

The Seminarian

The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

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JOHANN ALBRECHT BENDEL

Eberhard Nestle has prefaced his various text-editions of the Greek New Testament with the Latin quotation which reads: Te totum applica ad textum; rem totam applica ad te. I am very fond of these words and I have occasionally referred to them in the class room. They are taken from an earlier text-edition of the Greek New Testament, which was prepared by the Swabian scholar and theologian Johann Albrecht Bengel, and was published by him in 1734. Bengel was one of the finest Bible scholars of all times, and the 250th anniversary of his birth this year gives me the opportunity to call the attention of our students and other readers of The Seminarian to the life and work of this excellent man.

Bengel was born in Winnonden, not far from Stuttgart, the capital of Wuerttemberg, that little country in the southern part of Germany which has brought forth an unusually large number of men. Among these are the poets Schiller and Uhland, the philosophers Hegel and Schelling, and the critics F. C. Baur and D. F. Strauss. The Reformation was introduced in Wuerttemberg by Brenz who put upon the evangelical church the stamp of his own type of piety: loyalty to the Lutheran faith, combined with, and mellowed by, a profound interest in the study of the Bible. Bengel was a descendant of Brenz, and he inherited from him the same traits.

The life of Bengel has often been described: by his son, his grandson Burk and others, and more recently by Nestle, Bengel as a Scholar, 1893 and Bezzel, Bengel, a Teacher of Our Days, 1916. A critical study of his relation to the Pietistic movement is found in Ritschl's History of Pietism. Bengel completed his theological studies at the University of Tuebingen, made an extended journey through Germany to acquaint himself with the educational methods in the higher schools of learning and then accepted a call as preceptor in the preparatory school at Denkendorf, where he spent the best years of his life and did most of his literary work. Later he occupied an ecclesiastical office in the administration of the church in Wuerttemberg. Though a burning and shining light among the theologians of his time, his modesty would not permit him to accept a professorship in the University.

Bengel was a devout Christian, a fine preacher and a hymn writer of some note. But his fame rests upon his contributions to Biblical scholarship. In his youth he was influenced by the writings of Spener and Franke. In later life he made the personal acquaintance of Zinzendorf, yet without identifying himself in all respects with Zinzendorf's peculiar views. His own contributions to Biblical scholarship may be divided into three groups: his critical studies of the text of the Greek New Testament; his apocalyptical studies in the book of Revelation; his strictly exegetical studies, the results of which are embodied in a commentary on the entire New Testament, called by him Gnomon Novi Testamenti.

Bengel's critical studies have made him one of the founders of the modern science of textual criticism. His apocalyptical views, once very popular, may be forgotten, but his Gnomon Novi Testamenti, which has been translated into many languages, is still one of the best commentaries of the New Testament, especially for the theolog-

ical student. It is accurate, concise, profound, original, and highly suggestive.

Henry Offermann

A LETTER FROM BERLIN

Study abroad is in some ways less popular now than in the twenties, or in the four decades prior to the war. The nationalistic accent in Germany and Italy, plus the consequent spirit of tension which grips also France and England make Europe supposedly a poor environment for good instruction. Outside of Germany people told me about the lost glory of German universities and advised against studying history, sociology, philosophy, economics, and above all, theology. The exact sciences exempted, people say the racial dogmas, "blood-race-soil," have polluted everything else. I left Mt. Airy last May almost convinced that, as some say, "It may not pay to study theology in Germany now."

Be all that as it may, I'm now in Germany and have a proposition for you all at Mt. Airy to think over. But before springing it, let me create some atmosphere with two contrasting pictures of university life as I found it.

First, Tuebingen. Here over four hundred theological students crowd the biggest lecture hall to hear Karl Heim and listen with interest to his precise, sometimes amusing lectures. Others patronize Gerhard Kittel, "the Rabbi," as they call him, who is editing the monumental, Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament. Still others look up Professor Emeritus, Adolf Schlatter, to absorb some of his wisdom. Nor do the other professors go begging for students. In short, this theological faculty and the students are very much awake. In a sense one might label the professors as being bound: they must greet their class with a "Heil Hitler" as they enter the room; nor dare they take open cracks at the government. But these are marks of surface politics. Beneath them scholarship and Christian

character shine through, and these inspire. The students, in turn, well know that today not only the Church, but also Christianity are being attacked. They see points where the Church must reform itself, and also the State. Thus they are living in a milieu that shows what it means to live the Christian life under fire.

Second, Basel. Though Switzerland has no church struggle of its own, it is very critical of that in Germany. Professors like Karl Barth, Karl Ludwig Schmidt, and others, ousted from Germany, lead the chant against totalitarianism across the border. But, as no German students are allowed to hear Barth and lack the money to study where they will outside of Germany, the Swiss students listen to their animated professors but remain relatively complacent. They see less that the Church everywhere is in conflict because they do not live in the midst of a clear-cut outbreak of that conflict right in their home churches. But if the Swiss environment lacks the character-building intensity one finds in Germany, the same holds true as I have found it in Edinburgh, Upsala, Lund, Helsingfors, Copenhagen, and elsewhere. Nor can we boast greater alertness in America.

From these contrasting features of Basel and Tuebingen one can now get a better idea of the import behind study of theology today. As we all know, theology is a crystallization of the Christian faith and life. It is no sedentary "Queen of the Sciences" but the sword and euchyridion of the church militant. A wherever the situation is bad enough to shock people into a Christian crusade in defense of their faith - there is a good place to learn the meaning of theology.

Now for the proposition. Several students, pastors, and professors have remarked about the general ignorance here regarding the Lutheran Church in America. They should like to know more about it. In turn, they would like more than just intercessory prayers for their "persecuted church." They want direct contact with Lutherans in America, not only

now, but in time to come. What they wish to carry out is an exchange of theological students between the German universities and the Lutheran seminaries in the United States. It may sound fantastic after what I said at the start. But, they argue, "Why not rather send the few German theological students, now going to America, to Lutheran seminaries? Instead, we must send them to Yale, Hartford, Union, or Princeton where they learn almost nothing about American Lutheranism." In return they note that American Lutheran students can still learn much in the way of sound scholarship and method in Germany.

Advantages and drawbacks are on both sides. Our American seminaries are no theological utopias. Yet Germans are willing to try them -- not as escape resorts, either.

Through the International Student Exchange in New York City, which places hundreds of students annually, the theological trade with Germany could readily be made. The machinery for it already exists. The only requirement is that Mt. Airy, or some other seminary, must take one German theologian and send one abroad. His choice of a German university could be relatively free. What lies behind such an exchange is this: our Church must be alive to the world's need of Christianity; pastors of tomorrow must know the meaning and reality of dangers facing the Church, and they must learn, under attack, how to admit and repair the faults of the Church. Finally, one who has seen something of the vastness of the Lutheran Church -- in Scandinavia as well as in Germany -- cannot help but feel that this comprehensive Church of ours must be more firmly knit together in purpose and understanding. The Lutheran interpretation of Christianity has a world mission and responsibility. In this spirit we cannot allow Germany to become isolated and estranged from us.

E. Theodore Bachmann, '37

Berlin, 10 Oct. 1937

MEMORIES

(Editor's note: This article is written by a student from Germany who spent last year with us.)

It was on an afternoon during the summer of 1936 that I saw the Lutheran Theological Seminary for the first time. I had spent a week in a camp near Lebanon and was on the way back to New York. One of the counsellors, who lived in Philadelphia, took me up to Mt. Airy to introduce me to Rev. Friday. I was gladly surprised by Rev. Friday's friendly talkative nature - I had expected a stiff and very reverend registrar. I had a very hard time understanding him, and I thought, "My, I won't be able to comprehend the lectures if I don't learn the language better before school starts in three weeks.

On the 20th of September the family of White Plains, where I stayed for one month, brought me to the Seminary. It was a bright Sunday afternoon. The campus was still empty and quiet as a cemetery. I was just about to unpack, when I met the first student. He was Heinrich Suhr who came upstairs with a couple of heavy suitcases. It didn't take him very long to find out that I was a German and he began to speak in German. I rather would have spoken English in spite of my terrible way of expressing myself, for I was eager to learn English as soon as possible. If somebody spoke German with me, it threw me out of the atmosphere of the English language and made it more difficult afterwards to readjust myself. But, Heinrich insisted on speaking German, for he had now found a suitable chance to exercise his mother-tongue.

After I had straightened out my room I looked around the campus. At first I thought the Library was a chapel. Gowen Hall seemed like a venerable old school building. When I took a look into the Faculty Room, beholding the various pictures on the walls, I felt decades of glorious history looking down upon this foreign intruder who had no idea

what had been going on here in former days.

The next day life came into this silent place. One student after another arrived. At the dinner table I made the first wholesale acquaintances. The friendliness of the students soon made me feel at home. After a while some fellows began to ask me about Germany and Hitler. They apparently got a kick out of it because I took the discussions often too seriously in the beginning. Later I realized that they did it just for fun.

The behavior in class I found a little different from that in Germany. Everybody chose the most comfortable position to sit leaning back on his chair and putting his feet up. Connie Raker, I remember, used to put his feet up higher than the rest.

To my own surprise I could follow the lectures pretty well, except Dr. Holde in his seminar when he spoke about strengthening, counteracting, and limiting elements. The congenial, friendly, and personal way in which the professors associated with the students, I appreciated much. I was very happy that I could hear their excellent lectures. They made a valuable contribution to my theological knowledge. They helped me especially much to get an insight into the history, organization, and inner life of the Lutheran Church in America. It will give me a feeling of pride, comfort, and strength, when I am back in Germany, to know that we Lutherans in Europe don't stand alone, but that millions of Lutheran brethren live across the ocean in well organized, lively, and growing church bodies, fellow-Christians who are united with us by common faith and confessions and fighting for the same Christian ideals.

If somebody asked me, "How do you like it over here?", I only could answer, "Very much." I never felt homesick during the whole year because people were nice to me and I always had a fine time. There generally was some fun on or off the campus. I like to remember our nice Hallowe'en party, our Senior banquet, and our Christmas celebration which gave me a fine substitute for the "stimmungs und gemuetvolle"

German Christmas. Neither shall I forget the many kinds of games we played, not to mention water-bag battles.

The time of my stay in this country flew along like an arrow. It was much too short. Now only a sweet memory is left. Yet I don't give up the hope that to this memory there may be added a happy "Wiedersehen."

Werner Kupsch

THE INTERSEMINARY MOVEMENT

About a week ago a representative from the Interseminary Movement visited our campus. This movement is one with which Mt. Airy is little acquainted, and therefore the visit of this representative provoked several questions in the minds of some. Is Mt. Airy letting an opportunity slip by in neglecting this? Has this movement something definite to offer us? Have we something to offer it? These questions cannot be answered until one knows exactly what the Interseminary Movement is and what its objectives are.

The Interseminary Movement is the theological division of the Student Christian Associations. Its aims may be briefly put. The immediate objective is to bring students of the theological seminaries of all denominations into a friendship based upon understanding. More broadly, it endeavors to promote co-operation between denominations and to bring a common front against the uncommon crisis which the Christian world faces today. In a word, its object is unity through understanding. It is the little brother of the Federation of Churches.

As such, what shall we think of it? We have heard a great deal recently about efforts toward unity. Is this movement just organization, or does it have something to offer? It does not require much thought to see one big opportunity that it

holds out to us.

There is no denying that the Lutheran Church in America has one unfavorable heritage. Generally speaking, it is not "hail-fellow-well-met" among the denominations. It is not the life of the party when churches mingle. Whatever we can do to work off this stigma will benefit ourselves and others. The logical start of such efforts would seem to be in interseminary camaraderie. Our participation in these conferences will be one more proof, at least to those who will be our contemporaries in the ministry, that we will co-operate sympathetically with a program of united action, in so far as is possible. Even beyond the immediate benefits of such participation, friendships which are struck up here might prove in later years to be valuable contacts with key men of other denominations. Where men of Drew and Princeton, of Union and Yale meet in seminary fellowship, there men of Mt. Airy might also well be. Dare we call this fraternalization with other denominations in seminary life an insignificant factor?

We have spoken of other churches profiting by a more intimate connection with us. We are not in seminary because we believe Lutheranism has nothing unique to offer to the world today, yes, even to the Baptist or Episcopalian or any other world. Nor are we so foolish as to think that we can best make our contribution by an attitude of rugged individualism. If we wish to give to other denominations what we think would be of value to them, we can best do it in a clearing-house of ideas, where methods and solutions are discussed. An interseminary conference aims to be one such clearing-house, but these conferences in the past have not had the full benefit of the Lutheran counsel that we might have given them. We have been hiding our light under a bushel. For instance, our concept of the Word of God, and our emphasis upon the importance of the individual in working out the salvation of the world ought to steady the attitude of the other churches. As a denomination, we have been denying the rich Lutheran

tradition from having an equal finger along with other denominations in shaping the Christian expression of today. Is it fair to others?

Then, there is always the other side of the picture. These denominations have something to give to us. In absenting ourselves from such conferences, we are, in reality, affirming that we can very well do without the benefit of their experience and counsel. It is not disloyalty to assert that Lutheranism is not perfect; rather, it is a truer allegiance. Perhaps the other creeds can teach us a thing or two about methods of social salvation, for example. We want to see our own faith as strong as it can be made, and such strength does not come from aloofness, but from the give and take of ideas, where the best rise to the top. When we ignore such conferences, therefore, are we fair to ourselves?

We Lutherans have much to give; we also have much to gain. The Interseminary Movement is one of the agencies where both can take place. Do we wish to use this opportunity? If so, here is how we may do it specifically. On Nov. 11 and 12, the Middle Atlantic region of the Interseminary Movement is holding its conference at Auburn Theological Seminary. The conference topic is "Christianity — and Our World." Discussion will revolve around the findings of the Oxford Conference of this past summer. Then, from Dec. 27 to Jan. 1, the National Conference of the Interseminary Movement convenes at Oxford, Ohio, for a thorough discussion of the reports of the Oxford Conference. Men who participated at Oxford, England, will guide the thought of this conference. It is their hope that on each seminary campus from now till then men will study these reports in local discussion groups, so that the work of this national conference can proceed intelligently.

There is the program. It awaits our answer. What that answer will be, only the roll call at

Auburn and at Oxford will reveal.

Robert W. Stackel, '38

MEN MAKE STEEL

You recall the beautiful sunrise of last Easter? It was especially beautiful in a small Pennsylvania steel town, giving accent to the tones of the carillons calling men to worship in the House of the Lord. All men heard, but some were unable to present themselves in an earthly church that morning. They made steel.

Dawn creeps slowly into a room already filled with the piercing glow of white hot steel. At the end of the morning shift it comes like a panacea to men who have worked through the night. Stale sweat and weariness sit heavily on those who long for the quiet of sleep. Soon the whistle will send forth its call of relief and tired men listen for it.

Just one more pouring must be made before quitting time. The steel has been Bessemerized and the men are waiting for the ponderous cranes to come out from their place of rest and make the pouring. Slowly the giant arms move from each side. They converge on the graphite furnace. Suddenly they stop with a suddenness that comes only from objects in slow motion. With bleary eyes the men below scan the rails overhead. A jam! The two cranimen coming out of their huts approach the middle of the rail. They stoop to investigate the snag in the chain. Stoop over - and fall! The splash of two bodies in the liquid steel horrifies the watchers as the first rays of the Easter sun stream through the dirty windows. At once all weariness is gone from the room. Men shout - giants cry; and then there is a quiet broken only by the last few notes of "Christ is Risen." Men have made steel.

Two days later the bells peal again; this time a slow song of sadness. The sorrowing families follow two little caskets bearing two slivers of metal to

their final resting place.

And in that room of men? The furnace is connected and the once liquid steel is again heated to whiteness. That draft of air will purify the steel of all foreign bodies and anyway - the men are being buried. They make steel.

William F. Pfeifer, '39

IMPRESSIONS OF THE SEMINARY

Asked to record our first impressions of the Seminary we find ourselves faced with the difficult task of putting those varied and complex matters on paper. However, we shall do our best, and in doing so shall try to record not only the impressions of an individual, but also many shared by our classmates.

Strange as it may seem, the Seminary life comes close to our expectations. We had seen the dormitories before and knew them to be qualifying as antiques; we had heard of the fine meals served at the Refectory and found them to live up to their fabled reputation. We knew that one of the Seminary's primary functions was to aid the spiritual growth of the students, and though we have been here but a few weeks, we are beginning to feel that influence.

Asked at home what we thought of dormitory life at the Seminary we could think of no better answer than to compare it with the life one might find in a large and closely-knit fraternity house. This is natural since the students are here studying on common ground with common ideals.

Classroom work did, however, introduce several new elements to us. The idea was quickly gained by our class that we are strictly "on our own;" the work is presented in lecture form and we can "take it or leave it." Naturally, there are individual differences between the Faculty members;

one professor will give about one sheet of lecture notes an hour while a renowned speed artist has dealt out as high as eight per hour. Another instructor will stay close to his manuscript while still others will not confine themselves to notes. But these are unimportant differences. Generally speaking, the Faculty also lives up to its reputation of being a learned and consecrated body. We feel one distinctly new angle, namely, the various Faculty members seem to be interested in more than a salary.

Most of us were surprised, however, on one count. We had been told to expect rather easy work at the Seminary with plenty of time for other matters. This expectation has been sharply shoved into the background by reading lists which look like small, private libraries. To be sure there have not been any tests or examinations, but those reading assignments keep most of us on the books. However, there is time for play - and the opportunity also. The tennis courts and football field run close seconds to the popularity of the volley ball court.

The chapel periods and the work at our respective church assignments help us devotionally and practically. This work holds the natural attractions for men who will shortly be in the field themselves.

This article would be incomplete without that very enjoyable incident of seminary life - the water battle. Although we had heard about them, we marvel at the thoroughness of the job and the quantities of paper bags and water consumed.

And so we have found it easy to "find ourselves" at the Seminary. We have already been made to feel that we belong here, and we look forward to the next three years as years of opportunity for the complete preparation for the ministry.

THE MUEHLENBERG MONUMENT

Rain or shine, fair weather or foul, the figure of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg stands on our campus, commanding the attention of all who pass by. Why is it there? Some Juniors and upper-classmen have asked this question. How did this monument to the Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America come to be placed here? In as brief a manner as possible we shall attempt to answer these questions.

The monument itself is composed of a bronze statue of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg surrounded by members of his congregation. As far as we are able to learn, there is no particular significance attached to the figures on the side-wings except that they are supposed to represent the people of the congregation in various attitudes of joy, hope, longing, faith, and above all - reverence. This bronze work is securely fastened upon a granite base which is in turn firmly set in concrete. The whole is the work of J. Otto Schweitzer, a sculptor of Philadelphia, and was cast in bronze by the Bureau Brothers, also of Philadelphia. The cost was \$15,000.

The monument was presented by the Sunday Schools of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania under the leadership of a committee composed of the Reverend F. O. Evers, I. Chantry Hoffman, and A. C. Schenck, and Messrs. S. G. Seegers and E. Aug. Miller. It was dedicated during the Quadri-Centennial meeting of the General Council, on October 28, 1917, in commemoration of the 175th anniversary of the arrival of Muhlenberg in America in 1742.

We are told that the dedication ceremony held at 3:30 Saturday afternoon, October 28, 1917, was "interesting and colorful." An introductory address was made by Dr. Weller, president of the Ministerium which Muhlenberg founded all but 170 years before. The unveiling was done by Miss

Dorothy Young Richards, a descendant of the Patriarch. Prayer was offered by Dr. Fry, in his youth a member of the old Trappe Church which Muhlenberg had served. A few words were spoken by the Reverend F. O. Evers, chairman of the committee. The address in the form of a memorial was then given by Dr. H. E. Jacobs, Dean of the Seminary. In his speech he stressed the fact that Muhlenberg was a "man of the people," and that his motto always was "Ecclesia Plantanda." The account of the ceremony closes with the words, "There was charming weather, a responsive audience, and hearty hymn-singing."

This, in brief, is the story of the beautiful monument which stands so impressive on our campus, seemingly offering itself to us as a reminder that others have gone before and that others are to come until "there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

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James T. Powers, '39

SONS OF MOUNT AIRY

Sons of Mount Airy,
Lift your spirit high;
Let ring the chorus
Till it rend the sky:
Hail, School of Prophets -
This the song we raise -
Hail, Alma Mater,
Glorious be thy praise.

Sons of Mount Airy,
Sacred are these halls
Rich in tradition
Memory recalls.
Honor her story,
Walk her blessed ways;
Hail, Alma Mater,
Glorious be thy praise.

Sons of Mount Airy
Proudly bear her name,
Show forth her spirit,
Spread abroad her fame.
To earth's remote bounds
Throughout length of days;
Hail, Alma Mater,
Glorious be thy praise.

Paul J. Hoh, '18