The Seminarian

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ST. MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

John L. Gallagher

"And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." Twelve specially appointed men. But one rebelled and betrayed the Master. Now after the Resurrection and Ascension there were but eleven--one short of the chosen Twelve who were so ably instructed to feed the Master's sheep. One more must be added. Who shall it be? Not just anyone, but someone who had accompanied the other Apostles "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out" among them, from His Baptism to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension. Why must this someone meet these requirements? In order that he might be a fit witness to the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Two men seemed to be quite acceptable: one Joseph, called Barsabas, and the other, Matthias. By prayer and the casting of lots, Matthias was selected. Henceforth he was to be numbered among the Twelve.

Our knowledge of St. Matthias is scant. Indeed, his name appears but in one passage of Scripture. (Acts 1: 23-26) Even tradition has very little to say concerning him, and what tradition does say most authorities admit is extremely unreliable. But we do know that Matthias knew the Saviour personally, and because he knew Him, he was more than willing to serve Him.

The Master is always one short of the number required to feed His flock. His own sheep need always to be fed and tended, and multitudes in the world need yet to be brought into the fold of their True Shepherd. That is why you and I are here at Mt. Airy Seminary--to fill in the perpetually depleted Twelve. We will stand in the line of the "glorious company of the Apostles" by virtue of the fact that we will preach what they preached: the saving Gospel of the Crucified and Risen Lord. It follows, therefore, that we too should be found possessing the same qualifications which allowed St. Matthias to be numbered among the Apostles. We must know the Master personally, being in constant communion with Him in prayer and worship; welcoming Him in Word and Sacrament. We must know Him to be our constant Companion. We must find Him to be exactly what He shows Himself to be: our Saviour. Then and only then, can we like St. Matthias worthily feed Christ's sheep by witnessing to the Gospel of Him Who we <u>know</u> as our Lord and Saviour. This, then, is truly Apostolic succession.

*

(St. Matthias the Apostle's Day is February 24.)

TWO ABERRATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Dr. Theodore G. Tappert

Two interpretations of the Christian hope currently loom large in American Christianity. Both are advocated with great sincerity and personal sacrifice. I propose here to describe them briefly and in sharp contrast.

I

The first may be denominated an Adventist view. It is propagated not only by Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and a variety of people who call themselves Adventists, but also by many Bible institutions and schools whose premillennial teachings have colored the thinking of some of our people. Three things may be lifted out as characteristic of all Adventist expectations.

The first is a pessimistic interpretation of our age. This world is hopeless. It is ruled by Satan. It is dominated by evil. It can only become worse. This is so because God has determined that it shall be so. This is God's "plan of the ages." Nothing can change it. The world must become worse before it can become better, and therefore we should desire it to become worse and glory in its decline. We are living in a time of famines and earthquakes, wars and pestilences. These are all evidences that the end is near. Any attempts to improve conditions or reform society are contrary to God's plan. The United Nations, for example, "came forth from the abyss." It is wicked defiance on man's part to do anything but wait and hope for the end.

The second characteristic of Adventist teaching is that in the very near future Christ will come again to destroy this evil world. He will appear at the head of a military force to wreak vengeance on the wicked world. In the words of I. M. Haldeman, Christ will appear "with the eyes of one who is indignant, in whose veins beats the pulse of hot anger ... He comes forth as one who no longer seeks either friendship or love ...His garments are dipped in blood, the blood of others. He descends that he may shed the blood of men ...He will enunciate his claim by terror and might. He will write it in the blood of his foes. He comes like the treader of the winepress, and the grapes are the bodies of men. He will tread and trample in his fury till the blood of men shall fill the earth... In this way the kingdom is to come, not by the preaching of the Gospel."

The third characteristic of Adventist teaching is that, the evil world having been destroyed, the millennial kingdom will be established. Details in the picture vary, but gener-

ally speaking this kingdom will be like the ancient kingdom of the Jews. Christ will be enthroned as an earthly monarch and the elect will share in his reign. Under Christ's iron hand and rule the ancient temple will be restored. Jewish ceremonies and sacrifices will be reintroduced, and the feast of the tabernacles will again be observed annually. This is the Adventist hope: that this world will be annihilated by an impending cataclysmic act of God, whereupon a few elect persons will serve him in his millennial kingdom.

There are a number of observations that need to be made if we are to understand this Adventist hope.

Notice that it claims to be biblical. Adventists are champions of the authority of the Bible. They are among the foremost defenders of a mechanical theory of verbal inspiration. They boast of taking the Bible literally. It is of some importance to notice this because it thoroughly blasts the popular notion that a theory of verbal inspiration guarantees the truth. As a matter of fact, the trouble with the Adventists is that their use of the Bible is uncritical. They confuse poetry with prose. They take literally the apocalyptic imagery of the Bible. They also confuse prophecy with prediction and concentrate their attention on the peripheral rather than the central. In keeping with this tendency they give almost exclusive attention to a few portions of the Bible, notably the book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John.

Then there is another thing to be observed. The pessimistic view of the present which is characteristic of Adventists gives their interpretation plausibility today. We are living in evil days and everybody knows it. The power of sin and Satan in our world requires little demonstration to anyone who runs and reads. The note of hopelessness and despair lies near the surface of today's climate of opinion. Accordingly it is relatively easy to persuade men to give up in the face of great odds and to denounce all human efforts at reform. It must be conceded that the Adventists are right in acknowledging the power of sin not only in individuals but also in the institutions, even the best institutions, of society. But they press this so far as to deny the goodness of God's creation, to reject the activity of God in human history, and to cut the nerve of all ethical action.

And then there is still another thing to observe. In its extreme forms Adventism is faith in a plan rather than faith in a person. To be sure, God is not forgotten. He is the designer of the plan, its prime mover as it were, and Christ plays an important role in its unfoldment. But God's "plan of the ages" will take its course quite impersonally. The faith of the Adventist is pinned on the plan rather than on God.

II

The second view once assumed concrete form in the Unitarian and Universalist churches which built on foundations of an earlier rationalism. Today its influence is far more extensive. It is the religion of the Golden Rule, the religion of do-goodism, the religion of service clubs and fraternal orders which has invaded our churches and the thinking of our laity to an astonishing degree.

A rough description of its characteristic emphases can be attempted. Christianity is interpreted in terms of ideals or values. We are living in a moral universe, and so we must conform with its laws if we are not to destroy ourselves. What these are we can learn from the Ten Commandments or from the Sermon on the Mount. But since the law is written in men's hearts, we can also learn to know them in other ways. Such virtues as reverence, honesty, and temperance are simply self-evident. But in the Bible these moral laws come to us with the added sanction of religion. So we have in the Sermon on the Mount a picture of the good life, life as it ought to be lived. More than that, it is a blueprint of a perfect social order, for if mankind will only put into practice the ideals set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, the ideal human brotherhood will be achieved. If each of us does unto others what we would that others should do unto us, racial tensions will disappear, economic conflicts will settle themselves, political problems which harass us will find a solution, wars will cease, disease will be curbed, famine will no longer occur, and universal happiness and prosperity will be achieved. This is sometimes identified with what is called the American way of life. When the world is made safe for democracy and capitalism, the millenium will in effect be ushered in.

There are several aspects of this interpretation of the Christian hope which deserve special attention.

The first is the use which it makes of the Bible. As the Adventists concentrate attention on those portions of the Bible which are apocalyptic, so the moral idealists concentrate their attention on those portions of the Bible which are hortatory, which suggest standards of Christian life. Besides the Sermon on the Mount, the prophets of social justice in the Old Testament are accorded special honor. The rest of the Bible is not expressly rejected. It is for the most part ignored. Many portions of the Bible in appointed lessons of the church year, and in the liturgy itself, present problems. Preferably these are kept in the archaic language of the King James Bible so that they may not be disturbing. Whatever is objectionable if taken literally must be preserved in an esthetic framework out of respect for tradition, but in such a way as not to obscure what is central: "the moral grandeur of Christianity's

ideals of human brotherhood and service."

A second thing to observe is what happens to Christ. He is not the wrathful avenger who comes to destroy the wicked world, as the Adventists picture him. He is rather a gentle teacher, the patient pedagogue who expounded the highest ideals conceivable to mankind. But he is more than this. He is an example to men. His life is a demonstration that moral perfection is possible in this world. His "biography" is a great success story.

A third thing to observe is that while the Adventist s have a pessimistic outlook upon this world, which is hopeless in their eyes, the moral idealists are optimistic. The notion of divine judgment, which plays such a large role in Adventism, is neutralized. Man is still a sinner, to be sure, but he sins in falling short of his own ideals. His sin can be outgrown by resolutely pursuing what is good, true, and beautiful, by "practicing the virtues." Human nature is inherently good, and so emphasis is placed on evolution rather than regeneration, on education rather than redemption. Every day in every way we are getting better and better. There are relapses, of course. But progress will come when we try harder to live up to our ideals.

Ultimately this is a man-centered religion. Noble as its moral strivings undoubtedly are, the actor is not God, but man. Man has it in his power to achieve or fail. And now, with atomic power, man (depending on how he uses it) either ushers in the millennium or annihilates this world. Not even the end of the world is any longer in God's hands.

*

bull session.....

" But that isn't so,
it just doesn't follow.
For if..... " and so into the night.

Students with new fondled pipes,
nursed by frequent flame.
Minds, concupiscent.
Egos, truculent.
Words, free flowing.

What is said may have been said before,
the cradle of ideas is ladened with straw.
But there is a jewel within,
and it must be uncovered.

John R. Kulsar

ZIEGLER NAMED BOCKSTORE MANAGER

Middler John Ziegler has been selected to manager the student bookstore for the calendar year 1955.

Chosen last November by the bookstore committee, John has had several years of retail business experience. A graduate of Muhlenberg, the new manager is from Lancaster, but now makes his home in Mt. Airy. Although married and living off campus, John spends many hours each day in the store.

Formerly manager of the Muhlenberg Dramatics Club, he has served on the Seminary social committee and is currently coaching the "Angels."

Assuming his new position, Ziegler requests that the students and faculty make suggestions of books which they think should be stocked in the co-operative store.

BANQUET PLANS SET

Senior Banquet chairman Lou Kistler has announced that final plans have been drafted for the April 22 event.

To be held at Advocate Church, the program will feature 12 minute skits put on by the junior and middle classes.

The speaker has been secured, but according to tradition, his name will not be revealed until later.

Faculty and administration members and their wives will be invited along with all students and students' wives.

SCHERER TO SPEAK AT COMMENCEMENT

Dr. Paul Scherer, prominent Lutheran preacher and professor, is to be the speaker at the May 13 commencement.

Formerly pastor of Holy Trinity Church, New York, Dr. Scherer is now professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary.

It has been twelve years since Dr. Scherer last spoke at Mt. Airy.

SENIORS HEAR SPEAKER

Members of the senior class met for their second discussion program on Feb. 16, when Mrs. Norma Carson, former magistrate and policewoman, spoke on juvenile delinquency.

Dr. John Doberstein acted as moderator.

THE SEMINARIAN

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

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THE CERTAINTY OF BEING:

an apologetic in ontology

John R. Kulsar

Whenever the question is asked, Am I? a general snicker, an uplifted eyebrow, and a condescending aside are usually given as appropriate answers. However, any person merely conversant with the tenor of systematic theology today cannot help but feel that this same problem has raised its discomforting head. The "abyss of nothingness," the concept of "dread," and the "ontological shock," are all intimately involved with the very real possibility of non-being. The question, Am I? is now posed in the form of the more sophisticated interrogation, Could I not be? And indeed this question is very much with us.

The certainty of being is the issue at stake. For too long now the certainty of being has been given up as an insoluble mystery and merely assumed to be so by both Christian and profane thinkers. Yet, it cannot be denied that all speculative and empirical thought is vitiated, if not rendered meaningless, if the thinker cannot be posited with any amount of certainty. Philosophers, Christian and profane, have sought to establish the certainty of man's existence by logical, sensual, and intuitional methods. But there remains ultimate uncertainty. Being cannot be asserted with any logical certainty because the I that thinks cannot be both the I that is proven to be an I because it thinks and the I that proves itself to be. Logical integrity would declare that such an adventure is merely begging the question, that is, proving the existence of that which is originally presupposed.

But neither can being be posited with any certainty as the result of sense perception. That I feel, smell, touch, see, and hear is descriptive of what I perceive myself perceiving. But whether I who perceives is something other than a mere perceiver, who perceives himself perceiving in infinite regression, remains uncertain.

Likewise, there can be no intuitive certainty of my being. Even though I am conscious of myself, that I seek to persist, and that I value myself, what certainty is there that the I that seeks to persist is not an illusion, or that the I that values itself is not deluding itself?

The truth is that by myself I cannot prove myself to be. But then, must the hypothesis, that I am, remain forever uncertain and so the validity of the human enterprise be suspect? For the profane thinker who asserts his ultimate autonomy there can be no certainty of being. For the Christian thinker, however, such is not the case. The Christian thinker denies his

ultimate autonomy and confesses his dependence upon God. The ground of existence, the certainty of being, is not located within man but in God, in the Creator-creature relationship which God establishes with man. For man to assert the certainty of his being, he must first declare the existence of God and his creaturely dependence upon him. But the question may arise, How do you know that the God upon whom you posit your existence exists? The Christian who has been confronted personally by God declares categorically, by faith, that God is. But faith must not be understood as a self generative principle, and so perhaps illusory, but as a man's total response to the presence of God in his life. Faith can never be an illusion because, though the locus of its existence is man, still it is brought forth, nurtured, and sanctified by God. Faith is not a quantitative actuality capable of development, but it is a gift, given with creatureliness but which finds its true actualization in response to God's love. Consequently, the certainty of being must be stated in the passive voice. I AM LOVED BY GOD, THEREFORE I AM. The certainty of my being is grounded in my relationship to God in love, revealed in the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Christ, and apprehended by faith, that is, by a positive response to God's meeting me with his love and demanding my love. I am because God loves me. That I will be forever lay in the eternal nature and boundlessness of God's love for me.

Thus the certainty of my being lies in the truth, apprehended in faith, that I am loved, that I am the object of God's love. That man is the object of God's love is not a motive for quietism, as has been the case with monastic spearatism. For it is one thing to say that a man is loved by God, and another thing to say why God created man. True, man is the object of God's love, for upon this the certainty of his being depends. But man was created by God, not to be an object but to be a subject. Man is created to love, to love God and his fellowmen. Man is created for vocation, not a quietism or separateness. Man's vocation is to love, and a man fulfills his destiny, that is, what God would have him be, when he loves. This vocation to love, just as the response of faith, is not generated by the self, but it is born in rejoinder to the love of God.

It is time that Christian theologians stop exalting the possibility of non-being as the normative Christian experience. Our generation needs a more positive approach to life. The Christian expression of hope in a time of so much hopelessness ought not to be the addition of more futility by the persistent reiteration of the possibility of non-being. But Christian hopefulness ought rather to be a positive assertion of the certainty of being, grounded in God's love. You are loved, therefore, you are. With this as the basis for its ontology, the

Christian witness can authenticate the human situation with the certainty of its existence and challenge it to accept its vocation of love.

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If You're Considering an Internship . . .

AN EVALUATION

Paul F. Bosch

LAB has asked me to write about 500 words on my experience as intern, for whatever value it may be to those who are considering a year's field work. My perspective is very close, but I would recommend an internship to you anyway.

You get a fine idea of what work in the parish ministry involves, first hand, in a way that simply could not be got out of books. You work as an apprentice learning the techniques of the trade, and you learn from a man who is not only more experienced, but older. Maybe you will preach twice a week. Certainly you will have other responsibilities; inquire about liability insurance and clean out the sacristy and help install the new organ and check the General Rubrics about paraments for Septuagesima and type the newspaper notices. And the people of the parish accept the intern as a learner in his job. It is not as if you are an ordained assistant pastor, although you may actually do more than an assistant.

You meet people in the middle of their lives. in their homes, as they live, and this is quite different from meeting them in church or at meetings or on the street. People certainly become real to you when you meet them where they live. (Among their cats or African violets!) And you become real to them, which probably is just as important. One of the results is that in your preaching you do not talk so much any more about Man or Mankind.

There are other benefits, too, more or less important depending on what you need. You have one more year to mature and dry off behind the ears and think matters through in the light of present calling. You will most likely be grateful for that chance. In most internships you will be supporting yourself completely, maybe for the first time in your life. The one-year breather from school may mean that you will appreciate your last year more, and your teachers, and what they are trying to do. And there is the knowledge that you are filling a need in the parish where you have been called, although it is true that you get much more than you can give in such situations.

For Armchair Adventurers . . .

TRAVEL THROUGH EUROPE WITH ANDERSON AND LATOURETTE

By Lee Mull

During his three month European tour with Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette, George Anderson "...picked up a lot of useless information." Imagine, if you can, a journey through nine European countries, interviews with important religious and governmental officials, dinner at the English House of Lords, etc.; and during this time, George "...picked up a lot of useless information."

Dr. Latourette, former professor of Missions and Oriental History at Berkeley College, Yale University, embarked upon this trip with a number of goals before him. His primary motive in going to Europe was an invitation to lecture in the Scandinavian universities. Dr. Latourette, who has gained international recognition as a lecturer and historian, also planned to prepare a bibliography from European libraries for his forthcoming book on Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to this, Professor Latourette was interested in sounding-out European reaction to his latest work, A History of Christianity, and in observing the life of the churches in Europe.

George's duties throughout the trip were many and varied. As the business manager, he was responsible for paying all bills, securing tickets and other necessary papers, and keeping up with the plane schedules. Making and keeping all appointments and social contacts, George was also the social secretary for Dr. Latourette. During the numerous interviews with church and state officials, George served as a question and answer recorder. All this he did while serving as "traveling companion" to Dr. Latourette.

Leaving New York on March 4, Dr. Latourette and George flew to Denmark. There, they spent their time in the various institutions of the church. Highlighting their stay in Denmark were interviews with one of the Lutheran bishops and the minister of religion. This latter position is a cabinet post occupied by a woman. The Danish "way of life" is marked by ease and gaiety, according to George. The people are extremely hospitable and appear to like Americans. As George explains, "The Danes are friendly to Americans, but not to America."

Leaving the gay Danish people, the two American travellers flew to Sweden where they visited the three important university towns of Lund, Uppsala, and Stockholm. While in Sweden, they met with the Lutheran bishops Nygren and Aulen. George's impressions of Sweden are strikingly different from those of Denmark. In Sweden, a dinner guest is required to bring flow-

ers for his hostess and to thank the host and hostess at three specifically designated points during the course of the evening. Formality reigns.

George observes that the Swedish people express this formality even in their folk songs which have a strange, sad quality about them; and yet they also appear to be quite envious of the Danes and their gayness. Stockholm, says George, was the "nicest city" which he visited in Europe. The proximity of the sea and the multitude of water-ways within the city have gained for Stockholm the title of "the Venice of the North." The city is attractive to visitors because of its quaint old-world flavor, and the soft pastel colors which are predominant in the city's make-up.

Entering the city of Helsinki, Finland, was analogous to a visit to another world. A snowy, cold climate similar to the Arctic regions, and dark fir trees place Finland in a category all by itself. This is also the case with the Finnish language which has fifteen cases and no prepositions. It does not belong to the Western European family of languages, but resembles the Hungarian tongue.

Highlighting their stay in Finland was a visit to a folk high school, north of Helsinki. This school, which was a Lutheran World Federation project, was also designed for advanced study in the field of Christian religion. The nearness of Russia and the Finnish attitude toward the Communists, according to George, are especially interesting. The Finns have little fear of the Russians. In two wars they have successfully defended themselves against the Russians, and, therefore, they regard the American's fear of Russia as a simple case of hysteria.

Back to Sweden for ten days, more lectures, meetings with Swedish youth groups -- and, then, on to Oslo, Norway. This land of mountains, fjords, snow, and skis is George's "favorite European country." Largely because of the climate and other geographic conditions, the Norwegians (at least, it seemed so to George) are completely preoccupied with the sport of skiing. Dr. Latourette and George visited the west coast fishing village of Bergen where the continuous rain is as much of a joke as the wind in Chicago or the smog in California.

From Norway, Dr. Latourette and George flew to southern Germany where Professor Latourette lectured in five German universities. Most impressive sight there was the many wooded areas in the early spring.

Following a few short visits to various points in France, the travellers visited the historic spots of Belgium. Of particular interest there is the American Jesuit Priest's College in Louvain, where the visitors were hospitably received.

After a week-end in London, they travelled to Scotland, where they remained for two weeks. While there, they visited

WIVES OFFER SERVICE

A test-plan of service was decided upon at the Wives' Club Jan. 13 meeting. Volunteer groups of wives will donate time to reading and writing letters for the elderly people at the Germantown Home. If the program is successful, the wives hope to serve other institutions of the church.

Establishment of a "Library Fund" was also agreed upon at this meeting. Books will be purchased which will be of value to future women of the parsonage. A reading list is to be compiled, listing books and other publications of value.

In January the wives heard two speakers tell of the work of women in the church. Jan. 13 Miss Josephine Darmstaetter of the Women's Missionary Society spoke concerning the organization, aims, and activities of the only officially recognized women's auxiliary of the ULC.

At the Jan. 18 workshop Sister Anna Melville gave the wives an insight into the work of the diaconate. Sister Anna is currently serving as the parish worker for St. Paul's Church, Ardmore.

"The Minister and his Wife in a Suburban Community" was the topic chosen by the Rev. William Elbert of St. Matthew Church, Springfield, for the Jan. 31 workshop.

Professor John W. Doberstein spoke Feb. 10 about "Prayer."

Election of officers is scheduled for the regular meeting, March 10, in Hagan Hall.

-- Lea Messner

FACULTY FAMILIES TO BE FETED

Beginning this month, members of the faculty and their families will be invited to enjoy a refectory dinner. One family is to be entertained each week. Purpose of this program is that all faculty families may be entertained by the student body.

SIX ADDED TO ROLLS

Six men have been admitted to the seminary this Jan.
George Howard Brand: Wittenberg
Peter Duncan Fish: Wagner
William Arnold Fluck: Muhlenberg
John Werner Hendler: Temple
Rodger Andrew Krause: Muhlenberg
George Paul Zinsman: Wagner

For Armchair Adventurers . . .

the schools at St. Andrews, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. A motor trip through the Scottish highlands completed their stay. Back to London -- weekend at Cambridge -- guests at lunch at the House of Lords on May 31 -- lunch on June 1 at Johnnie's.

And all this George calls "a lot of useless information!"

ANGEL ANTICS

Highlighting the Seminary sports scene are the Mt. Airy "Angels," the hardwood five under the tutorship of John Ziegler. With a 9-1 league record, the Angels traveled to Allentown Feb. 5 to play the Muhlenberg freshmen. The Mules won a scrappy match, 73-45.

Despite the Mules' speed, height, shooting ability, and polish, the Angels quickly dumped in five fast shots to the Mules' two. Losing 10-4 after the first few minutes of play, the Mules soon evened the score, took the lead, and kept it throughout the game.

High scorer for the Seminary five was Larry Hand with 11, closely followed by Don Adickes with 10.

In addition to scheduled games, the Angels won over Philadelphia Bible Institute and will tackle Eastern Baptist and Lincoln University.

Team members are: Martin Luther Acker, Don Adickes, Larry Hand, Walt Hitchcock, Lou Kistler, John Kulsar, Don Landis, Herb Piehler, Ernie Schmidt, and Jack Traugott.

SPORTS IN SHORT . . . Athletic Committee reports new ping-pong table ordered for library recreation room . . . Money for new table was to be used for repair of pool table, but cost of repair was too great . . . Intra-mural basketball tourney is expected to commence this month . . . Games to be played at the Mt. Airy Presbyterian Church. . .

STATISTICS RELEASED

Magazines are generally expected to carry vital statistics of the previous year in the first issue of the current year. THE SEMINARIAN is no exception to this accepted rule.

One full-time and one part-time faculty member were added to the seminary in 1954, bringing to 20 the total number on the faculty.

Seven students were graduated in January. Six were admitted at the same time.

Britons drank 10,604,000 gallons of hard liquor in 1954. They bet $20,600,000 on the nation's 44 football pools.

The Bible contains 3,586,469 letters, 773,692 words, 31,173 verses, 1,189 chapters, and 66 books.

Americans consumed more than 8,000,000 cases of sauerkraut and an estimated 12,000,000,000 hot dogs, according to the National Kraut Packers Association.

--D.M.B.

Apparently, accurate local candle count not available.

--A.B.

Class athletic chairmen have been asked to organize teams.

Round-robin tennis tournament to be launched next month . . . Competition to include singles and doubles . . . Volleyball intramurals listed for spring.

Athletic Committee: Ernie Schmidt, chairman; Herb Hinman, John Ziegler, and Martin Luther Acker, class chairmen.

-- Al Schrum

A Book Review of Sorts . . .

Erich Maria Remarque's

A TIME TO LOVE AND A TIME TO DIE

L. Alex Black

It has become almost a commonplace that if one wants to prove the correctness of the existential orientation of his theology, all he need do is to seek proof texts from modern novels. This rule I want to apply here. I want briefly to consider Erich Maria Remarque's A Time to Love and a Time to Die in the light of the Christian doctrine of man.

Remarque's whole view of man, as expressed in this novel, seems to fit quite well into what you and I look upon as man's estate as a sinner. I am aware here, of course, of my trying to read too much into the author's words and plot, but then that's always the danger, isn't it? At any rate, I am not contending that Remarque's view is the Christian view, but simply that it fits well into such a view.

There is running through the entire novel the basic conception of the "lostness" of man, of his loneliness, of his total inability to help himself in circumstances beyond his control, of his life where all the cards seem to be stacked against him. This theme of man's helplessness appears again and again. German private Ernst Graeber and his fellows are fighting a losing battle on the Eastern front; the German lines are crumbling; the dead keep piling up. "It had been raining for days....The village had been fought over several times.... 'Cabbage of course! For the third time this week!'....'We're only doing our duty. And orders are orders. Aren't they?'.... The hand had ceased to respond. Graeber held it tight; that was all he could do...."

Graeber goes on leave; he returns home to find his parents missing. He meets Elizabeth Kruse. "I feel imprisoned," she tells him. "That's worse than feeling old." They live together and marry. He returns to the front.

"It seemed to him as though he had never been away." He is placed as guard over a group of Russian peasants. He throws down his rifle and releases them. "One of the men looked back and saw him. All at once the Russian had a rifle in his hand. ...Graeber saw the black hole of the muzzle....He did not feel the shot....and his eyes closed."

That's the picture Remarque paints of the lives of his hero and those about him: bleak, dreary. There are bright spots of happiness here and there, but always over them hang the dark shadows of pain, loneliness, lostness. Man is pictured as caught in a web of endless days and circumstances. From this

web he can in no way set himself free. Indeed a gloomy view. Is the author then so far wrong? I think not. Remarque's view of life corresponds closely, it seems to me, to life as it gets itself lived; at any rate, the author here has pinned down neatly the necessary elements of a tragic sense of life.

Without attempt to illustrate them here, let me simply point out that there is expressed, too, the total depravity of man and his condition as "Incurvatus in se."

With the exception of spiritual pride, all the forms of pride that the Christian Gospel condemns find their way into the story, and it is interesting to note that, whether by didactic design of the author or not, by the end of the novel each type has been in some way crushed. There is the proud S.A. commander, who thrives on and continually gloats over his power. He likes to eat and keeps a large store of rare food and drink, captured from Germany's enemies. Cruel! The commander is killed in an air raid, and his home is destroyed, all, that is, except the pantry and the wine cellar.

At the front with Graeber is a young soldier named Fresenburg who prides himself on his intellect. He has the whole thing reasoned out: life is a struggle; this is war; don't worry about your share of the blame or your role; just fight until you are killed, and death will cancel out the memory. What happens? Fresenburg is wounded and loses a leg. He has not been killed; he will have to live, and where his leg was, there will be the constant reminder of that which should have been wiped out and forever forgotten. Listen to him: "Now one's in the middle of it again. I had made a sort of pretense: that death canceled out everything and so on. That's not how it is." In the novel, pride and virtue are soon crushed, too.

There is revealed here, also, both generally and specifically, that eventual state of sinful man which Kierkegaard terms despair. The despair of weakness: witness the loyal party man, who even amid the ruins of the Russian front keeps proclaiming, "The Russians are exhausted...Our counter-offensive with the new weapons will be irresistible...Heil Hitler!"

The despair of defiance can be discovered in the soldier who follows his friend's advice: "Go out and pick up a whore and forget your misery!" Check the men's reasons for drinking: "Drink to anything you want, to this damnable life of ours, or to the fact that we are still alive." And the despair of not knowing you're in despair: how about the soldier who sleeps away his whole leave?

If the reflection cast by Remarque's books has been a dark one, well, shouldn't it be? If the modern novel is to be realistic, it can't be happy. Which man can adequately describe a heaven he doesn't know? Which man hasn't known, in a sense, hell?