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The ⁺ Seminarian

TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Dr. Edmund A. Steimle

Possibly the most dangerous hours in a man's spiritual life come not when he is under the immediate pressure of events and decisive action is demanded, but rather in the long dull periods when there is little action or excitement and whatever lustre may once have adhered to his calling as a Christian appears cloudy and dull. That's why I am forever grateful for the accounts we have of the temptation of our Lord. For here is something very close to my own experience -- and to yours, too, I suspect.

Other periods of temptation in the life of our Lord, after the feeding of the 5,000, for example, or in the garden of Gethsemane, are far more dramatic and intense. There is a spine-tingling quality about them which urges me on to dare to follow, for there is clear, decisive, heroic action. And yet these more dramatic incidents are actually almost completely beyond my own experience. Rarely, if ever, will I be called upon to make a decision in which life and death, even for myself, hang in the balance, to say nothing of my inability to come even close to appreciating the depth of those struggles: in the Garden, for instance, where Jesus looked directly into the deep abyss of human sin so that He instinctively recoiled, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass..."

But the temptation in the wilderness is close to my own experience. Here, too, of course, I may not be able to comprehend in all their fullness the dimensions of the choices offered there; but in its timing and setting and in its issue, here is something which speaks directly to the familiar hazards of my own spiritual life.

Note in the first place that immediately after the baptismal experience in which our Lord's mission becomes vividly clear, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil...", or as Mark puts it in more vigorous expression, "And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness..." The same Spirit which descended upon Him as a dove in the ecstatic moment of His baptism now drives Him out into the wilderness of temptation.

Preachers, contrary to their calling, are notorious sentimentalists and not least when they conclude their

sermons with the familiar appeal, "Let the Spirit rule in your hearts," with the assumption that everything will be fine and dandy from there on. We ought to consider more carefully. Once the Spirit enters into the life of a man immediately the Spirit drives him forth into difficulty, frustration, and temptation.

There is an inevitability about it. For example, a man decides, even as you and I, to devote his life to the ministry. In the decision there is a certain exaltation, an awareness of mission and purpose, which, however, is followed straightway by low periods of wonderings and doubts. Such a man comes to the seminary -- and right there, after the first flush of novelty wears off, is the wilderness for him as he finds himself plugging his way through studies and disciplines which often seem all too remote from the accomplishment or expression of his high purpose. The daily routine of classes, lectures, and papers, even the moments of worship in Chapel or in private devotions become routine and devoid of any sense of the immediate presence of God. Like our Lord, it is not so much a questioning of the will of God as it is, "Is this the will of God for me?"

So we take refuge in looking to the next high point -- ordination, perhaps, or your first parish -- then you say, I shall once and for all get out of the wilderness of dull and empty days when the reality of my calling is remote, when the high purpose which I have accepted for myself seems to bear so little relation to what I am actually engaged in doing day after day.

Do not deceive yourselves. The temptation in the wilderness always follows hard upon the sense of mission and high purpose. Monday always follows hard upon the weekly celebration of the Resurrection; Monday, with its dull and drab routine of mimeographs, correspondence and the endless petty details of parish life.

It is futile to try to escape it. Here, perhaps, you may be tempted to look to other seminaries. Maybe it would be different somewhere else. Later, perhaps, you will be tempted to look to other parishes. Somewhere the words of the hymn, "Every morning mercies new fall as fresh as morning dew" ought to find concrete expression in the daily experience of those who follow the way. But you will not escape the temptation in the wilderness by a change in scene. The details may be altered but the dull drab days which seem so inconsistent with our high purpose are inevitable.

The temptation of our Lord can teach us this, at least, that there is an inevitability about it. The same Spirit which sets us apart for the ministry of the Gospel drives us forth

into the wilderness. The unhappiest ministers are those who have failed to reckon sufficiently with our Lord's temptation in the wilderness following hard on His baptism. It should help, as these dry periods come upon us, just to recognize the inevitability of it. Peter was talking about the persecution of the early Church, but he could as well have been talking about this wilderness experience when he wrote, "Beloved, do not be surprised...as though something strange were happening to you." It is not strange -- we ought to expect it!

But how to meet it when it comes -- that's the question. I think it is significant that our Lord meets the tempter at every step of the way with a quotation from Scripture -- Scripture which no doubt had been learned by rote as a child. Here is no impassioned prayer such as he uttered in the Garden. Here, calling upon a reservoir of years of habit, His trust finds specific expression in obedient reflection upon the will of God given to Him in Scripture. If the temptation itself is painted in sombre tones -- forty days of solitude in a barren wilderness, the answer to the temptation is painted in the equally subdued tones of obedience.

This should be instructive for us. It is inevitable that we shall meet temptation in the wilderness of dull, drab days. And the response then is not to look for some spine-tingling experience of the presence of God which may or may not come, but rather to give expression to our faith in simple acts of obedience. To reflect upon the will of God in Scripture. To say our prayers alone and together whether or not we feel like praying. To attend to our daily duties whether or not we see at the moment their immediate relevance to our high calling. To lean on the reservoir of habit built up in more luminous days when the lustre was there -- vivid and real. And woe to the man caught in the wilderness of doubt and frustration who has neglected to build up a reservoir of habit upon which he can draw.

And the issue of it all? Angels came and ministered to Him. Light broke in upon the dreary scene. God -- Who had been with Him all along -- now makes His presence known. This is our reassurance too. If it is inevitable that we shall be led of the Spirit into the wilderness, God will not leave comfortless those who give evidence of their faith in obedience. The days are not all spent in the wilderness.

The glory of Scripture is not its other-worldliness and certainly it is not the sentimentality with which we so often clothe it; the glory of it is in its realism. "The Spirit of God descended upon Him as a dove...Then the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness to be tempted...and the angels came and ministered unto Him."

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The Festival of the
Reformation 1954

L. Alex Black, Editor; Fred Auman, Don Bravin, George Fehr, Calder Gibson, Harold Markert, Lee Mull, Don Safford, Al Schrum, Joe Schwartz. Artist: John Bucher

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ELIZABETH DEVLIN, NEW SECRETARY, HAS UNUSUAL BACKGROUND

"The Lutherans have done it again." A non-Lutheran fundamentalist spoke these words about the Martin Luther movie in a gathering which included Miss Elizabeth V. Devlin, newest member of the Seminary staff. It was this statement that caused her to see that flicker 12 times.

As she passed Mt. Airy Seminary while riding the trolley one day, she immediately thought of the "students who are like Martin Luther." She happened to 'phone the Seminary shortly after. Soon after this call she was

appointed office secretary.

Miss Devlin's background is jammed with interesting facts. Entering Wheaton College, she received an A. B. degree 17 years later with several years at business college partly filling the interim.

Due to her mother's illness she has spent 11 winters in Florida. There she was secretary to a Presbyterian minister. Although she wanted to travel to Israel to Christianize the Jews, Miss Devlin has served as secretary for a Jewish rabbi.

This versatile woman has also helped to compile an Assyrian dictionary with the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. She has helped to compile a Bible concordance as a research worker for the American Bible Society.

While working for FOCUS (Fellowship of Overseas College and University Students), she helped foreign students feel at home in the U. S.

Immediately before coming to Mt. Airy, Miss Devlin was secretary for a patent attorney.

An Episcopalian, Miss Devlin feels at home in her present job and environment.

SENIOR HOURS REDUCED

Seniors have only 15 class hours next semester instead of the 17 listed in the catalog. Reason for this is that the present Seniors had Christian Education 801 -- Catechism -- in their Junior year.

CLASS NEWS

Senior

Class President Bob Grochau reports that Gerald Miller has been named chairman of the Senior Class Gift Committee.

Bill Rittberger has been selected to head the new Senior Class Program Committee. The Committee hopes to present three programs which will be of interest to Seniors preparing for the parish ministry. Panel discussions and presentations by speakers will form part of the agenda.

Senior Class Social Committee will plan the refreshments for the various Senior functions this year. Paul Buehrle is chairman.

George Fehr, chairman of the Senior Class Photograph Committee, has announced that Senior's pictures will be taken on Thursday, Nov. 4. Exact time for the sittings will be announced later. All photographs are to be ready by Christmas.

Middle

Art Henne, Middle Class president, has announced some appointments for the Senior Banquet: Program, Carl Weaver; Dinner, John Ziegler. The Middlers are traditionally responsible for the dinner and program honoring graduating seniors.

Junior

Bill Jensen, Junior Class president, has announced appointments and elections for the class: Bill Hunter, Gift and Card committee; Joe

Holt, Bookstore committee; Walt Hitchcock, social chairman; Jim Haney, secretary-treasurer; and Martin Acker, athletic chairman.

Juniors lost a volleyball game to the Seniors, but won over the Middlers in a two-day tournament.

FACULTY NOTES

Mr. Elmer Zieber has brought his wisdom and humor back to campus after an absence of several months last year.

Although he hasn't completely recovered from the effects of his serious illness, his strength is gradually returning. He has assumed his duties as teacher of voice and choir director.

A brief, but critical, illness necessitated a delicate operation for Dr. Theodore Tappert early in August. Rapid recovery has made it possible for him to carry his normal teaching load.

Professor and Mrs. Erich Voehringer, newest faculty members, were honored guests at a faculty dinner this fall. Although Dr. Voehringer taught during last spring's term, his family did not move on campus until after the term had ended.

MATRICULATION HELD

The annual matriculation of new students was held in the chapel on October 27. The address was given by Dr. Bagger.

WIVES HEAR MRS. AMMON

With a good representation of Middler and Senior "old-timers" and the Junior's wives, the Wives' Club opened its 1954-55 season on October 14.

Elected at this meeting, to complete the list of officers, were secretary Margie Gibbs, and editorial representative Lea Messner. The other officers for the year were elected at the April meeting: Helen Blank, president; Marion Hinman, 1st Vice President; Chris Haversat, 2nd Vice President; Evelyn Neilssen, Treasurer.

Lively discussion was stimulated by the speaker at the Oct. meeting, Mrs. George B. Ammon, President of the Women's Auxiliary of the Seminary and member of the Educational Division of the WMS. Mrs. Ammon presented an account of the history, organization, purposes, and accomplishments of the Women's Auxiliary. The value and effectiveness of this 13,500 member organization was brought to the wives by the use of such examples as the fact that during its 15-year existence the Auxiliary has contributed over \$155,000 for such projects as renovation of the Main Dormitory, the refectory, the North Dormitory, and the Library. Plans for the future appear to be equally ambitious.

The Executive Committee of the Club is planning a series of workshops similar to those of last year, in addition to the regular meetings and "fun sessions". Next meeting is Thurs., Nov. 11.

PARENTHOOD LECTURES
TO CONTINUE

Recognizing that Mt. Airy seminarians will one day have to deal with the biological factor in marriage counseling, the Pennsylvania League for Planned Parenthood presented the first of a series of four lectures on Oct. 19.

Dr. S. Leon Israel's talk on "Reproduction" was followed by: "Infertility and Abortion" on Oct. 26. "Premarital Education" -- Nov. 2, "Child Spacing" -- Nov. 9.

The full series, to be presented in room 1, Hagan Hall, are open to all students.

PLPP offers eight lectures in all, geared to cope with the problems of marriage and marriage counseling which the pastor will encounter in sects education and marriage and family counseling.

Mt. Airy's faculty selected four of the eight lectures offered, choosing those which deal with the biological factor and supplement the psychological factors dealt with in Seminary courses.

WRITING SEMINAR SCHEDULED

Representatives of the Board of Publication and its editorial staff will be on campus Thursday evening, Nov. 18, and Friday afternoon, Nov. 19, to conduct a "Creative Writing" seminar and workshop. This experimental program is open to faculty and student participation.

DELEGATES TO BE SENT
TO IOWA ALS MEETING

Mt. Airy will again send student representatives to the annual Conference of the Association of Lutheran Seminarians.

This year's conference, to be held at Wartburg Seminary (ALC), Dubuque, Iowa, will dwell on the theme, "The Gospel Breaks the Barriers."

Delegates from Mt. Airy will prepare a study paper dealing with the international barriers.

BOOKS FOR HOH COLLECTION TO BE
PURCHASED

Mt. Airy students were handed a questionnaire this month in an effort to determine books to be placed in the Hoh Memorial Library collection.

Of the funds collected two years ago for the Hoh Memorial, \$270 yet remains for the book purchases. This is to be the final act of the Memorial Committee, headed by George Fehr.

The T.V. set, card table, and chairs in the Hoh Memorial Lounge were purchased with the other half of the fund.

Books for the library collection are to be chosen by the students from the many serious, modern books available today. It is to include essays, novels, poetry, and drama.

After questionnaires have been returned, books most in demand will be purchased. Any balance remaining will be set aside to enlarge this collection at a later date.

LAZARETH IS NEW LECTURER

Mt. Airy is privileged to have for a semester Mr. William H. Lazareth, lecturer in the department of systematic theology.

Upon completion of his undergraduate studies at Princeton University, this native New Yorker spent one year studying at the Harvard Law School. The following year he came to Mt. Airy for a semester's study.

Receiving a two-year leave of absence from the Seminary Mr. Lazareth worked in Germany with the Lutheran World Federation's services to refugees and displaced persons.

Returning to Mt. Airy, Mr. Lazareth completed his seminary studies and was awarded the Samuel Trexler Fellowship. This fellowship, given by the United Synod of New York and New England, provides for one year of study abroad. Mr. Lazareth chose to study in the department of systematic theology of the University of Tübingen in Germany.

At present, Mr. Lazareth is a candidate for a Ph. D. degree at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. He has completed his residence requirements there in the field of doctrine and ethics. In February, he will leave for the University of Lund, Sweden. During the spring and summer he will be engaged there in his dissertation research on Luther's social ethics.

SECOND LARGEST CLASS ENTERS SEMINARY THIS SEMESTER

The fall semester got under way after an orientation program which introduced 54 new students, the second largest group admitted in the seminary's history, to life at Mt. Airy. Two of the group are transfers- one a middler, and one a senior.

This semester's enrollment stands at 154, including 56 seniors and 46 middleers. Represented in the total student body are 16 ULC synods and 48 colleges. A total of 56 students are married.

An interesting picture is presented by the Junior class. It represents 13 synods - The Ministerium and New York and New England vie for top honors with 16 students each. A total of 23 schools and universities are represented; Muhlenberg's 14 students retain their school's first place, followed by Wagner's nine and Gettysburg's five.

DEATH TAKES WILLIAM ARNHOLT

Mr. William Arnholt, engineer in charge of the heating plant, died Oct. 15, after an illness of several weeks. Cause of death was diagnosed as a coronary occlusion.

"Bill" was a familiar figure on campus. His faithful services and friendly manner will be greatly missed.

President Bagger conducted the funeral service on Oct. 18.

ISM PRESENTS PLANS

Campus ISM committee will sponsor a dinner meeting and panel discussion here on Nov. 3. In addition to Mt. Airy representatives, students and faculty will attend from Eastern Baptist Seminary and the Philadelphia Divinity School.

The meeting has been planned to encourage activity among the seminaries in this area and to provide opportunity for open discussion of important matters of Church doctrine and practice "The Christian Ministry" is to be the subject at the November meeting. Dr. Martin Heinecken will represent Mt. Airy's faculty.

CHEY BUILDS DRIVEWAYS

Students returning after summer vacation with visions of repainted buildings or a dormitory for married students were startled to find new pavement on the Graduate Hall and powerhouse driveways and new and wider pavement on the library circle.

The purpose of repaving the library circle was not to provide additional parking facilities, as rumored, but to put the finishing touches to what already existed. It was formerly exceedingly narrow and, during rainstorms, muddy.

Cost of the entire project, last on the CHEY program, was \$14,500. This brings to \$19,000 the CHEY total used to make campus improvements.

BUT IT IS BY THEIR PRAYERS . . .

William R. Maki

How I wept at Thy hymns and canticles, touched to the quick by the voices of Thy melodius Church. The voices flowed into my ears, and the truth distilled into my heart, and thence there streamed forth a devout emotion, and my tears randedown, and I found relief therein. Only a little while ago the Church of Milan had begun to make use of this kind of consolation and exhortation -- the voices and hearts of brethren singing together with great devotion.

St. Augustine, Confessions, ix. 6 and 7

Among the most fascinating attributes of a budding seminarian is his practical omniscience in disposing problems of the Church. This, next to his uncanny facility in the analysis of personality, accounts for his status as a unique individual. It is devoutly hoped that this paper will not solve all ecclesiastical or secular difficulties. It is only an attempt to face up to one side of a problem which confronts every novitiate as he moves toward his ordination day.

The backdrop of the problem is one which involves the world. Every generation has, or invents a peculiar problem. Ours is no exception. The word grows heavy with overuse, but it is usually admitted that the condition of our civilization is secular. A vast collection of literature describes the twentieth century as one of despair, anxiety, given to aspirin, and other symptomatic variations which paint the picture. Without attempting to resolve the problem at one writing, I should like to suggest that the battle is not merely one of the future. It is intensively ours.

It is no secret that secularism has made inroads among Christians of every station. Observation and inquiry produce some remarkable definitions of the Church and the Christian life. They are remarkable for their emptiness and stark humanism. Behind the definitions Christianity may be described as a myth, prayer as a simple psychological diversion, the Church as an ethical humanitarian society. In secular Christianity, most of us have learned that the parish minister

is often forced to play the role of the small, unsuccessful businessman and promoter. He is led to play overly much at the 'numbers game', and he is plied for psychological (but not spiritual) counsel. We are not destined to watch the rising tide of secularism. We are to be plunged into it; there we shall either flounder, or learn to swim.

Sandbags of despair and pessimism will not help. Definitions of the Church and the Christian life are insufficient. Learning to swim demands action, and that action should begin here. If a young pastor has not already learned to swim, it is not likely that he will be successful as life-guard or swimming instructor.

Within this community, we know little of the 'outside'. Nevertheless, it is not absurd to assume that we cannot combat secularism among Christians with more secularism. If a seminarian wishes to flower into something more than club president, or entertainment chairman for an ethical culture society, he will want to look in another direction.

Perhaps it is an oversimplification, but it may be that the Christian action against secularism is prayer. Prayer is the fundamental activity of the Church in communion with God, and in ministering to the people of God. It is prayer, not promotion, which is the efficient weapon of the Church.

Reduced from battlecry to practical application, this is only to say that the weapon of the Church must be used, not only by the faithful people, but by the clergy. It is easy to preach about prayer, but there is nothing so convincing as a life of prayer, practiced by the preacher. If that life is not practiced here and now, it is not likely that it will begin at some future date, when all good intentions are expected to fall into place.

What is the life of prayer? In our household of faith, that is something which we must decide for ourselves. Without obligation to a discipline, we find a strong suggestion in the public worship of our communion. The Lutheran Liturgy presents us with an ordered rhythm of devotion which moves in definite patterns and cycles, through seasons and festivals, from Sunday to Sunday, and from day to day. The ordinary patterns never vary, forming an essential diet of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. The movable structure has many moods and subjects, each a variation on the theme of God active in the lives of His holy people. The members of the Body of Christ are drawn into the saving activity of the Head, becoming one with Him as they celebrate Him. The drama moves from Expectation to Incarnation, from Passion and Sacrificial Death to Resurrection, from Ascension to the sending of the Comforter and the Commencement of the Church. Throughout the drama, the faithful people are edified by the memory of those who have

walked before them in the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. The public life of the Church guides us through the unvarying, but lively movement of Office and Sacrament; and within the framework, the everchanging action of the Church year.

In seeking a desirable expression of the life of prayer, we may well begin with what we already have. Our seminary community offers a most adequate expression of corporate devotion in daily offices and frequent celebration of the Holy Communion. Here we see the balance of Word and Sacrament, proclamation and communion, edification and prayer.

It seems logical that private devotion should take its cue from the corporate worship of the Church. In this way, the member of the Body of Christ perpetuates his common life with the Head and the other members, even when he is alone. When he does this, he moves ahead in the drama, becoming participant, where he may have been mere observer. Like everything else in the Church, this is a spiritual adventure which is not described, but lived. Participation in a rich worship life is not found without pain, but the discipline can become a joyful rhythm of prayer and praise. The spirit is contagious, and one who thus occupies his life cannot escape a full Christian experience with God, and with his fellow members in the Body of Christ.

Whether one should find his private devotional life in an ordered discipline is a matter of choice. All-inclusive method, form, continuity and beauty are deliberate ingredients, as in public worship, and some may prefer a more spontaneous type of prayer. An adequate scheme of prayer would include psalmody, extensive lections in the Scriptures, and continuity with the Church Year. It would also include prayers of praise, thanksgiving, adoration, petition, intercession, confession and assurance of pardon. If one can assemble a spontaneous devotion which includes these elements, he is a wise and pious man. However, most of us need an organized, practical method of prayer, which guides and instructs us in communing with God. A well planned devotion will be so complete that it inspires further meditation, contemplation, and interior prayer. It will give greater meaning to public Office and Sacrament, and in turn will be nourished by both. If practiced more than occasionally, the life of prayer will incorporate the member into an appetite for the infinite majesty and love of God, which cannot be satiated, except in constant prayer.

Is it too much to suggest that a seminarian pray frequently throughout the day -- perhaps every few hours? Such a project demands ingenuity and research, if it is to be an ordered plan. Practical suggestions for use of the Common

Service Book as a breviary are found in E.T. Horn's Altar and Pew (pp. 47 ff.). Presently lacking the proposed Lutheran office book, any seminarian is equipped to prepare one for himself. There are treasures in the Common Service Book which are virtually untapped, and may be used with profit (CSB, pp. 191 ff., Invitatories, Antiphons, etc.; pp. 236 ff., General Prayers: Litany, Suffrages, Bidding Prayer, etc.). The basic structures are well established in the Common Service Book, and will point the way to expanded construction of an office book.

This is not a project for partisans. A servant of God is a servant of the Church. It is within the Church that he will combat what we have called secularism. Secularism is nothing more than a perverted emphasis upon the things of the world, which seeks to smother the life of the spirit. In suggesting a certain type of prayer, it should be remembered that the important element is prayer, not a type of prayer. The familiar story of St. Ambrose may point the way. In his day, the Arian heresy was the enemy of Christianity. As Bishop of Milan, Ambrose was threatened with arrest, and with usurpation of the cathedral church, by the Arian, Auxentius. In the time of crisis, he gathered his people together in the cathedral for vigils of prayer which continued day and night. As the story goes, it was at this time that he taught the people to sing psalms and hymns of his own composition, to relieve the fear and tension created by the threats of Auxentius. The soldiers of the Arian Emperor watched outside the church, but did not enter, except to join the people at their prayers. It was that kind of churchmanship which at length triumphed over the Arian threat. The Christian Church did not fight Arians by becoming Arian. Rather, the Arians were finally converted by the Faith which would not compromise. Secularism is as dread a foe as the old heresy, but its destructive force will be cut off if Christians use all the gifts and graces with which they are endowed. The life of prayer is not the least among them.

The poor are my defenders, but it is by their prayers; blind though they are and lame, weak and old, yet are they stronger than the stoutest warriors.

St. Ambrose, Serm. contr. Auxent. 33
(Quoted in Dudden, Saint Ambrose, v.I, p. 290.)