

The Seminarian

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TO THE JUNIORS

The steps of Seminary life are comparable to the proverbial three points of a sermon: Introduction, body, conclusion. It is needless to say that as we pause briefly upon the third step, we look with interest at those who are mounting the first step and have resolved to follow us. We are proud to have you with us; and we promise that if we can make the first step a little easier, a little more pleasant, or a little more vital, we will strive with all our hearts to do so.

We are aware of the fact that you will be facing the same problems, the same anxieties, and the same joys that we have faced. And in sharing them with you we have a bond which will make us not only perpetual friends, but also brothers in the greatest endeavor of mankind: the Ministry of our Lord.

Thus we say to you, "Welcome to Mount Airy. May our brief year together be long remembered, and our lives better because we have known one another."

-Floyd Paules

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The Middle Class is glad of this opportunity to welcome the Juniors formally to Mt. Airy's campus. Already, we hope, you have felt this welcome being informally extended to you, in class, in the dormitories, in the refectory, wherever we have come into contact with each other.

But rather than as "Juniors" we welcome you as the newest members of the Seminary family. Class Distinctions have little meaning among us here. We are really one, in spirit, in purpose, and this unique character of our group transcends the traditional demarcations

of class authority. Unconsciously, perhaps, you are already finding yourselves an integral part of this group, not one part among three. And that is as it should be. Like Dumas' Three Musketeers," we three classes are indissolubly bound together through a Leader. With Him as our Head we are a united body of His followers.

This fact comes to us especially forcibly at the present time. For this year the United Lutheran Church in America, on the threshold of its third decade, is rededicating itself to the ideal of its organizers: unity. What could be more fitting than that we, as a special group within that body, should emphasize that ideal for ourselves. Here is our chance to grasp that ideal and bring it down to reality here at home, and with that thought in our minds we extend to you a sincere welcome to Mount Airy.

- Theodore L. Fischer

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LUTHERANS! LOOK BACHWARDS

It is truly unfortunate that Johann Sebastian Bach was not a Wesleyan. If he had been, perhaps his music might be used in the Lutheran Church of today! As the situation stands, Bach was a staunch Lutheran all of his life; he dedicated all of his music primarily to the glory of God; and he left to posterity a heritage of the finest music ever conceived in the mind of man. But- there is only one single instance where one of Bach's harmonisations is used in the Lutheran Common Service Book. This is the music for the setting of the Sanctus, and with these words preceding it: "ascribed to J. S. Bach."

A complete catalogue of Bach's works has

never been written, nor probably ever will be. Even Bach himself did know the exact number of compositions that he wrote, and many have been lost in the past two hundred years. An approximate number would be over a thousand. He composed both secular and sacred music; the latter being such diverse forms as: oratorios, hymns, cantatas, choral-preludes, passion music, and settings for the Service.

His contribution to music is incalculable he was the leader of the triumvirate of "B's": Bach, Beethoven, Brahms. His sacred music exerted much influence on Lutheran music. It was he who showed the richness and color that is our heritage; it was he who resurrected the Lutheran chorales and, under the magic touch of his gifted fingers, made them live; it was he who laid the foundations for the future of music in the Lutheran Church. Despite all of this, however, his music is rarely used in our Lutheran churches today.

The index of composers in the Common Service Book yields some interesting and startling facts. Of the composers listed: 130 are English, 86 are German, 45 are American, 11 are Ancient Plain and Folk songs, 7 are French, 4 are Scandinavian, 3 are Italian, and 1 each represents Holland, Bohemia, and Russia. The remainder are either anonymous, or were taken from collected hymn-tune sources.

Among individual composers: Dykes has 44, Wm. Monk has 21, Gauntlett has 15, Smart and Sullivan have 14, Lowell Mason has 13 with Barnby, Ohl has 11, and more are represented with the English outnumbering the German.

It seems that good Lutheran music is lacking in the Lutheran Church. There are many cases of alternate tunes for the original chorales, which are invariably almost always used! Is it that our pastors are so sadly

lacking in appreciation of good music? It certainly isn't mandatory that we must use the musical hash concocted by the Messers, Sullivan, Dykes, and Mason. The musical value in any hymn written by Mason is so infinitesimal as to be non-existent. The tune "Martyn", used for "Jesus, Lover of my Soul", has a musical vocabulary comparable to a first-grade music student's ideas of harmony. The author knew nothing about harmony, and his aesthetic sense was noticeable by its absence.

It seems that the Lutheran Church has been overly infected by the virus of that sickly, sentimental Victorian tradition. Bad poems and worse music clutter up our hymnal while the greatest church music ever written is not even suggested. There have been many artistic hymns and melodies written for worship. Why don't we look farther Backwards than the Victorians and use them?

Bach's chorale-preludes were written as free improvisations on hymn-tunes as a prelude to the service of worship. They are fitting and devotional; they invoke in the auditor the true spirit of worship that is essential. Unfortunately many of our organists are not musicians; their repertoire is limited to the most elementary things. It is entirely possible to insist on a true musical interpretation of the hymns and services; and it is entirely possible to find good music that will enhance the Service and not detract from it. Such music is found in Bach. I invite the Lutheran Church to investigate Bach; he is well worth hearing.

It should go without saying that Calvinistic, revivalistic, and secular music must not be heard in a Lutheran church under any circumstances. The old cry- "The people won't understand good music" has no reasonable basis. How can people appreciate good music if they never hear it? Music written in a devotional and

worshipful mood will invoke that same mood in the congregations.

Lutherans! look Backwards. The music produced by Bach and his disciples is the finest divinest music ever written for the worship of God. Its like has never been heard and probably never will. True genius, however, can not be confined to its own age but spreads through all ages. If we look Backwards we will not be enemies of progress; but we will enrich the lives of others and our own; we shall be worshipping God in the fulness of His Being in the Divine tongue of humanity which is Music!

-John A. McConomy

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HERE WE STAND

--By Hermann Sasse

From Germany, the land of the Reformation, and the scene of the present struggle of the Lutheran Church for its existence, there comes a stimulating and significant book, under the English title "Here We Stand". The author, Hermann Sasse, prominent in Church History in the Theological Faculty in the University of Erlangen, has written, it may be said, from the field of battle. We have, therefore, something like the spirited defense one offers when under attack. And to our further advantage he has to a large degree avoided the pitfalls of working under fire. "Here We Stand" contains few, if any, rash or sweeping statements. Instead the book is carefully written, and succeeds in fairly presenting the Reformed side as well as our own. One more thing in its favor is the substantial subject matter of the book, which makes two readings profitable.

The Lutheran Church beyond Germany is (or should be) avidly interested in the church situation in Germany not only because fellow-

churches are in danger, but further because increasingly we shall ourselves have to answer the same challenge or question, namely, to justify our existence. In rising to the challenge we shall have to cut through our prejudices, misunderstandings, and vagueness, and discover the fundamental confessional nature of our churches. Here, Sasse steers us on the right road by presenting a sound perspective of the Reformation. Those who look anywhere but to the Church for an explanation err, he says. Certainly Luther's life does not explain it, nor a cultural revival, not an event in German History. The temptation so to explain does not alone beset the layman. Having returned to the Reformation for the origin of the confessional nature of the Lutheran Church, we then see clearly the Reformed Church differentiated; and hence the impossibility of uniting with her on the present basis of our confessions.

The question of uniting two or three, or all denominations into one confession has occupied sincere Christians for many years.

"Would not that be the answer to those who like to say that churches are bringing God's truth to men, but cannot agree what that truth is", they say. Sasse sides with unionism. But he solemnly warns that to unite without dissolving all fundamental differences of their respective churches is to betray their confession, upon which their church rests. This explains the careful consideration by Sasse of the respective confessions of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

In addition to the quality of the subject matter contained in "Here We Stand", and its timeliness, is the stimulating nature of the book. When Sasse so earnestly searches for the Revealed Truth as we believe the Lutheran Church holds in its confessions, and when he

honestly compares the confessions and the Reformed and our own Church, then we are seized with a similar earnestness. If the Lutheran Church alone confesses the Truth correctly how sure the Church should be if such is the case, and how steadfastly it should strive to continue confessing that Truth! When we are convinced that the Lutheran Church rightly confesses the Truth, then we want to diligently examine the Lutheran Confession, appropriate the truth in our lives, and finally hold in our hearts by constant searching, lest it become lost or obscured.

Ministers, in pursuing their continual study can only choose a few of the many books they would like to read. In my opinion this is one of the "few". Because "Here We Stand" is a significant book for both layman and clergy, and is stimulating so that the reader examines anew what the Revealed Truth is, we are indebted to the author and to Professor Tappert of our faculty for presenting to us the book in English.

-Charles K. Wynkoop

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THE PROPHEET

-By Kahlil Gibran

Claude Bragdon says of Kahlil Gibran: "His power came from some great reservoir of spiritual life else it could not have been so universal and potent, but the majesty and beauty of the language with which he clothes it were all his own". That is essentially a definition of a poet- be it a writer, a painter, a composer, or a sculptor. It is their intensity and beauty in expressing what we perhaps more dimly experience in the secrets of our own souls, that draws us with a hidden force to their creations to admire, to reflect,

and then to pray; and through it all to find a beauty and a joy in life, which draws us another step nearer God. Whose soul is so dull as not to find a source of strength in hearing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or in seeing El Greco's View of Toledo; or in experiencing a further realization of the unity of the spirit through Blake's When the Morning Stars Sang Together?

In "The Prophet" we hear primarily a voice from beyond in answer to some cravings of our own soul and the desires of our own heart. It is this which has endeared this little volume in the hearts of thousands in many lands, and which has given to many of us in America who are desperately seeking a firm foundation in modern expression, a deeper hope and joy.

The prophet here is Almustafa, "the chosen and the beloved", who is about to leave the strange city after a twelve year stay. Of the time spent here, he significantly says: "Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls, and long were the nights of aloneness; and who can depart from his pain and aloneness without regret". And then, at the request of many in the city he speaks of those things which lie deep upon their hearts: On Love, On Marriage, On Children, On Giving, etc. They are short "prophetical" utterances with a wealth of material for our joy and reflection. I quote but a few short passages:

"When love beckons to you follow him,
Though his ways are hard and steep.
And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
Though the sword hidden among his pinions
may wound you....."

"For even as love crowns you so shall he
crucify you. Even as he is for your
growth so is he for your pruning."

On Giving he says in part:

"You often say, "I would give but only to the deserving.

The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.

They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish."

On Religion he says in part:

"Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his beliefs from his occupations?

Who can spread his hours before him saying, 'This for God and this for myself; this for my soul, and this other for my body?'"

With his peculiar genius and as a product of the immensely fertile soil for poets and prophets, Kahlil Gibran- an Arabian from Mt. Lebanon- has been doubly endowed, which he proves in all his creation of beautiful pictures, in the simplicity of his expression, and in his deep spiritual insight. The three of these qualities have produced a powerful creation in "The Prophet".

As a stylist, Gibran is a poet in his own right; as we must essentially classify the style of a Whitman, a Yates, or a John Singe. There is a rhythm in the meter and in the choice of words and phrases, which gracefully enhances the beauty of its imagination and depth.

As a man of faith, we find in "The Prophet" the expression of a soul which has gone deep in its search for truth and beauty, and which has come out of its search beautifully enriched, his faith and his religion have so influenced his philosophy of life and his way of life, that he can well become a teacher to many- although this is undoubtedly farthest from his

mind and purpose. Having lived under the same heat as Christ, and having lived among the same hills and fields and- to a large extent- peoples, which were His constant joy, Kahlil Gibran is able more than any others to put into modern feeling the Christ on earth and the Saviour in human hearts and lives. We need but read his Jesus, the Son of Man to be convinced of his faith in the Son of God and to know more intimately how deeply He moved in the lives of seventy-seven of his contemporaries- friends as well as enemies.

As to his drawings- of which there are twelve in "The Prophet"- one must compare the clarity of his visions, and his ability of expression with many of the greatest- with Michelangelo, and Blake, with Rossetti of the Pre-Raphaelites, and with others. The place we can eventually give him among these, and among other artists and poets, will depend upon further reflections and comparisons.

-Gottfried E. Alberti

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REFLECTION

The aim of the minister is to touch the hearts of his people. For this reason he ascends into the pulpit to preach the Good News. I wonder if it is necessary that he deliver his homily from that position? The preacher might better stimulate his flock if he remained out of the pulpit and before his audience. John, the Baptist, instructed in the wilderness; the desert was his pulpit. Jesus preached his best sermon on a mountain side. St. Paul grasped every opportunity to plant Christ. Certainly, he knew little of the pulpit.

Perhaps we err when we preach Christ from the pulpit. The moment we enter it a barrier

rises between the pastor and his sheep. I think the personal contact of man to man may disappear, and this contact is of vital importance to a Christian minister. Can we hope to be persuasive when this wall stands between us and the congregation? I wonder if we remained free of this fence which encloses us, our message might not be more effective for the Lord, who desires to strengthen, comfort, guide, and save those before us? When a public speaker delivers an address he generally stands with nothing between him and the audience. He experiences no hindrance as he approaches them; and, therefore, his address becomes more personal. Isn't it possible that we are hindering the work of the Holy Ghost when we in the pulpit separate ourselves from His unbelievers?

Usually our pulpits rise above the chancel level. The congregation is beneath us. We preach down to them, while we are instructed to preach "to" and not "at" our people. As we are elevated, we may seem superior to them. Perhaps this produces the wrong attitude in the minds of the parishioners? Our Calling, under no circumstances, must communicate the impression that the pastor is better than his flock. The words and deeds of a minister should manifest the life of Christ and His humbleness. So should it be when he preaches.

The height of the pulpit may also cause physical discomfort to those in the pews. The people (if there are any) in the forward pews must exert themselves to observe the preacher constantly. When fatigue overcomes them, they no longer regard him. They cast their eyes downward; and in thus doing, the vision of the man in the pulpit is lost to them. What a loss of personal contact! These people hear

words but see no man. Their thoughts drift to other topics of the world. I believe they may as well listen to a radio sermon and receive as much benefit from that.

Then too, all are not fortunate to possess a physical stature that will accomodate itself to the pulpit. While some are tall, others are short. The former noticeably rises above the pulpit. He becomes conscious of this and feels awkward and uneasy. People consider his physique ("What a football player he'd be!"). For the latter, it is a struggle to observe his audience at all times. He seems to play hide and seek with those in attendance. How can one retain interest and attention when such conditions prevail? When the parishoners depart, they consider the man and not the Christ of Whom he is preaching. I wonder if these circumstances may not bear a negative effect on our sermons?

But the pulpit remains and carries with it a practical use for us. All men are not endowed with a mind that will commit entire manuscripts to memory. In the pulpit there is a space upon which to place the notes. Being without a pulpit may mean to carry these notes before the audience and hamper the delivery of the sermon.

The pulpit has become a tradition of the Church. As a tradition, the Church holds it in reverence and has accepted it as a part of its life. It is a sacred place from which Christ, through the medium of man, infroms the world of Christianity. Maybe, our departure from the pulpit may psychologically affect the congregation. They see their Lord in that pulpit. If the preacher delivers his discourse from a position almost level with them, will they continue to believe that God dwells in him? They associate the pulpit with God. So to be with His Spirit, the minister ought to preach from the pulpit.

But whether we preach in the pulpit or out of it, our privilege remains to carry the Word of God to His people. Dr. Seegers says, "The sermon is a Divine-human discourse....." God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, is always present wherever we may preach.

-Herbert D. Hrdlicka

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"THY KINGDOM COME"

This petition ascends to God from the heart of each one of us as we commune with Him daily in our private devotions. This petition resounds heavenwards in grand chorus as we pray it in our chapel services. Individually and as a group we pray that others may be led to share the Fellowship which we enjoy with God, Our Father. We pray for the spiritual harvest. But all too often we forget how the spiritual harvest is gathered. An analogy may prove helpful.

In the spring of the year every farmer asks God (if not in word at least in thought) to send an abundance of rain and sunshine, to bless the seed that it may spring forth into a bountiful harvest. But as he prays, he toils. He tills the ground, plants the seed and daily labors in the hope of reaping a harvest. The farmer prays for a rich harvest, and as he prays, he toils.

Daily we pray for a rich spiritual harvest. We pray that from every kindred, tribe, and nation, souls may be gathered into God's Kingdom. Yet do we realize that as we pray, we must toil?

Our fathers prayed for God's Kingdom to come and their prayer has been answered. They prayed for a harvest from India and a harvest has been reaped. When their first prayers ascended to God, our American Lutheran Church

could claim no membership in India. Today, however, we can proudly exclaim: "Our Church has reaped a harvest in India, a harvest for God. 175,000 Christians in India join with us in praising the name of Jehovah.

Our fathers prayed and their prayers brought activity. They said: "We have been praying for the conversion of the world; but we must also begin to do something or our prayers cannot be heard, they will be a mere mockery before God". Thus, on Oct. 5, 1841, our fathers commissioned the Rev. Christian Frederick Heyer to go to India as our first missionary. They asked for God's blessing upon the mission work and they in turn pledged their loyal support. Because they toiled, they did something about it, their prayers have been answered. Will our prayers be answered?

-Walter H. Guigley

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

We can call to mind the answered prayers of those men who left Mt. Airy with a definite conviction of their place in the furtherance of God's Kingdom on earth. One of our most recent graduates, Rev. J. Christian Port, has been called to the Argentine field. Together with his many pastoral and administrative duties he has planned to translate Dr. Nolde's works on the Catechism. Preparations are being made to have these published. This is a concrete illustration of seed planted at home, transplanted in a foreign field to increase the membership in the Kingdom. All of us here hope that Rev. Port's efforts, like his prayers, will be realized. We also hope to hear about the work of Rev. Alsdorf, '38, who is working in Japan. These, and many other answered prayers, should encourage the toil of some of our students.

OUT OF RESPECT

To the memory of a gentleman whose talents were unstintingly given to the men of Mount Airy Seminary these lines are devoted. For thirty-two years he taught men to speak with distinction and with power. But sometimes he forgot his subject and then his students were privileged to witness the performance of an artist- an artist in the fields of music and practical philosophy. He knew music and loved to tell of his passion for her beauties and to demonstrate his mastery of her classics. He has traveled far and his voice became the eyes of those who heard him tell of his adventures. He was a Christian who knew how to live and to enjoy life.

We who knew him feel that his death has severed a lively link between ourselves and the scintillating aurora that surrounds the often abused but, in this case, truly applied phrase, "a great man". Punctual at all times, rigorous in his demands upon himself, he still remembered and recognized the failings of young men and was extremely lenient with them.

Robert Schurig was possessed of talents far above the average. Mankind had a right to expect much of him. It may indeed be said of him that he never "trailed in the dust the golden hopes of men". He gave freely and wisely. For all this we will remember him.