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CONTENTS

	Page
ARNDT, W.: Foreword	1
LAETSCH, TH.: Die Schriftlehre von der Verstockung....	7
MUELLER, J. T.: Introduction to Sacred Theology.....	12
KRETZMANN, P. E.: Apostelamt, Predigtamt, Pfarramt, Synodalamt	23
LAETSCH, TH.: Studies in Hosea 1—3.....	33
Dispositionen ueber die zweite von der Synodalkonferenz angenommene Evangelienreihe	45
Miscellanea	55
Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.....	57
Book Review. — Literatur.....	72

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

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

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

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Foreword.

When in 1855 *Lehre und Wehre*, the chief ancestor of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, made its appearance, it could be compared to a vigorous youth who with his right hand held aloft the Bible and with his left the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. From the very beginning it was apparent to all readers that the editors conceived of their task as consisting in promulgating and defending, with all the theological apparatus and equipment available, "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure." Month after month scholarly articles, pointed paragraphs on current religious happenings, and informing book reviews came before the public on its pages, and all testified that here there was a journal which meant in every respect to abide by the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and of the Lutheran Confessions collected in the Book of Concord of 1580. While undoubtedly on some points touching the nature and the policy of the new journal contemporary opinion was divided, it is difficult to see, as one pages through the early volumes, how there can have been any dissension on the position this journal meant to take and to maintain with respect to the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions.

It was to be expected, of course, that this position would be attacked and that an ugly and, especially to a Lutheran, extremely odious interpretation would be put on it, to wit, that the men responsible for the publication of the journal were introducing two standards into the Church by which it was to govern its faith and its life, one divine, the other human, and that they were placing the contents of the Book of Concord on a level with the holy writings of the apostles and prophets. To the superficial observer it seemed the critics had a good case. The Scriptures and the Confessions — this slogan appeared to furnish all the evidence needed. A strange anomaly it was said to be. The promoters of *Lehre und Wehre* were the very people who with much emphasis repeated the words of the aged Luther, "*Deus impleat vos odio Papae!*" and now it seemed they themselves

were setting up a Pope, not one of flesh and blood, to be sure, but a Pope nevertheless — the *corpus* of the Lutheran Confessions. How odd it seemed that the men who boasted of the freedom which Luther had won for the Christian world through the Reformation apparently were eager to forge fetters of slavery for themselves and others!

But the publishers of the journal were able to show without much difficulty that such an accusation, though in the view of some buttressed by annihilating evidence, was entirely groundless. They recognized, so they pointed out, but one authority in the Church, the Holy Scriptures. The Confessions, on the other hand, were to them just what the name says they are, actual, real confessions, declarations of the faith that lived in the early Lutheran fathers and in them, too, clear utterances as to what they believed the Scriptures to teach and to inculcate. With much emphasis they stated their belief that no divine authority attached to the Confessions, as though they had been given by inspiration of God; that, on the contrary, these documents were produced by fallible men, not at all to be compared with the prophets and apostles, and that whoever invested them with the authority of divine writings was indeed making a Pope of them and thereby abandoning the principles of the blessed Reformation.

But while voicing the loyalty to the Scriptures as the only divinely given norm for faith and life and doing it with a fervor which has seldom, if ever, been surpassed, they told the world quite fearlessly that it was their firm belief the Lutheran Confessions taught the truths of Holy Scripture in their heavenly purity and that they therefore were determined to abide by these Confessions to the last breath. With great rejoicing they proclaimed to the critics who likened the Symbolical Books to fetters that these Confessions contained for them, not opinions which had been dictated to them, but their own sacred convictions; not cruel laws imposed by some foreign potentate, but saving beliefs which they cherished; not a prison-house designed to hold captive all their thoughts and mental energies, but their own "home, sweet home," bequeathed to them by the fathers, which they were not willing to exchange for all the pleasures and palaces the wide world might offer. The Confessions were to them a banner which symbolized freedom and great privileges. When they placed themselves under this banner, it was not owing to external constraint, but to the conviction that the benefits which this flag stood for were real and inexpressibly precious. That a flag may symbolize tyranny to those who are marching under it is, of course, true enough. We think of the poor Hessians, who in the Revolutionary War fought under the British flag here in America, men who had been taken away from their native country, in many a case against their will, and who bore arms in a cause which was alien to their hearts. They were marching to battle like slaves. But how different the position

of the men who, opposing them, fought under the flag of the united colonies, volunteers who left their homes and endured hardships and braved dangers and death, not because they had to, but because they wanted to, their flag symbolizing to them freedom from intolerable oppression! It was thus that the publishers of *Lehre und Wehre* viewed the Lutheran Confessions. How utterly the charge that they were establishing a human beside the divine authority in the Church collapses! Just as little as the soldiers of an army who are fighting under their general and under their flag are acknowledging two leaders, so little did these men by their insistence on the Word and the Confessions bow to two masters in the Church.

In speaking of the meaning of the Lutheran Confessions to the founders of *Lehre und Wehre*, we must not overlook that they indeed regarded these documents as being the authoritative voice of Lutheranism, to be heeded by all that desired to be classed as Lutherans and to be consulted if anybody wished to obtain information on the doctrinal position of this Church. The Confessions, then, to them were not only a means for publishing their convictions regarding the great truths taught in the Scriptures, but they were in their view likewise a badge designating the wearer as a member of the Lutheran Church. Conversely they held that whoever laid claim to the name Lutheran should not fail to display this badge. With great vigor they assailed the position of those who, while adorning themselves with the name Lutheran, were unwilling to accept fully the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions. "If you wish to be a Lutheran, then *be* a Lutheran and do not deceive yourself and other people by a partial acceptance of the Lutheran standards." To make this idea a live and potent one in the consciousness of Lutherans, they expended the magnificent stores of their learning and eloquence; for it they labored and strove with burning, untiring zeal. Being Lutherans to the core, they abhorred the thought that views might be expressed in their journal which ran counter to the teachings of the Confessions. If they should permit such a situation to develop, they felt they would lay themselves open to the charge of insincerity and dishonesty, not adhering to their own professions. Yes, they intended to examine everything they themselves and others wrote for their journal as to its full agreement with the Lutheran symbolical books, because they were convinced they could not be consistent Lutherans without taking this course. In the prospectus of *Lehre und Wehre*, issued in 1854, they had stated as their guiding principle: "The Holy Scriptures, and after it the Book of Concord of our Evangelical Lutheran Church, will be the norm of all essays that will be accepted for publication, Scripture being the *norma normans*, the Confessions the *norma normata*." Thus, while carefully distinguishing between the Scriptures and the Confessions, they unhesitatingly called the latter

a *norma* for themselves; of course, a *norma normata*, a derived norm, which possessed authority for them because they had found it to agree in its teachings with the inspired writings given us in the Scriptures.

It is generally admitted that, when our fathers began the publication of the new journal, the Lutheran Confessions had in many a quarter here in America fallen on evil days. In 1853 a book appeared, written by an influential Lutheran, Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, which bore the title *Why Are You a Lutheran?* The author appears rather ashamed of the Lutheran confessional writings and minimizes their importance, saying of them (p. 15): "They contain the prominent doctrines of the Bible as understood by Lutherans, methodically arranged for the sake of perspicuity, but are binding no further than as they faithfully set forth the revealed mind of the Holy Spirit. The principal of these writings is the Augsburg Confession, and even in relation to that no more is required, even of ministers at their ordination, than to believe that 'the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in its doctrinal articles.' The other symbolical summaries are not referred to at all even at the admission of private members or of ministers." What a sad evaluation of the standards of the Lutheran Church by one of her sons, appointed to be a leader in her battles!

Still more depressing was the spectacle presented, in the very year when *Lehre und Wehre* began its career, in an anonymous pamphlet the author of which dared to do to the Augsburg Confession what Melancthon had done to it in 1540, namely, to alter it in order to make it more acceptable to human reason, with this difference, however, that he proceeded in far more radical fashion than Melancthon had ever dreamed of doing. A decade later Dr. S. S. Schmucker, Professor of Dogmatics at the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, publicly admitted that he was the author of this lamentable attempt at a revision. The title of the pamphlet was *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods, Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod*. In the language of Dr. Adolph Spaeth: "This 'American recension' of the Augsburg Confession coolly charged that venerable document, the *magna carta* of Protestantism, with a number of gross errors and changed or mutilated twelve out of its twenty-one doctrinal articles, omitting altogether the second part of the Confession, the seven articles on abuses." (*Memorial of William Julius Mann*, p. 56.) The author of the *Definite Platform* called the tendency which he and others represented American Lutheranism, as he unhesitatingly disavowed the old positions which Luther and his coworkers had occupied and which the grand leaders of the Church in succeeding generations, Chemnitz, Gerhard, Loescher, to mention only a few, had valiantly defended.

This episode, better than anything else, describes the atmosphere which prevailed in wide circles here in America when *Lehre und Wehre* came upon the scene. These circles, while not quite ready to drop the name Lutheran, felt little enthusiasm for what was distinctively Lutheran in doctrine and forms of worship. The peculiar teachings of the Lutheran Church were looked upon as outmoded and were studiously ignored. From the mighty granite boulder representing Lutheran theology, by careful polishing, all edges and corners had been removed, and now it lay there a rounded, nondescript stone among other stones similarly polished, not likely to hurt anybody, but neither of a kind to set the heart of the passer-by on fire with visions of strength and virility. Imagine the feelings of the founders of *Lehre und Wehre* when they beheld a Lutheranism of this diluted, anemic, apologetic, vacillating type. Hailing in many instances from rationalistic environments, they had through prayerful study of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, to which were added the writings of Luther and other great teachers of the Church, in some cases after severe spiritual struggles, reached the blessed assurance that the Lutheran teachings represent the doctrines of the Scriptures and that, in accepting them, they were giving their assent to the eternal truths which God in His mercy has revealed to the world. Passionately they loved these teachings. In them they saw the gold and the fine gold exalted in the sacred rhapsodies of the Book of Psalms. Rather than to forget them, they were willing to let their right hand forget its cunning and to have their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouth. It filled their soul with indignation to see some of these teachings treated with indifference, cavalierly, as though little significance attached to them. Whether they would be able to remedy the situation in the American Lutheran Church they did not know, but they wished to inform the world that there were at least some sons of the Lutheran Church who strongly resented the treatment their poor mother was subjected to and who were not ashamed of the jewels she wore and of the house she lived in, called "old-fashioned" by many people, but who were willing to stand at her side and bear all reproaches which a rationalistic and unionistic age might heap upon her.

With all this passionate fervor for an uncompromising Lutheranism, the founders of *Lehre und Wehre* did not fall into that fanatical scholasticism which from admiration of its own system forgets entirely that the chief business of the Church must be the preaching of the Gospel of salvation and which is constantly disputing and wrangling about its own definitions of what constitutes proper food instead of handing out this food to the starving multitudes. While insisting on orthodoxy, being unwilling to see one jot or tittle of the Scriptures rejected, they were thoroughly evangelical, making Christ

and His work of redemption and the justification of the sinner by grace through faith the center of their theological thinking and writing. A powerful influence to keep their ship in this course were the works of Luther, which they studied with exemplary devotion and energy. Sitting at the feet of the great Reformer, imbibing both his love of the truth and his joy over the free grace of God, they avoided the extreme of unionism and indifferentism, where divine truth is held cheaply, and its opposite, the extreme of fanaticism, where vilification, fire, and sword take the place of argument and love, mercy, and fairness are praised, but not practised.

This manly, determined espousal of the cause of the time-honored Lutheran teachings was not without glorious results. The last century witnessed a remarkable reawakening of Lutheran consciousness, and among the factors which produced and aided it *Lehre und Wehre* is entitled to an important place. It has often been pointed out that Lutheranism in America is far more confessional to-day than it was in 1855. In rejoicing over this situation, let us gratefully remember the chief editors of this journal, Drs. Walther, Pieper, and Bente, a noble trio, who, assisted by like-minded co-workers, were a great force in the movement to place and keep the light of Lutheran doctrine on a high candlestick, visible to all who wish to see.

“The Scriptures and the Confessions”—such is the slogan of the editors of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY as they are endeavoring to continue the work so nobly begun by the promoters of the mother journal. That a militant, vigorous insistence on loyalty to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church is imperatively needed to-day no conservative Lutheran who is at all acquainted with current tendencies in religious matters will be disposed to deny. In the denominations surrounding us confessionalism is disappearing at a frightful rate. The historic American Protestant church-bodies are largely disintegrating under the influence of Modernism. The old appellations are losing their meaning. That a man, for instance, claims membership in the Methodist Church and calls himself a Methodist is far from being a guarantee that his doctrinal views are those of Wesley and the Methodist catechisms. If there ever existed the need of clear, definite notes from the trumpet of the loyal adherents of revealed truth as they are proclaiming their message to the world, that need exists to-day. In the Lutheran Church of America, in spite of very considerable progress made during the last seventy-five years, an energetic, firm, uncompromising stand in behalf of the Confessions of the Church is still sorely needed; for here, too, the cry of “union at any price” is being heard, and indifferentism and Modernism are creeping in and doing their destructive work. Every faithful son of the Lutheran Church should be on the alert to prevent

the importation of the leaven of a false liberalism into the household and to remove it where it has surreptitiously been brought in. The men who have been entrusted with the guidance of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY pray that they may always be found loyal to the position that in the Lutheran Confessions the great, divine, indestructible, everlasting truths which God in the Scriptures has revealed for the salvation of sinners are set forth in their purity and that the great Head of the Church may mercifully deign to bless their humble efforts as they, together with their brethren, are striving for the spread and the defense of confessional Lutheranism.

W. ARNDT.

Die Schriftlehre von der Verstockung.

Gottes Wort sagt uns, daß wir zum Glauben kommen nach der Wirkung der allmächtigen Stärke Gottes, welche er gewirkt hat in Christo, da er ihn von den Toten auferweckt hat, Eph. 1, 19. 20, daß also die Befehrungsgnade eine allmächtige Gnade ist. Dasselbe Wort Gottes sagt uns, daß die Menschen die traurige Macht besitzen, sich gegen diese allmächtige, heilspendende Gnade zu verhärten und zu verstocken und also an ihrem Teil den allmächtig wirkenden Gnadenwillen Gottes außer Kraft zu setzen. Gottes Wort sagt uns, daß es Gottes ernstlicher Wille sei, alle Menschen zu befehren und selig zu machen. Dasselbe Gotteswort sagt uns auch, daß derselbe barmherzige, gnädige Gott in gerechtem Gericht gewisse Sünder verstockt, verhärtet, sie in ihren verkehrten Sinn dahingibt, aufhört, noch weiter an ihnen zu arbeiten, ihnen schon bei ihren Lebzeiten Gelegenheit und Raum zur Buße abschneidet. Die Selbstverstockung des Menschen ist die graufigste Sünde, deren der Mensch sich schuldig machen kann, die Verstockung des Menschen durch Gott das graufigste Gericht, das in dieser Welt über einen Menschen kommen kann. Gerade die Lehre von der Verstockung des Menschen gehört zu den Wegen und Gerichten Gottes, die der superflugen menschlichen Vernunft ein Ürgerniß und eine Torheit sind und ihr immer wieder Anlaß geben zu allerlei Fragen und Zweifeln und Einwänden, ja auch zu mancherlei gotteslästerlichen Reden. Weil auch Christen und christliche Theologen nicht gegen solche Gedanken gefeit sind, so lohnt es sich, einmal wieder etwas ausführlicher auf diese Lehre einzugehen. Wir wollen das tun, indem wir das Beispiel der Verstockung betrachten, das Gott selbst in ausführlicher Weise in die Heilige Schrift hat einzeichnen lassen, auf das auch Paulus im Neuen Testament aufmerksam macht, das Beispiel der Verstockung Pharaos, 2 Mos. 5—14, und Röm. 9, 17—20. Wir wollen dabei zunächst auf die Selbstverstockung Pharaos und das Gericht der Verstockung über Pharaon achten und sodann auf die Ursache und den Zweck der Verstockung.