our everlasting happiness.

The sound doctrine of the Scriptures — we Lutheran theologians are convinced that this doctrine has been laid down in a more or less systematic form in our Lutheran Confessions. The churches that maintain, support, and conduct our seminaries likewise hold that conviction. Without assuming that Luther and his co-workers were inspired in the technical sense of that term, we believe that through God's undeserved grace these men did set forth the Scripture teaching in its old, apostolic purity and that hence in the writings which they produced and which the Church accepted as expressing its faith we possess the sound doctrine of which St. Paul speaks. If we, then, wish to teach our students this sound doctrine we must, among other things, acquaint them with our grand classic confessional writings.

There is another fact to be considered in this connection. Our dear Lutheran Church is a historic Church. It was born in a period of tremendous stress, strife, and controversy. A heroic age it was when the foundations were laid and our Confessions were produced. There breathes in these writings the spirit of noble courage, of unselfish consecration, of high resolve to adhere to the revealed truth at all hazards. It was this spirit which gave our Church one of its distinctive characteristics — that of simple loyalty to the Scriptures, regardless of traditions and of ecclesiastical prestige, on the one hand, and of rationalistic considerations on the other. Our church bodies wish to see this spirit of loyalty to the Scriptures fostered and perpetuated in the seminaries, so that the pastors of the congregations will set forth in their sermons and their catechetical instruction the grand truths that Luther and his co-workers bravely and consistently confessed and defended. We ourselves, I am sure, share this desire of our church bodies. Our aim, then, must be to labor faithfully to bring about in our students, in the first place, the intellectual apprehension of the great teachings that the reforming and founding fathers zealously and successfully sponsored.

A faithful presentation of the truths set forth in our Confessions will have the result that the students will come to see what is the heart of the Scriptures, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, for in tireless fashion our Lutheran confessors keep the attention focused on this teaching, having as its foundation

the message of universal redemption. There they will be led to appreciate the concepts of sin and grace, of Law and the Gospel—all of them matters on which the Church wishes its pastors and teachers to be informed so that they can speak on them with Scriptural clarity and definiteness.

## IX

I have now placed before you some paragraphs which have to do with an intellectual requisite sought in our graduates—knowledge of the doctrines taught in the Scriptures. You undoubtedly have the same feeling as I—that merely the surface has been scratched. But we must hasten on to the next set of requirements which the Church, basing on the Scriptures, looks for in the candidates graduated from the theological seminary. I have before called them qualities of the heart, of the spiritual life. Listen to these words in Titus 1:8: “The bishop must be a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.” When you read all the specifications, you will soon notice that qualities of the heart, that is, qualities constituting the Christian life, are most prominent. The Church, we may add, desires to have, and should have, saintly pastors. Of our Dr. Walther it is reported that in the last months of his life, when he was lying on what proved to be his deathbed, he uttered the prayer “Gott erhalte unserer Synode ein frommes Ministerium” (May God preserve to our Synod a pious clergy). It is the prayer of all of us. We realize that mere head acquaintance with the Scripture truths, an orthodoxy which consists in nothing but correct conceptions on all the various heads of Christian doctrine, is altogether insufficient to make a person fit for the Christian ministry. We all realize, I am sure, the importance of furnishing our Church with candidates who are men of faith, prayer, true charity, earnest devotion to their work, who are fearless in the service of the truth, self-sacrificing in their dealings with their fellow men, humble and self-effacing, and yet manly and courageous. The Church desires to have pastors who espouse orthodox teachings, but who hold these teachings not merely as philosophical propositions or as intellectual ballast, but as convictions which are dearer to them than life itself. Orthodoxy must be not merely of the head, but of the heart. How can the seminary produce pastors that are not only intellectually well equipped, but who are truly pious, God-fearing, earnest Christians? The seminary cannot do it, we all say; God must do it through His Word and Spirit. But we are His instruments. In which way can we most effectively use the Word to bring about the blessed result? Is there anyone of us who can view our task without fear and trembling? The minute

that we stress the scholastic aspect of our work, leading our students to immerse themselves with all the vigor they are capable of in learned studies, we are in danger of neglecting the spiritual side of the student's life, and *vice versa*. I need hardly mention that on account of the abnormal times in which we live both aspects are in great peril of being disregarded.

It may be that at times we teachers feel that our responsibility ends after we have delivered our lecture and corrected the examination papers that have been written under our direction, and that the students' spiritual life is a concern of the students themselves. We have perhaps enviously observed the instructors at secular institutions who at least in some instances are interested in teaching their particular subject satisfactorily and in nothing else. But a minute's reflection must show us that apart from not fulfilling our duty toward the students placed in our charge, we are not true to our obligations toward the Church if we follow such a *laissez faire* course in this sphere. The Church expects us to furnish, as far as in us lies, real men of God. It has a right to expect it.

#### X

About the third set of qualifications, those pertaining to the special "skills" of a minister, I shall not say much. Paul says the minister must be *didaktikos*, "apt to teach." Hence it must be our aim to make our ministers able preachers and teachers. Our courses in homiletics and catechetics are designed to fill that need. Today, when an increasing number of our congregation members are college graduates, when practically everyone of our adolescent boys and girls attends the high school and every time the pastor speaks in public there are a number of critics scrutinizing severely both what he says and how he says it—I say, that today we have to be more zealous than ever in cultivating this branch of our instruction will be granted by all.

#### XI

It may be that one or the other of you who does me the honor of listening to me, in hearing me discourse in this fashion on the kind of men the Church desires the seminary to furnish can hardly suppress a smile, and says within himself, "What a hopelessly old-fashioned talk this is! That man is still living in the first half of the nineteenth century. He apparently has never heard of sociology and economics, of the leadership pastors are to exercise in their communities, their function as members of war-chest committees, as advisers of the juvenile courts. One of these mornings he will finally come upon the word psychiatry and rush to the dictionary to ascertain its meaning." So, I fancy, runs the charge. What shall we old-fashioned folks say? That the Church desires

its pastors to be well educated goes without saying. Here we are all agreed. But now let me state that, as far as my observation goes, while the Church desires its pastors to be specialists, it wants them to be specialists not in economics or sociology or psychiatry, but in theology, in religion, in the Bible. I know quite well some flourishing congregations, having in their midst highly educated as well as poorly educated folk, the pastors of which are simply Bible theologians. The members of these churches are satisfied with, and edified by, the Scriptural discourses of their pastors and would not wish to have ministers of a different kind. Just as little as a church expects its pastor to be an expert in medicine and in the diagnosis of diseases, able to tell whether a parishioner's stomach is suffering from an oversupply or a deficiency of acids, so little does it demand that he be an economic expert, able to solve income-tax perplexities for the bewildered people in his community. But it does desire to have a minister who can tell it what the Word of God says about the use of medicine in general and about a Christian's duty toward the Government.

## XII

What of the charge that our seminaries do not educate the student sufficiently with respect to the thought currents, the systems of philosophy and of theology that are influential in the world at large these days? The names Kirkegaard, Barth, and Brunner, to mention only a few, are on the lips of all. To what extent do we, to what extent should we, acquaint our students with the ideas and the work of these men? What of the philosophies of Santayana, Dewey, Whitehead, Hocking, and others? Here in my opinion a middle course should be taken. The seminary must adhere to the fundamentals dwelt on before without neglecting to give our prospective pastors the proper background for an understanding of the present-day world by placing before them information on the theological and philosophical tendencies that are prominent. Here is a place where one of our difficulties lies, a veritable *Spannung*, or tension. That seminary is fortunate whose teachers are wise enough to strike the proper balance between the eternal and the ephemeral, the absolutely essential and the merely desirable. The churches will be found indulgent, provided the pastors we furnish them are truly pious and consecrated as well as men of practical ability in the pulpit.

## XIII

There are a host of other points one would like to discuss. I shall merely mention one or two. What must be the relation between the seminary and the Church as far as leadership in religious thinking and in church practice is concerned? Should

the Church lead the seminary, or should the seminary lead the Church, or what should be their mutual status? The question is much discussed in liberal seminaries and divinity schools where, naturally, the position is taken that the seminary is marching at the head of the procession and the Church should follow even though the latter finds the leadership not to its liking and loses breath and balance in endeavoring to keep in step. For us the problem does not exist. We have our priceless Confessions; on them the Church and the seminary stand together. It is true that new issues constantly arise, so that conditions are never static. Today a new system of philosophy may knock at the doors of the learned, and the seminary through its faculty has to take cognizance of it in order to give information and proper evaluation to the students and the clergy on the new phenomenon. Tomorrow there may come a new political development that agitates people's minds, and the pastors at once have to grapple with it, and by and by repercussions reach the seminary, and the professors of the practical department make a mental or visible notation in their lecture outlines on the newcomer. Let them realize, the seminary and the Church, that they are waging one and the same battle, fighting for the same cause, the cause of the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### XIV

There is one thought which I should not like to leave unexpressed, and it can form a fitting conclusion for this paper. Our seminaries should not regard themselves primarily as schools of scientific study and research, but rather as schools of holy propaganda, endeavoring to help the Church in bringing the message of redemption to as many people as possible. We have to have at our seminaries earnest, concentrated study of all questions of theology. Obscurantism was not the ideal of the early Church, it was not that of Luther and his fellow workers, nor should it be ours. Nor should we think that the Church must be built with the dash and power of pure emotionalism. But at the same time let us beware of regarding our seminaries as cloistered laboratories established for the training of profound scholars. Scholarship with us, though we exalt it highly, must be merely a means to an end. The Church, as I have abundantly intimated, has a practical purpose in mind when it establishes and maintains seminaries. Let us, too, who are privileged to teach in Lutheran seminaries, recognize that practical purpose, make it our own, and with God's help send forth diligent and willing laborers into the harvest, which is appallingly great. In doing this we shall serve the Church, and, what is more, we shall serve our exalted Lord, sitting at the right hand of the Father.

W. ARNDT