

# THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. I.

OCTOBER, 1921.

No. 10.

## Concordia Triglotta.

PROF. TH. GRAEBNER, St. Louis, Mo.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. *Rom. 10, 10.*

### I.

In 1917, the quadricentennial year of the Reformation, the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States passed a resolution to publish, as a memorial of the Jubilee, a German-Latin-English edition of the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In the present year, memorable as the quadricentennial of Luther's epochal confession before Church and Empire at Worms, the task was completed, and the trilingual Concordia is now on the market.

The writer approaches with some trepidation the task, with which he has been commissioned, of writing an announcement of this volume for the THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY. The publication of the *Triglot Concordia* is more than a bold book-making venture; it is more than an achievement of Christian scholarship even; it is an event that marks an epoch in the history of the Lutheran Church. A century hence, if the world stands, it will be easier to appraise its importance than it is to-day, when with eager eyes we are scanning the pages of this fine volume, with the faint odor of bindery still upon it. Even a generation hence there will be a better perspective than we possess to-day, to measure its importance to the Church of the Reformation and to the kingdom of God. And this all the more so if it is true, as we hold it to be, that the Lutheran Church is even now entering upon a new era of growth and development, greater than any of the past. Who, then, standing at the threshold of a new day for Lutheranism, shall say what this book, containing the history of its great trials and the memorials of its triumphs, the platform upon which it invites the Church Visible to unite for future labor and conquest, — what this *Concordia Triglotta* means to the Church of the coming years?

So much we can discern even now, that its publication at this time will hearten every faithful disciple of Luther in the age of conflict that lies ahead. For let it be said, if there ever was an age in which men ought to hesitate before venturing the issuance

## The Road to Success, or Self-Improvement.

REV. F. E. PASCHE, MORRIS, MINN.

(Continued.)

Opportunities for self-improvement surround us. "The wind is in the shoulders of your sail" (Hamlet). The helps to self-improvement are abundant. Industry, self-help, and daring have accomplished about all the great things of the world. The trouble with most men is that they are not willing to throw the whole weight of their being into their vocation. They think more of leisure and pleasure than of discipline, drudgery, and training in their great life specialty. They are not willing to make present sacrifices for future gain. They have ability for something higher up, but they have not the energy and determination to prepare for it. They do not play the game for all it is worth.

What we are will be the result of previous years of self-discipline. To go through life conscious that you are making a botch of your capabilities just because of lack of training, is a most dispiriting and degrading thing. Very bitter and depressing are the regrets which come from being obliged to let opportunities pass by for which one never prepared himself.

The parable of the talents illustrates and enforces one of nature's sternest laws: "To him that hath shall be given; from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Scientists call this law the survival of the fittest. The fittest are those who use what they have.

Nature is liberal with us if we utilize what she gives us, but if we stop using it, if we do not transform what she gives us into power, if we do not do some building somewhere, if we do not transform the material which she gives us into force and utilize that force, we not only find the supply cut off, but we find that we are growing weaker, less efficient. The force is withdrawn when we cease exercising it. A great many college graduates afterwards find that they have but very little left to show for their many years of study, because they have not utilized their knowledge. They have become weaklings without knowing it.

Everything which you do not use is constantly slipping away from you. From this dilemma there is no escape. Use it or lose it. The secret of power is use. Ability will not remain with us, force will evaporate the moment we cease to do something with it. It is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings. The tools for self-improvement are at your hand, use them. Progress may seem slow at first, but perseverance assures success.

It is hard to undergo the processes that produce the finest product, but would you prefer to remain a rough bar of iron or a horseshoe all your life? There is very little difference between the material given to a hundred average men at birth, yet one with no better means of improvement than the others, perhaps with much poorer means, will raise his material in value a hundredfold, five-hundredfold, aye, a thousandfold, while the ninety-nine will wonder why their material remains so coarse and crude.

All these are arguments which go to demonstrate the fact that, to become successful, you must make the best use of what you have. "Thyself must make thyself." God aids those who are industrious and help themselves. "Famous men have fought their way to triumph through all sorts of opposing obstacles" (Milton). That industry and a strong will-power to succeed are almost omnipotent and can perform wonders all history goes to prove. "Men at some time are masters of their fate" (Shakespeare). There is always room for a man of force and strong will. "People do not lack strength, they lack will" (Victor Hugo). He who has a firm will molds the world to himself. He who resolves upon any great end by that very resolution scales the great barriers to it; and he who seizes the grand idea of self-cultivation, and solemnly resolves upon it, will find that idea, that resolution, burning like fire within him, and ever urging him onward toward self-improvement. He will find it removing difficulties, searching out or making means; giving courage for despondency and strength for weakness.

A good constitution, the habit of hard work, indomitable energy, determination which knows no defeat, decision which never wavers, a concentration which never scatters its forces, courage which never falters, self-mastery which can stick to it, a cheerful disposition, unbounded enthusiasm in one's calling, a high aim and noble purpose, and, last but not least, God's bountiful blessing, — these things insure success and happiness.

There is a sense of great power in a vocation after a man has reached the point of efficiency in it, the point of productiveness, the point where his skill begins to tell and to bring in returns. Up to this point of efficiency, while he is learning, the time seems to have been almost thrown away. But he has been storing up a vast reserve of knowledge, laying foundations. When he reaches the point of efficiency, all the knowledge and skill thus gained come to his aid, and he finds that in what seemed at first of little direct value lies the secret of his success.

Ambition within us requires constant care and education, just as the faculty for music or art does, or it will atrophy. Our faculties become dull and soon lose their power if they are not exercised. How can we expect our ambition to remain fresh and vigorous through years of inactivity, indolence, or indifference? We must always be aroused. "What I most need is somebody to make me do what I can" (Emerson). People are sometimes so wrought up by a good word, their minds are raised to such a pitch of courage and daring, all their faculties so sharpened and braced, their whole nature so stimulated, that they can attempt and accomplish things which would be impossible to them without the stimulus. Without it they would be content to be poor, debased creatures, allowing the powers of their brain to rest for want of energy to cultivate and apply them.

Everywhere we see people who have reached middle life or even old age without being aroused. They have developed only a small percentage of their success possibilities. They are still in a dormant state. The best qualities in them lie so deep that they have never been awakened. When we meet these people, we feel conscious that they have a great deal of latent power that has never been exercised. Great possibilities of usefulness and of achievement are, all unconsciously, going to waste within them.

If you interview the great army of failures, you will find that multitudes have failed because they never got into a stimulating, encouraging environment, because their ambition was never aroused, or because they were not strong enough to rally under depressing, discouraging surroundings. Environment is stronger than heredity. Even the strongest of us are not beyond the reach of our environment. No matter how independent, strong-willed, and determined our nature, we are constantly being modified by our surroundings. It is very stimulating to be with people whose aspirations run parallel with your own. If you lack energy, if you are naturally indolent, or inclined to take it easy, you will be urged forward by the constant prodding of the more ardent and ambitious.

What opportunities are there for self-improvement in public speaking? Force yourself to speak every time you get a chance. Do not wait until you are better prepared. You never will be. Here you learn confidence, self-reliance; you discover yourself. It is here you learn not to be afraid of yourself, to express your opinion with force and independence. Nothing will call out the man more. It is strong, vigorous exercise for the mind. Do not

be afraid to show yourself. This shrinking into a corner and getting out of sight and avoiding publicity is fatal to self-improvement. If you have an invitation to speak, no matter how much you may shrink from it, resolve that you will not let this opportunity for self-development slip by. The hardest thing for the public speaker to overcome is self-consciousness. But no orator can make a great impression until he gets rid of himself, forgets himself in his speech. While he is wondering what kind of an impression he is making, what people think of him, his power is crippled, and his speech to that extent will be mechanical, wooden.

The orator must be convinced of what he says; he must be sincere. As a man speaks, so he thinks; and as he thinks in his heart, so is he. No mirror reflects a man's form and likeness as true as his speech. The public is very quick to see through shams. It is not enough to say a pleasing thing, an interesting thing, the orator must be able to convince, and to convince others he must have strong convictions. A man carries weight because he is himself the embodiment of power; he is convinced of what he says, and gives a frank, kindly expression of his opinion. His opinion carries with it the entire weight of his being. The whole man gives consent to his judgment. He himself is in his conviction, in his act. Yes, "words are things," as some one has said.

In the presence of an audience lies a fascination, an indefinable magnetism that stimulates all the mental faculties, and acts as a tonic and vitalizer. An orator can say before an audience what he could not possibly say before he went to the platform, just as we can often say to a friend in animated conversation things which we could not possibly say when alone. There is something in the sea of expectant faces which awakens the ambition and arouses that reserve of power which can never be felt except before an audience. The power was there just the same before, but it was not aroused.

A man who is self-reliant, positive, optimistic, and undertakes his work with the assurance of success, magnetizes conditions. There is everything in assuming the part we wish to play and playing it royally. There is something in the atmosphere of the man who believes that he is going to win, something in his very appearance that wins half the battle before a blow is struck. Things get out of the way of the vigorous, affirmative man, which are always tripping the irresolute, timid, negative man.

We often hear it said of a man, "Everything he undertakes succeeds." By the force of his character and the creative power of his thought, such a man wrings success from the most adverse

circumstances. His self-poise, assurance, confidence, and ability increase in a direct ratio to the number of his achievements. Set the mind on the thing you would accomplish so resolutely, so definitely, and with such vigorous determination, and put so much grit into your resolution, that nothing on earth can turn you from your purpose until you attain it. Such courage will strengthen the whole man and give power to a combination of faculties which doubt, fear, and a lack of fortitude undermine. Confidence doubles and trebles the power of all the other faculties. Man can never rise in his profession having no confidence and ambition to reach its highest point.

Success is incompatible with stagnation. A man must feel his expanding power lifting, tugging away at a lofty purpose, or he will miss the joy of living. It is sweet confidence and clean ambition which keep alive hope and courage.

Never give up hope and courage. There are golden opportunities also for you. Find them; seize them; make the best of them. Never despair; trust in God's loving-kindness; implore His help and blessing. And never doubt your success; for success does not depend on your own trembling strength, but it comes from the powerful hand of the Almighty.

O grant me, Lord, to do,  
With ready heart and willing,  
Whate'er Thou shalt command,  
My calling here fulfilling;  
To do it when I ought,  
With all my strength; and bless  
The work I thus have wrought,  
For Thou must give success.

*(To be concluded.)*

---