

The Semestrian

The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

Volume I

April 1937

Number 2

A PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE

This is a prayer of hope prayed at the gate of the Future's temple; a prayer for patience and love; a prayer for understanding. This is a prayer for the knowledge and the courage to "salute truth, even if she comes in rags," and to "hate error though she comes clothed in tradition, riding in a coach." This is a prayer for tolerance; for new and more distant horizons; for desires and burning passions; for recognition of opportunity. This is a prayer of thankfulness—for beauty and eyes to see it, for music and ears to hear it, for work and hands to do it,—of hate for sin and its iron claws of greed and envy and jealousy; for war with its bands and banners and blood. This is a prayer for humility; Christ was born in a manger—for rejoicing; Christ conquered the tomb.

This is a prayer for the right words of hope and cheer to speak at a bedside or by an open grave; for gentle hands to lay on infant heads; for bended knee and upturned face in conference with God. This is a prayer for diligence — in the quiet of the study alone with God, His Word and His people before us; on the dusty road or the crowded street.

Let us be faithful. When much around us is false let us be true. When there is a city to gain or a soul to keep, let us keep the soul. When we are imprisoned by doubts and fears or even

error, keep us from saying we never knew Him. When playthings crowd our destiny, take them away. When there is a cross to bear, help us bear it; if we would turn away hold it closer to our eyes. Help us to weave though we may not see the pattern. We know the pattern can be seen from the other side. And when we have fought and been conquered; when we have loved and lost; when all our blocks come tumbling down, help us to start again.

This is a prayer for service. Let us be so busy serving we shall not have time to be served.

Howard A. Wessling, '37

RELIGIOUS REALISM

Sometime ago there came over the radio, as part of one of the programs, a poem which made a deep impression upon at least one listener. The voice which recited the lines was (as the voices of most radio artists are) charming and impressive. But in this instance it was felt that it was more than a charming voice that had cast the spell, and our listener resolved to possess the poem for herself. An inquiry addressed to the broadcasting station brought the necessary clue: the author was Robert Herrick. With this clue, and the assistance of two or three librarians and a student, the poem was soon located. It occurs in a volume devoted to Herrick's poetry in "Everyman's Library" and is entitled "His Creed." Here are the lines:

"I do believe that die I must,
And be return'd from out my dust;
I do believe that when I rise,
Christ I shall see, with these same eyes;
I do believe that I must come
With others to the dreadful Doome;
I do believe the bad must goe
From thence to everlasting woe;
I do believe the good, and I,
Shall live with Him eternally;

"I do believe I shall inherit
Heaven by Christ's mercies, not my merit;
I do believe the One in Three,
And Three in perfect Unitie;
Lastly, that Jesus is a Deed
Of Gift from God: And Eere's my Creed."

We do not quote the poem because of its poetry. Perhaps as poetry it would not rank very high. To be sure, there is a fine simplicity about it which gives it charm; and its positiveness is refreshing in a day when a sophisticated agnosticism is the dominant mood. But these cannot account entirely for the impression which the poem makes upon the modern mind. We quote it because of its religious realism. It is that which gives it its arresting quality. Especially, if we think of it as coming over the air and suddenly striking our ears against the background of the usual persiflage with which the radio afflicts us, does it grip the imagination. Here, we feel, is reality, —the soul of man disentangled from the transitory and the seeming, the senuous and superficial, seeing itself in the light of that eternity which alone can give meaning and purpose and coherence to life. The reality to which it points is not an other-worldly reality. He who resolutely speaks his "I do believe" has his feet firmly planted in this world. But it is an ultimate reality because it knows the temporal only in terms of the eternal.

This is the lost chord in the modern symphony of life. In its place there has been introduced a kind of realism which substitutes the screech of brakes and tooting of horns, the blowing of whistles and clank of machinery for the music of the spheres. Even in the ministrations of the church this "realism" is obtruding itself. Religion, we are told, must be this-worldly. It must speak to man as it finds him and concerning the things which are of immediate concern to him. The noise and strife of contending groups, the agonizing, or defiant, cries of the down-trodden,

the militant crusade for economic justice and peace,—these constitute reality and to these the church must address itself. That is partly true, and it is one of the services which modern Christianity has rendered that it has made us conscious of that fact. But it is only partially true. Reality is a greater thing than that. The greater part is that world which opens upon our vision when the soul learns to know itself in the light of its eternal destiny, when it hears the voice of the Son of Man speaking His "Peace" in our world of selfish strife.

It is because Herrick's poem reminds us of that great fact that it has again become modern after three hundred years and can thrill the imagination when quoted over the radio. Perhaps it would be well to have it lying on our desks where we can read it from time to time. We need its emphasis in order that we may preserve the proper balance in our own Christian lives. Above all do we need it when we are preparing as preachers to tell men what is real by telling them what is eternally true.

E. E. Fischer

JUST BOOKS?

Discontent is frequently a virtue. It makes hibernation unlikely. Instead, it stirs men to either progress or regress.

A seminarian is frequently tempted to become discontent with his task. Routine reduces him to a rebellious automaton. Note-taking becomes a plague. And the very confines of the campus seem to make of the seminary a monastery. Often, besieged with worthy German Wanderlust, the seminarian wistfully stretches his soul muscles and visions a journey into distant glamorous worlds.

Under that tower clock with the wheezing heart and liquid tones rest many books. They occupy shelf after shelf. Some of them are noble giants;

others, unassuming pigmies. To such a miscellaneous array, a seminarian in discontent may well retreat.

For you discover that books are not just books. Instead, you observe in one book a venerable German scholar raising his head from a littered desk and generously sharing with you his view as to the actual story of Jesus. Meanwhile a voice from the neighboring volume booms forth and states that, with all due credit to his good friend's scholarship, such an attitude is the height of stupid folly, and seeks to show you why. They call upon you as referee. It's serious business, yet thrilling.

A large dusty tome on the bottom shelf incites your curiosity. In it you find a story of the "Babylonian Captivity." Three popes simultaneously claim to be the "Vicar of Christ," each declaring the opposing two to be outside the established church and hope of salvation. Such desperate confusion! Will the church right itself? Are there any men of such times who actually hold to Jesus as their spirit-Lord? Just then around the corner you chance upon a saint of this same period. You can see without his telling just what Christ means to him. Yet he tells you, and you have gained.

As you enter another corridor, the aroma of malt brew greets your nostrils. To be sure, it's Luther with eager students gathered round his table! Someone has inadvertently mentioned Zwingli's name, and Luther is thundering as only Luther can. But as he calms, he shows you with the insight of true religious genius how thoroughly correct he is. With the most skillful of handling he brings before you God's Word in Jesus with that vividness which is truth's own proof.

Again it is the clock that reminds you that you must beg to be excused. But you shall meet them on the morrow, when the discussion shall be continued. You return to your room no longer discontent. For all lands and times and people have opened themselves to you.

Books are not just books. They are personalities.

The library is no tomb. In it is the communion of saints.

"K"

(Anonymity is against the principles of THE SEMINARIAN. An exception has been made in the foregoing article. The name of the author, however, will be furnished on request.

IS A BACHELOR'S DEGREE ENOUGH?

For many years the University of Pennsylvania has offered to the Seminary ten free scholarships to men who desire to do graduate work while attending the Seminary. This generous offer has not always been taken, for the question has always troubled men as to the advisability of taking the added responsibility. Would I be able to carry the work? Is it worth the extra time and effort? It is amazing to note that out of our student body of eighty, not one Senior, only four Middlers, and three Juniors answered these questions affirmatively. These facts encourage investigation into the problem.

The need for more education of the clergy grows larger and larger with the succeeding years. The reason for this is the rapid advance of modern education. Two decades ago, a high school diploma was held in as high regard then as a college certificate is today. Today a master's degree claims no uncommon honor, and even "Ph.D." has lost its halo in the minds of the average people. As a result of modern education, men and women, and especially children are unusually intelligent and educated in comparison to only a few decades ago. Now while the educational level has been rapidly on the increase for the common mass of people, the education of the clergy has remained, comparatively speaking, static. Not a century ago the village preacher was respected by his parishoners

not only as a pastor, but as the epitome of all knowledge. He was the intellectual leader of the community.

A glance into history will show the high education of some of the leaders of the church. Martin Luther graduated from Erfurt with the degree of Doctor of Theology. The Wesleys achieved their master degrees at Oxford. H. M. Muhlenberg attended Goettingen University before he went to Halle. The first colleges in this country were founded to educate the clergy. What does this mean? It means that today we no longer hold the intellectual position among our fellowmen as our forefathers. Modern education is leagues ahead of us while we question whether or not a Bachelor's degree is sufficient to get us through.

To this there is a two-fold solution. First, another year of academic work might be taken in a university, raising the entrance requirement of the seminary from the Bachelor to the Master degree. This solution, however, for the majority is not practical, because it would be financially impossible. The second solution is to continue the academic work in the graduate school at the U. of P., taking advantage of the free scholarships. This solution is more practical in all ways. Yet, it does not catch the imagination of the majority. A further analysis of the problem will lead to the consideration of the advantages and the objections to this second suggestion.

The advantages of utilizing the scholarships are too many to discuss in detail; a cursory treatment is necessary. First, there is the economic advantage of the free tuition. There is no limit set to the number of hours a man may take. If he takes four hours each semester for three years, at the end of which a Master's degree is granted, the tuition cost of \$300 is saved. The advantage here is obvious.

Second, the use of the library and the opportunity of making social contacts. By the use of the library, your literary resources are doubled. Many interesting and valuable contacts are made

with outstanding authorities, as well as fellow-classmates. It is needless to enter into the discussion of the value of such associations which otherwise would be impossible.

Third, the University subjects offer variety to the field of study. Here we continually study one field of knowledge, Theology, which is broken into the various closely-connected courses that sometimes over-lap. A bit of variety is needed, for it refreshes and stimulates the mind. This need was voiced not so long ago by an individual's request to include in our curriculum a course of a different nature. The University answers this problem.

In the fourth place, there is the cultural advantage. The clergyman may never be able in this specialized age to become the intellectual leader of his community as our ancestor-pastors were. However, we ought to be able to take our place with the rest of society. The educated make the claim that religion is only for the weak and the ignorant. The best apologetic for this charge is being able to stand on our feet alongside of the accusers. Unless we can meet the ever more and more educated people, how can we talk with them about Christ on their own level? To a Psychologist, we must speak in his language, not ours, in order to reach him. This can only be done by further training.

The fifth advantage is the educational. Whatever branch you enter, you cannot emerge without being benefited, even if it is only in training your mind to think logically. If it be Sociology, Philosophy, English, they all are helpful to our better applying the message to the modern age.

The list of advantages may be concluded by mentioning a few persons that have followed this second solution. On Muhlenberg's faculty, Dr. Brown, Rev. Stine, and Rev. Cressman took their Master's work while at Seminary. Closer home, these men did likewise: Doctors Jacobs, Nolde, Snyder, and Prof. Tappert. Undoubtedly all who

take extra work do not become professors, but their examples are guides to us toward a more educated clergy.

There are also objections to further study. After the listing of the advantages, they look very insignificant and can be dismissed hurriedly. The first and most valid objection is the claim that two jobs cannot be handled at the same time without doing harm to either one. This is to a certain extent true. However, the time that we would spend on the University we do not put on Seminary work. We spend our time in some other way that is far from being as useful as the University. It is like the man who says he does not have to go to church to worship; yet that man does not take time to worship in his home.

Another objection is the complacent feeling that college was enough. Justification is found by quoting Paul that this world's knowledge is foolishness to God. This objection is not worthy of a theological student. Many times it is used as an excuse for downright laziness.

One more point of opposition is that education opens up problems that only perplex and harass the mind into doubt. Besides, they say, it produces vanity. All will agree that the firmest faith is the faith based on intelligence rather than on ignorance. If our faith cannot withstand modern intellectual problems and facts, then it would be the best thing to scrap that type of faith. It is not to get faith by study, but it is to get a more solid faith by knowing the facts. We ought to take the approach of Anselm: "For, indeed, I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand."

Why should one take extra courses in the graduate school? The purpose should be to prepare oneself as much as possible so that one's ministry will be the most effective in a bewildered and more highly educated age. All knowledge, all

technique that one might grasp is for the greater glory of God. The motive is not to attain a degree; that is only incidental and can easily be eliminated. The important thing is to put the message of Christ across to the people in the most effective and attractive manner possible. This can only be done by thorough training.

John R. Brokhoff, '38

A SERMONETTE OF OVER-WORKED WORDS

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." This is no pleasant platitude, but a challenging outburst which comes out of the fullness of Paul's heart. Here the radiant beauty of Paul's dynamic technique is clearly revealed. It is truly one of the great texts of the Bible. Examine it carefully; it does not portray a mere wistful, wishful longing, but it pours out an understanding which shows us the harmony which a human spirit can feel with the divine spirit.

Paul with a pen filled with virility, strength, and scope never puts the cart before the horse, never lets the tail wag the dog, but courageously faces every issue. So too in this passage no hypo-critical half-truth lurks behind its lyrical, contemplative thought. Avoid brethren any pharasaic shallowness. And now finally in the last analysis consider whether we too can sing in our modern times a song so filled with an abundance of God's love.

William J. Leifeld, '39

A MAN SENT FROM GOD

This is the season of the year when a young man's fancy turns to love and the Senior seminarian's thoughts turn to a call. Just recently I read an article in a magazine which discusses the latter subject and many of my thoughts will be drawn from it.

What does a congregation seek in a man whom they desire for their Pastor? There was once a congregation that was seeking a Pastor. It didn't object to a mature man, but its preference was for prospects under fifty. It wanted a preacher, but also one who could build up the organization, interest the young people, and produce some improvement in the finances.

There are two kinds of preachers. The first consists of those men who put the ministry first. The second includes those who put the job first. For example, there was a certain clergyman who was well-trained, enthusiastic, tactful, vigorous, a good mixer, a fair speaker, and pretty good as a painless extractor of funds from not too wide-open pockets. He is a "success."

But he'd be as much a success as a sales manager or a real estate broker. His strong points are points which modern business values highly, and for which it pays well. It would not be surprising, were some corporation to make it worth his while, if this man should desert the church and go into business.

There are several variations on this general type—the good executive, the debt raiser, the crowd getter, the pacificator, the builder, the organizer, and the budget balancer.

Now here is a clergyman who is the servant of a call which grips him and masters him. He does all the other things the other man does, often not quite so well, but to him they are means, not ends.

His business is to remind men of God, not as incidental to their lives, but as central, and as terribly, gloriously real. He cares for his people because they are his charge, his responsibility and privilege; and whatever he does with and for them he does because he agrees with his Master about their eternal value.

A minister must first of all be a man who himself has a call from a higher source. Of course he should have as many good points as possible, of the mixing, organizing, money-raising, managing sort, but first of all he must be God's man.

A Church of God, no matter how many truly Christian business men it may boast, will not be satisfied with a religiously minded business man as its pastor. It needs a man sent from God.

Walter R. Harrison, '38

PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR THE SEMINARIAN

In the last issue of THE SEMINARIAN there was an article advocating the careful consideration of a four-year course for the Seminary to provide opportunity for practical training of the students. It is a thought that is characteristic of the present-day feeling of the inadequacy of the practical training which a candidate of the ministry gets. There is the thought that for the first year or so, the new minister must do a lot of unnecessary experimenting with his first congregation so that he may "find" himself. To meet this problem, a fourth year of training would be helpful.

But it is altogether unlikely that much will be done about such a move for several years at least. In the meantime we may well look about us to make better use of what we have already. At the present time, practically all of the Middlers, and a goodly number of the Seniors and Juniors are engaged in work at some congregation. Through it they are brought into contact with the situations they will meet when they enter the active ministry. There is provision for the reading of services, teaching of classes, leading of discussion groups, preaching, and observation. If the seminarian makes the most of his opportunities, he can get a fair idea of that which he will meet himself in a year or so.

It is in this field of work which we already have access to that an immediate answer is to be found to the plea for more practical training. But the answer can best be found only by some changes in the present customs governing the work of the students in the various churches.

First of all, there is no real plan of work for all the students. Some of us have much more chance for valuable work than others. In some churches, the seminarians are somewhat unnecessary additions. The main purpose of the work in church—to give practical guidance—is completely overlooked. A year's work in a church will give some of us a much better preparation than it will others.

Secondly, there is no real supervision of the work of the seminarian. The pastor is frequently not over-concerned about making his church a training school, and there is no stimulus from the outside to make him think of it in this light. Specifically, there is no faculty provision to supervise the work of the student.

Hence, to make the most of our present setup, and to provide the best training possible, certain changes must be made. They indicate a fault of the system, not of any individuals. First, there should be a set list of duties for the seminarian who is working in a congregation. It will give him a definite place. Moreover, it will tend to equalize the opportunities of the various men who get to different churches. Finally, it will cover the broader aspects of church problems to take care of the most necessary things which could be covered in a "fourth year." This set list of duties should consist of reading services, occasional preaching, and teaching. Moreover, it should include a careful study of the church constitution and charter; a study of the special organizations of the church such as the Young People's and Women's societies. It should include an understanding of the Every Member Visitation as it is used; of the system of bookkeeping; of the various committees of the church; and of the methods of keeping the record of pastoral acts; of the technique

of visiting the sick; and of the conduct of special services.

Secondly, there must be a closer co-operation between the faculty and the pastors of congregations employing students. The program to be covered by the student should be worked out by the faculty and submitted to the pastor. All pastors should be made to feel more that they have a responsibility as guide. Moreover, more recognition should be given to the work of the student. It could be elevated to the rank of an elective or a seminar with credit given. Certainly just as much of value would be obtained from this work as from some of the present courses.

Finally, a word may be said as to the benefits of such training. First, the student would have a real place in the congregation he is serving. There would be a definite course to complete. There would be definite projects to work out. Also, there would be a definite relation between the pastor and the student. There would not be the usual bewilderment as to what is expected and what is not. Moreover, the placing of the work on the level of a course would give the student the incentive for work and establish a definite obligation.

The result would be a greater measure of practical training than is now possible. We would not be gaining all the objectives of the "Fourth Year" but we would be making the best of what we already have with the hope that it will lead to something even better. The plan involves little change in the present setup, no expense; and guarantees something which all we seminarians want—a more thorough training.

Hermann B. Miller, '38

AT THE OPERA

There are better ways of celebrating one's birthday than by going to see the Civic Opera

Company perform Tristan und Isolde. Four hours of continuous sitting is enough, one might think, to condemn any performance, but add to this what amounted to a battle of music between screaming, facially-distorted, yet inaudible sopranos and a 75 piece conductor-goaded assembly of not-too-well-united instrumentalists and you have—well, some call it artistry; others—

There were, however, some rewards for the miserable patients. Between the merciless onslaughts of the two contending groups were interspersed a well-spaced number of mirth-provoking incidents. The first of these presented itself in the flesh—King Mark was a scream. His bellowing ranged from that which one might expect to come from an enraged bull to that of the same dumb creature's moaning in distress.

The well-proportioned (bovinely speaking) Isolde pulled a thermotic one when she, wishing to let the goblet from which she and Tristan had just drunk the love-potion drop soundlessly onto the fur-covered couch, unwillingly let it fall at precisely the wrong spot on the couch; with a bang and several clangs it clattered across the floor. The entrances, love-drunk Tristan and Isolde never flickered an eyelash.

Aristotle advises that one be consistent even if the object of one's consistency is inconsistency. Admirably, the cast held to this principle; did not the pipe-player observe it when he did not forget to fail to put his pipe to his mouth before the music (which apparently he was to have been playing) emanated from the real player hid behind the arras?

Toward the close of the marathon the prize-winner was enacted. Isolde had just rushed through the gates of Tristan's Cornwall castle-garden to the side of her dying lover. To bar those who were closely following her, the trusty

side-kick of Tristan laboredly, painfully rolled an immense boulder and an even larger log against the gates. Did that hinder King Mark and Melot? Not in the least. The King swung open the gates in the wrong direction and with a well aimed boot here and there scattered the (papier mache) rock and log like dandelion seed in the wind.

Much may be said about the merits of opera in general; little may be said about the burlesque we say.

Titus R. Scholl, '38

YOUR PAPER

Thus far THE SEMINARIAN has been financed by the "Miscellaneous" fund of the student budget. At the coming student-body meeting, however, the staff intends to propose some other more permanent means of paying for the paper—either, probably, by personal subscriptions to the paper, or by a regular allowance in the budget.

THE SEMINARIAN is a student-paid paper. Therefore it is free of charge to members of the student-body. We make exception to this in the case of the members of the faculty. All others may buy copies at five cents each.