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The Seminarian

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A Meditation . . .

THE NEW BETHEL

Dr. Russell D. Snyder

In the March number of The Seminarian my junior colleague, Prof. Reumann, opened our eyes to the perils of allegorical interpretation. His able and exceptionally interesting article on the relation of theological exegesis to the historical variety not only measured up to my expectations in every respect; it also impelled me to re-examine some of my old sermons on the Fourth Gospel. The mind that gave birth to the Fourth Gospel was profoundly mystical and allegorical; it saw symbolical meanings where less creative minds see only bald historical facts. Unless we take this mind-set into account, we are not interpreting the Fourth Gospel either historically or theologically. But how far can we afford to go? What if we succumb to the subtle and ever-present temptation to read into the Fourth Gospel meanings which the Evangelist never intended it to convey? In that event Prof. Reumann would have every right to remind us that we are sinning the sin of Heracleon, the second century Gnostic who earned his inglorious niche in history by his fanciful misinterpretations of the Fourth Gospel.

With the informal sanction of the editorial staff, I have decided to share with the readers of The Seminarian the substance of one of my sermons on the Fourth Gospel. I hope they will do me the honor of assuming that I am not submitting it as a model; I am submitting it as an illustration of a problem in homiletics. Have I gone too far down the road which Bunyan travelled? Have I read into the Evangelist's mind ideas and insights that are out of line with his understanding of the gospel?

I

John 1:51 "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

I have never either heard or read a sermon on this text. It seems to mystify our pastors as it mystifies us. We see Jesus, standing on the threshold of his ministry, holding before the eyes of his newly won disciples the entrancing prospect that hereafter they will see the angels of God ascending and descending upon him -- a promise that is as piquant as it is mystifying. What are we to understand by it?

Suppose we begin by putting it back into its setting. Long ago I learned to look upon the Fourth Gospel as a heavenly

pageant in which the Evangelist is playing upon certain mystical and symbolical meanings in scene after dramatic scene from our Lord's earthly ministry. In my study of the several scenes I generally begin by asking myself just how they would have to be managed if they were to be put on the stage. In the scene before us, as I visualize it, the background would take the form of a massive mural depicting Jacob's experience at ancient Bethel, a holy place which Jesus and the disciples travelled on their way to Cana. The mural would be placed there in the hope that it would have the effect of keeping vividly before our eyes the symbolical background on which our text rests. It is a transparent allusion to the hallowed story of Jacob's vision at Bethel. In his dream Jacob saw a ladder reaching up into heaven, with "the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. 28:12). When he awoke he exclaimed, "Surely the Lord is in this place..... This is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:16-17). Whereupon he called the place Bethel, and the word Bethel means House of God.

What Jesus is saying to the disciples, then, is that he is their new Bethel, their new House of God. Elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel he is portrayed as the new Tabernacle, the new Temple, the new Wine, the new Manna, the new Israel (Vine), and the new Paschal Lamb. Here he stands revealed as our new Bethel. In him the "traffic" between heaven and earth, what Francis Thompson has described as "the traffic of Jacob's ladder," will become strikingly realistic to all who have eyes to see. In Jacob's dream the "traffic" remained only a dream, a vague, shadowy symbol. In the person and ministry of Jesus the dream will work out into blessed actuality. From their own experience the disciples will discover that the gates of heaven have been opened wide to him, that in him the lines of communication between heaven and earth are always open to those who are one with him by faith. Standing in his presence, they will be standing in the presence of one who has all the power of God and all the love of God at his beck and call. Standing in his presence, they will be standing in the presence of God.

But what does all this mean to us in our daily living? If the Risen Lord is our Bethel, our place of fellowship with God, are we justified in assuming that he would have us turn our backs on all earthly places of worship and let them fall into decay? To read any such nonsense into his words would be to do tragic violence to them as well as to the example he has given us. Everywhere in the Gospels he stands before us as one who, far from looking with scorn upon public worship in holy places, welcomed every opportunity to participate in it. The Christian life, like all life, has its routine aspects, its public aspects, its community aspects. Besides, human nature being what it is, we always have to take into account the sin-

ister probability that, if we do not worship God publicly in Church, we are not worshipping him at all.

No, our text is not directed against any type of worship, public or private, formal or informal. Actually it is in the deepest and truest sense a summons to worship. It is a vivid, dramatic way of saying that the life we live from day to day, in the home, in the office, in the shop, in the club, on the streets, ought to exhale the aroma of worship. It ought to take the form of a continuing fellowship with the risen Lord in the heavenly Bethel which he has provided for us.

II

Let me now take you on a brief pilgrimage to this new shrine of the soul. The first impression we get as we stand in the narthex and scan the sacred appointments in the nave is that here all life is holy, as holy as God. The lines we are wont to draw between the sacred and the secular now seem sadly out of place, like a soda fountain in the chancel.

Several years ago a discerning Christian lawyer opened my eyes to certain ethical blindspots which Christian people who draw sharp lines between the sacred and the secular sometimes bring with them into his office. He informed me that his clients are for the most part honorable, upright men. They would not even dream of doing anything for which they could be put behind bars. But all too many of them, he said, stop at that point. As soon as they become involved in court processes, they expect their attorneys to take full advantage of every loophole in the law. They seem to take for granted that anything that is legal is also ethical and right and proper and Christian.

What is wrong? Apparently many of our people do not realize that the life we have been called to live is a life lived in the presence of God and in continuing fellowship with him. They do not realize that we have been called to be just as "Christian" in the courtroom as we are in church. They do not realize that in the new Bethel in which we have been called to spend our days, nothing is secular, everything is in harmony with its high sanctities and its heavenly overtones. If we sink to the secular level in any respect, we are profaning the House of God, profaning our Lord's personal Holy of Holies.

III

From the narthex of our new Bethel we walk forward and take our places in the pews. As we listen to the words of life addressed to us from the pulpit by the risen Lord, we soon discover that in his eyes life in all its phases is an act of worship. When you say of a friend that he is a man of prayer, you

are not saying anything distinctive about him. All men of God are men of prayer. But if you can say of him that his whole life is a prayer, an act of worship, you are ascribing a form of Christlikeness to him.

What is worship? Worship is at bottom a grateful returning to God of everything we have received from him. Since every day of the life we live has come to us from him, we are not worshipping him in the Christian sense unless we dedicate every day to him, to the doing of his will and to the achievement of his holy purposes. Rightly understood, the praises we sing in church, the gifts we toss upon the offering plates, are but tokens of worship, tokens of a radical consecration of life in its totality to God. Without this total consecration, our songs of praises will have a hollow ring. They will grate on God's ears, like the sounding brass and clanging cymbals that filled the air at the pagan rites which Paul has in mind in I Cor. 13:1.

IV

At the proper time we leave our places in the pews and move forward to the altar. Standing there before the risen Lord at his cross-crowned altar, we learn a lesson that is even more vital and vitalizing. We learn that in his eyes all life is a sacrament -- not merely an act of worship but also a sacrament. When we think of the Christian life as an act of worship, we are thinking in terms of an act of man -- of man as the one who acts. When we think of it as a sacrament, we are thinking in terms of an act of God. As modern theologians love to put it, man is no longer the one who acts but the one who is acted upon. In Word and Sacrament, God comes to man and offers him everything he needs to make his life complete. In Word and Sacrament he comes to us and offers us himself. And is that not the very heart of the New Testament, its basic orientation? On almost every page he stands before us as a seeking God, a perpetually seeking God, a God who is always seeking us, seeking us in spite of our blasphemies and our shabby desecrations, seeking us in spite of our sins, yes, because of them. His love has been compared to the ocean playing upon the dykes of Holland. Like the ocean it keeps feeling for an opening in our lives. Once it is given a fair start, it comes rushing into the lowlands in a mighty flood, carrying everything before it. All that he really asks of us is that we give him his chance.

This does not mean that the risen Lord will automatically solve all our problems for us. He wants us to become strong men of God, not mere puppets on a string. What it does mean is that he always stands ready and eager to throw all the resources of heaven into the struggle on our side. And is that

not just what we need? Left to himself, man is like a horse expected to pull a load meant for ten, a load which it cannot even budge. As Schlatter used to put it, digging spurs into the horse will not solve the problem. What the horse needs and what we need is a lift -- power from the outside that will lift us out of ourselves and above ourselves and make new men and women of us in spite of ourselves. And that is where the symbolism of our text, this picture of the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, begins to speak to our condition with power. It brings us the grand, ineffable assurance that all the power of God and all the love of God have been thrown into the struggle on our side.

V

Thus we see that the salient lesson of our text, the thought that the risen Lord is the sanctuary in which we have been called to spend our days, is more than a romantic fantasy. Like all vital poetry, it is basically realistic. The more seriously we take it, the more realistic it becomes. God never intended that we should spend all our time sitting in earthly temples. For that matter, there come times to us all when, owing to sickness or physical infirmity, we cannot worship God publicly in church, much as we might want to do so. But blessed be his Holy Name, our God has provided a heavenly sanctuary for us in the person of the risen Lord, a Bethel to which we can always turn for light and power and healing. In this living sanctuary the risen Lord comes to us day in and day out, in sickness and in health, in the dark days and in the bright days -- he comes to us, to each of us in our infirmities and sins, and asks: "What is your deepest need? Is it forgiveness? Here it is, take it. Is it victory over sin and death? Here it is, take it. Is it happiness? Is it peace with God and peace with men? Here it is, take it. This is my body which is broken for you. My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. I am the way the truth and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the light of the world. I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

Edward F. Weiskotten

In three years, the impressions and experiences that we have here at Mt. Airy are bound to be many and varied. For the most part, they are happy and beneficial experiences of learning. On the other hand, the gripes often fly thick and fast during bull sessions. Sometimes we realize later that our judgments have been too harsh, or, occasionally, not harsh enough. So we often revise our opinions of this or that aspect of seminary life several times before the momentous day of graduation is reached. However, when some criticisms are voiced again and again, by each new class, and with often increasing intensity, then it becomes apparent that something is really wrong. Such criticism, I think, ought to be made public and be given honest consideration by those in a position to make some suggested changes.

Of course, any criticism by students runs the risk of being classed with that of cranks and old maids. For some reason students, in the eyes of most administrations and faculties, are the least qualified people to evaluate the training they receive. It is hoped that here at Mt. Airy this is not the case, especially since we are all, students and faculty alike, concerned pre-eminently with spreading the Gospel in a sound and comprehensible manner. Inasmuch as we are not attending here just for the ride, therefore, but are serious about preparing for the ministry, we would naturally like to receive training that will best fit us for that job. It is with this purpose in mind that these criticisms are advanced.

It is only fair, lest it appear that all student criticism is negative, to start by briefly mentioning two aspects of life at Mt. Airy that seem particularly good and strong. One is the freedom which the students enjoy in planning and guiding their own affairs. By the time one graduates from college, he ought to be able to handle himself with a reasonable degree of maturity. On the other hand, he can also develop a greater personal maturity by being allowed a good deal of freedom, while he is yet in a position where some restraints are placed upon him. Both of these things point to the fact that in a theological seminary, responsible freedom should be expected and allowed. Our own administration, therefore, is to be commended in that, even though our freedom is occasionally misused, they have never threatened to make permanent restrictions.

Another encouraging part of seminary life, and one which adds immeasurably to the enrichment of budding ministers, is the close and friendly relations between students and faculty. Ever since education has been part of the human experience,

which really takes us back to the beginning, good educators have realized that personal contact with students is vital. Even though Mt. Airy has grown enormously in recent years, with very little attendant growth in the size of the faculty, little of the cordial atmosphere of the campus has been lost. Open houses, faculty "teas," and seminars are an invaluable part of our training. If anything, it is the students who ought to be chided for not taking full advantage of these opportunities to learn in a painless and often stimulating way.

Now there are also some areas where distinct improvement could be made. It is quite possible that there are a number of such areas, but for the sake of brevity, I intend to mention only three, those which I feel are most important and/or most easily changed.

The subject of field work is a frequent conversation piece. Some like their assignments and some don't, which may or may not be important. The important thing is what a man learns from his assignment, and this, naturally, is often tied up with his liking or disliking the assignment. The seminary apparently realizes the need for practical experience along with theoretical study, else there would be no field work program at all.

However, there seems to be a mistaken attitude that the seminary has fulfilled its function by finding some church or agency to which to assign each student. If a student is fortunate to get a church, say, where things are active and the pastor is co-operative and helpful, then he is likely to learn a great deal. But, if there is no pastor, or if he fails to guide and to assist the student, the student is likely to learn very little. Similarly, there is apparently little constructive help given to the churches by the seminary, for they often seem to have little knowledge of some of the ways they can best help to train a student. All too many of the assignments consist of little more than reading a portion of the service on Sunday, sometimes no more than the lessons, and of sitting in on Luther League meetings.

The question is: what can be done about it? For one thing, if the first year students, especially, could have some advice and supervision from the seminary, it would help immeasurably. Some of the better seminaries, like Yale and Union, have their students meet in a seminar one hour a week with an advisor, to face some of the problems encountered and to discuss solutions. There is also a system of visiting each student in action at least once at his assignment, with helpful criticism being offered. It will be argued here that Mt. Airy lacks men to do this and funds to acquire more men. But I honestly think that if there were a sincere effort made, some system could be worked out utilizing the faculty, the field work director, and graduate students, and even pastors,

if possible. Essentially, what is needed is a much closer connection between the seminary and the churches and the students throughout the year.

It would also be beneficial to require detailed written reports on each assignment at the end of each year. This would give the seminary a better idea of what is lacking; it would require the students to approach their assignments a little more responsibly; and, perhaps, it would make the churches realize that they also have a keen responsibility in this work.

Recently there has been a lot of talk about introducing a required year of internship, and it now appears that such a program will be a fact in years to come. But could such an internship accomplish much more than two years of revitalized and improved field work? I doubt it.

In any school, the curriculum probably comes in for the major part of criticism, so there will be no exception here. There are a number of ways of criticising the curriculum, however. The main point here is not the arrangement of courses in sequence, or some such thing. It is the inclusion of certain courses and the exclusion of others.

Basically, the question asked is this: why are there no required courses on pastoral counseling? True, there are now two courses in practical theology, but these deal more with theology from a practical point of view, and of course, are very helpful as far as they go. But even the one elective in "pastoral encounter" cannot hope to do justice to the varied techniques, situations, and psychological helps which ought to be a part of every fledgling pastor's knowledge, and equipment. When it is obvious that every ministry, if it is to be fully effective, will necessarily entail a great deal of counseling, this amounts almost to criminal neglect.

Eminent Christian counselors like John Sutherland Bonnell openly admit how much insight a pastor can gain from the findings and methods of psychology and psychiatry. It is not exceptional to hear pastors say that they feel completely helpless when faced with their first counseling situations, because they have not received adequate training in seminary. Is it so much to ask that this whole subject be given its rightful place in our curriculum?

Now the argument advanced will be, among other things, that there is not room in the curriculum to add new courses, without lengthening the course to four years. This is not the only alternative, however. There is also the possibility of re-evaluating some of the present courses, to see whether they merit being retained. Is it so important, for instance, that we have a whole semester course, required at that, in church architecture, where we learn such stimulating and vastly important facts as the exact dimensions of a credence table? Or,

again, is it really necessary to spend another semester memorizing the names of hymn writers and connecting the hymns they wrote with their names? I suggest that to combine the three courses Liturgics, Hymnology, and Church Architecture into one course would be entirely possible without eliminating such valuable material as is to be found in each course. This alone would open up two additional courses that could be devoted to pastoral counseling or some related subject which would be of more use in the everyday work of the average minister.

This leads us to one final lack here at Mt. Airy. It is the apparent refusal of the faculty, at least to a large extent, to teach techniques of any kind. This is felt particularly in the fields of evangelism and stewardship. While it is entirely possible that the methods advanced by some people in these areas are extreme and out of taste, that in no way detracts from useful and essentially evangelical methods.

A vast majority of us who are about to graduate have no idea how to conduct a visitation-evangelism program or how to stage an every-member-visit, or even how to promote an on-going attitude of the stewardship of one's whole life.

Frankly, I have heard only one reason ever advanced for the exclusion of these subjects, and it is indeed a poor reason. It is said that we can get literature on these subjects easily enough, so it is not necessary to teach them in seminary. Is it not true that we could learn just about everything that has been taught us at seminary by reading enough books? This reason, I think, is hardly adequate.

These are some of the criticisms voiced by the students at Mt. Airy, presumably stimulated by a desire to see the seminary improve in preparing men for a strong and well-rounded ministry of the Gospel. It is hoped that they will be received in that spirit.

* * *

Continuing the Age's Ontological Debate . . .

NOCH IMMER JA, KARL ANDERSON

John Emil Kulsar

I promised myself that in replying to Mr. Anderson's article, "Nein, Antwort an Emil Kulsar," printed in the March issue of The Seminarian, I would not indulge in any theological gamesmanship, at which he is more adept than I. Therefore, I will make no reference to safaris or culinary delights as he so picturesquely did in his article.

Briefly stated, I attempted to make these two Points:

1. With reference to the self, there can be no certainty

of existence.

2. With reference to God, there is the basis for ontological certainty.

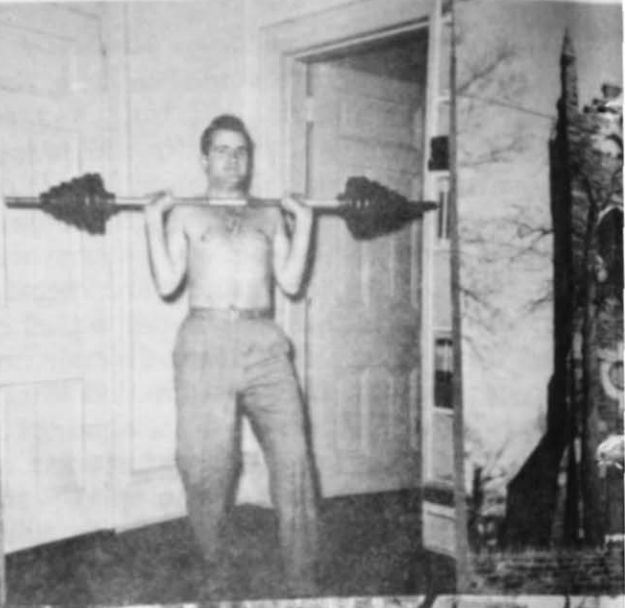
Indeed I perceive that Mr. Anderson would not disagree with these two points, although he would say that we can only assume that we are with psychological certainty, whereas I propose that we can declare that we are with apodictic certainty.

Basically, Mr. Anderson accuses me of positing God's existence so that I can assert the certainty of my being. He says that I say "...that we can only prove our existence by supposing that there is a God who made us." What I actually say is that "For a man to assert the certainty of his being, he must first declare the existence of God and his creaturely dependence upon him." Note well, that a declaration is much different from a supposition. My declaration that God is, is not the proposal of a hypothetical possibility. It is a positive and dynamic assertion that God has confronted me. I who was lost, am found, I who was unloved, am loved. Upon this fact, apprehended by faith, rests my declaration that God is and the certainty that I am.

To say "apprehended by faith," is to say that I have responded affirmatively to God's discovery of and love for me. This positive response to the inescapable fact of God's coming to me is faith. However, Mr. Anderson believes that the "validation of this faith lies in our own life and response." Upon this basic misunderstanding of faith he concludes that I have been begging the question. For to say that the certainty of my existence depends upon God's existence which depends upon my faith which is validated by me is indeed like a half mile run around a half mile track -- the finish is at the start. But consider closely, what kind of a faith is it that can be validated? When faith is verifiable by human experience, it is no longer faith. Kierkegaard has the right idea when he says that we have faith by virtue of the absurd. Thus, faith is not a conclusion drawn from the facts nor the result of investigation, for it transcends these epistemological endeavors. My faith is my yes to God's discovery of me, his presence with me, and his love for me.

Again I say it is time we put a little beef into our Gospel to the thoughtful. And there is little beef in a vague psychological certainty or a morose uncertainty of existence!!! Man is a center of responsibility in so far as he is. And he is only in so far as he is related in love to God. We conclude then, noch immer ja, I am loved by God, therefore I am.

(Obviously a monks' squabble -- the typist)





SEMINARY TO GRADUATE
47 AT MAY EXERCISES

Second largest class in Mt. Airy's history is expected to be graduated at the May 13 exercises.

In addition to the 47 who will receive Bachelor of Divinity degrees, eight men are to be awarded Master of Sacred Theology degrees for work completed in the graduate school.

Speaker for commencement will be the Rev. Dr. Paul E. Scherer, professor of homiletics at New York's Union Theological Seminary.

Dr. Scherer, an instructor at Mt. Airy during the period 1919-1929, is well known as a radio preacher over several national networks.

Following the commencement, to be held at St. Michael's, Germantown, at 11 a.m., luncheon will be served in the refectory for students, families, and friends.

Seniors are to be feted by the faculty wives Thursday evening preceding graduation. Wives, friends, and families of the seniors are invited.

Graduated magna cum laude from Charleston College in 1913, Paul Scherer received his B.D. from Mt. Airy in 1916.

Two years later he was called to become assistant pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Buffalo.

In 1920 he accepted a call to become pastor of Holy Trinity Church, New York. He remained there until called to Union in 1945.

SELECTED LACKEYS TRAIN
FOR NEXT YEAR'S DUTIES

Six waiters received the "laying on of hands" and were vested in their white uniforms at private services, April 18.

These selected men began immediately to perform the duties with which they shall struggle throughout the next school year.

Serving in the front line of refectory duty, without regard for possible injury inflicted by hurled boiled potatoes and passing catsup are Calder Gibson II, John Robinholt, Martin Luther Acker, Jack Traugott, Robert Kelly, and David Kistler.

Newly appointed commanding officer for this coffee brigade is Edwin Eastman.

K.P. officials in the background are: Richard Sieman, Richard Olsen, George Anderson, and Hal Markert.

Scurrying in the scullery is Lee Mull, to the pot and pan music of Walter Hitchcock.

ANDERSON HEADS STUDENT
BODY'S NEW OFFICERS

Hugh George Anderson, middler from Alhambra, Calif., and a graduate of Yale, was elected Student Body President at elections on April 28.

Other officers serving with George will be: vice-president, Larry Hand; secretary, Luther Kistler; treasurer, Jim Haney; athletics chairman, Walter Hitchcock; bookstore committee member, Joe Holt; publications chairman, George Handley.

WIVES GET PREVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Immediate past Wives' Club President Barbara Kaelberer returned April 21 to present to the club a preview of the unique responsibilities which fall upon the pastor's wife. Mrs. Kaelberer is the wife of the Rev. John Kaelberer, assistant pastor of St. Paul's, Allentown.

In co-operation with the student body's Social Committee, the wives sponsored their annual Senior Farewell Party at the fireplace on the campus.

All students, faculty, and administration members were invited to the April 28 affair.

Following a "wienie" roast and group games, a song fest brought to a close an evening of fellowship designed to provide an appropriate climax to a successful calendar of events.

--Lea Messner

HEYER COMMISSION ELECTS NYCE

Ray Nyce was elected Heyer Commission president for the next school year at the group's April 21 meeting. New secretary is Walter Hitchcock, and Luther Kistler was elected treasurer.

Adopted at this meeting was the Commission's reworked and rephrased constitution.

The Rev. N. Earl Townsend, missionary to Argentina, presented the latest facts concerning that field and showed colored slides taken there.

LOEW DELIVERS 1955 KNUBEL-MILLER LECTURES

"After Confirmation, What?," the 1955 Knubel-Miller lecture series, were presented by Dr. Ralph W. Loew during the evenings of April 19 and 20 in the chapel basement.

Dr. Loew, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Buffalo, and vice-president of the ULC Board of Foreign Missions, sub-titled his lectures, "The Church and the Amateur Adult."

First two sections of the series, arranged through the co-operation of the administration and the Symposium Committee, were presented on Tuesday evening, followed on Wednesday by the remaining three lectures.

Condensed for presentation here, the lectures are based on the Confirmation Prayer of Blessing: "Father in Heaven, for Jesus' sake, renew and increase in thee the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Dr. Loew has been offering the series at selected spots in the United States and Canada.

Receiving his A.B. from Capital University in 1928, Dr. Loew pursued graduate work at Ohio State University and received his B.D. from Hamma Divinity School.

Formerly pastor of Trinity Church, Millersburg, Ohio, and assistant at Reformation Church in Washington, D.C., Dr. Loew has been pastor at Holy Trinity since 1944.

He was a delegate to the LWF meeting at Lund.

DAVIS HITS HYPOCRISY
AT SENIOR BANQUET

"It is exceedingly difficult to preserve integrity and downright honesty in our day," said the Rev. Dr. H. Grady Davis, at the April 22 senior banquet.

Speaking to students, faculty, and friends, Dr. Davis reminded that "the first stage of hypocrisy is sentimentality." Young seminarians write and preach the way they think they ought to write and preach -- they imitate.

A 1916 graduate of Mt. Airy, Dr. Davis is Professor of Functional Theology at the Chicago Lutheran Seminary. He has served parishes in Trenton N.J., and in Tennessee.

"The second stage of hypocrisy," said Dr. Davis, is meretriciousness. If your aim is to talk or work the way other people think you should, then nothing living, nothing vital can come out of your work -- it is meretricious."

"There is only one hope for us preachers...whenever we work with the 'stuff' of the Christian faith -- that we come before him (Christ) and stand before him, and then proceed.

"And this meditation, this standing before him, should be done in the secret places of our souls, where no one will give us credit for it.

"Then we will speak the Gospel of his death--so that it is not easy, but tough; so that it is not sweet, but

HEYER COMMISSION DRIVE
NETS \$401.50 RETURN

Largest Heyer Commission drive yet undertaken has been completed with record success.

Under Luther Kistler's direction \$401.50 was collected from students and faculty for medical needs in Liberia.

The money has been sent to the Foreign Student Fund of the ULC Board of Foreign Missions, for the medical training of Liberian student Roland Payne.

Now studying at the University of Kansas, Mr. Payne will return to serve as a doctor in Liberia following his completion of his education.

The total amount collected is here broken down:

Faculty	13	100%	\$ 63.50
Seniors	47	85%	110.50
Middlers	44	79%	145.50
Juniors	55	67%	82.00
	159		\$401.50

LETTER TO THE EDITOR --

I take exception with one remark in the last issue of The Seminarian; this concerns the use of the term, "eucharistic vestments" in the article on Henne and the Virgin Islands.

True, they use the chasuble here. But, that is all -- no alb, no amice, etc. In fact there is only one chasuble. So your use of the plural is wrong.

I take it that the anglicizing influences on campus need a few cuffs, but error is never successfully combated by lies.

- G. Handley
bitter; so that it is not beautiful, but redemptive."

EXEGESIS OF PSALM CLI

(Being the systematic application of
current scholarly principles)

- verse 1. Hail, hail, the gang's all here
2. What the hell do we care
3. What the hell do we care
4. Hail, hail, the gang's all here
5. What the hell do we care now

*** H. G. Anderson: Exegetical Notes

Textual-critical notes

- v. 1 Read, with Gunkel, "El" for the second "hail." The re-duplication has obscured the original divine name, which can be recovered by simply removing the aspirate.
- v. 2 The text is corrupt. Versions read "What the heck," but this does not correct the basic problem, which is one of syntax. Read, with Oesterley, "What he will." Evidently the original has been lost through copyists' errors, which misread the radicals and duplicated the final "t" of "what" and the "he" of "he." Such dittography is common.
For "care," read "cry," a mere alteration in the vowel pointing.
- v. 5 "Now" is simply added to bring out the force of the verb. The text, as emended, now reads:
- v. 1 Hail, El, the gang's all here
v. 2 What he will do we cry
v. 3 What he will do we cry
v. 4 Hail, El, the gang's all here
v. 5 What he will do we cry now.

Literary Form

This is obviously a cultic liturgy, consisting of a line for the leader, followed by a response of the congregation. The response is repeated--note the close parallelism between verses 2 and 3--and then the leader again states the dominant theme. The psalm closes with the emphatic congregational response. Some authorities have called this a litany (note the pattern of verses 2, 3, and 5), but careful study will show that verse 5 is, after all, different. It may have been a round. The theory, advanced by Mowinckel and others, that a final line has been lost, is mere speculation. The meter is 2:2 throughout.

Sitz im Leben

At last we have found the psalm used at the gathering of the gods on the sixth day of the Akitu Festival. According to Babylonian texts, the gods were carried out of the city on the sixth day and put into a hut, where they decided the fate of the city. This psalm is obviously a priestly representation of what went on inside that hut. The scene is clear. The gods are assembled, they cheer their leader and announce a quorum ("Hail, El, the gang's all here"). The fate of the city is then left up to El himself as the lesser deities "let El do it." They affirm their willingness to abide by his decision ("What he will' do we cry"), and the jollification breaks up. The effect of this psalm was to leave no doubt in the mind of the hearers that El was supreme, and that all the gods obeyed his will.

Relation to the Old Testament

There are several pre-Israelite elements in the psalm, notably the divine name "El." However, the main thrust of the liturgy is to assert the supremacy of this God over the lesser rivals, and thus it is in line with the best Old Testament tradition. Compare, for example, Ps. 103:20 "Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word." The theme of lesser beings doing the Supreme One's will is here, and it continues into a remarkable parallel of vv. 2 and 3 in 103:21 "Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will!" Note the idea of the Covenant expressed here -- "What he will" is the obedient cry of the congregation, and they seek to work out El's purpose now (v. 5). Thus, the doing of the Supreme Will begins now, in this age, and the Kingdom is already here (Realized Eschatology).

Relation to the New Testament

While there are no direct quotations from this psalm in the New Testament, its spirit may be felt time and time again. The reference to other heavenly beings appears (Lk. 15:10), and obedience is certainly stressed. Compare Lk. 22:42b, "Not my will, but thine, be done," with v. 2. Also Matt. 6:10b.

Theological Implications

This psalm shows conclusively that the Akitu Festival was known in Israel, and that the amphictyony used such cultic elements uncritically. While the content could be adapted to Israelite beliefs, the psalm as a whole stands out like a

glacial erratic, deposited on the biblical landscape by forces of an earlier age. Because of its great antiquity, this psalm has been generally misinterpreted in our generation, and it is the author's modest hope that these observations will alert modern readers to the danger of superficial research.

*** R.E. Bornemann: Additional Notes and Corrections

H.G. Anderson is to be commended for his excellent and incisive study of Psalm cxi. He has shown a remarkable grasp of present-day principles of exegesis. It is necessary, however, to point out one or two errors in methodology, which when corrected will alter somewhat his final results.

Mr. Anderson has correctly asserted the Babylonian origins of this psalm as well as its cultic setting. I would call attention, however, to the fact that the divine name, El, is more properly Canaanite than Babylonian. In view of this it seems certain that instead of "Hail, El, the gang's all here" the original text read, "Hail, Bel (Marduk), the gang's all here." It was only with the Canaanite adaptation of the myth and ritual pattern of Mesopotamia that the initial "B" was dropped so as to fit the circumstances of Canaanite mythology in which El is the supreme deity. Mr. Anderson's text, then, does not represent the original but only an intermediate stage of the text. (NOTE: It seems unlikely that a further change was made from "El" to "Baal" when El receded into the background of Canaanite mythology in favor of the more youthful and virile Baal; but see Eissfeldt, El im ungariischen Pantheon, pp. 407-413.)

This corrected understanding of the text and its development offers the only logical explanation for the presence of this Babylonian psalm in the Hebrew psalter. It is now a recognized fact, as W.F. Albright has brilliantly and conclusively shown in several articles he intends to write, that the myth and ritual pattern as it appears in Israel's cultus was not borrowed from Babylon, but mediated through Canaanite religion. The assimilation of the Canaanitized psalm was easy because of the common use of El as a designation for God.

Moreover, with Israel's adoption of this hymn the cultic Sitz im Leben was changed. Israel had nothing to correspond to the Babylonian observance or its Canaanite parallels. Instead, the psalm came to be associated with the Israelite festival of Sukkoth. Consequently, while in Canaanite religion the "gang" refers to the company of gods, in monotheistic Israel the "gang" can refer only to the amphicytony of the twelve tribes who were gathered at the fall festival to renew the covenant.

There is still a further stage in the psalm's development which Mr. Anderson has not adequately treated. This is to explain how the "El" became "Hail," and the "what he will do we

cry" became "What the hell do we care." The process is an extremely complicated one and cannot be explained simply on the basis of dittography, haplography and scribal errors. It is, rather, a good example of what Bentzen in his Inledning til de gammeltestamentlige Salmer has described as 'the process of secularization' (cf. the funeral dirge) as well as 'the trend towards democratization.' What happened is roughly this: when the Judeans were taken into captivity they took with them their psalmic tradition. In Babylon, cut off from cultic expression, Psalm cii (and others) suffered development and adaptation both because of Israel's altered situation and because of her future hopes. At the same time the forces of secularization were at work, and the strictly cultic character of the psalm became obscured. Nevertheless, the psalm was retained and cherished within the psalter, because upon the return to Judah it effectively expressed the feelings of the restored community as it gathered about the rebuilt temple.

Originally a Babylonian and Canaanite cultic hymn, adapted for use in the Israelite Sukkoth festival, the psalm in its present form is to be understood as a psalm of the restoration achieved under Cyrus after 538.

*** E.A. Steimle: Homiletical Notes

First, a careful study of the exegetical notes of Anderson and Bornemann plus intensive study and contemplation of the psalm in the original have been made in order to discover what the Psalm has to say. And what it has to say is quite clear:

Hail, hail, the gang's all here
 What the hell do we care
 What the hell do we care
 Hail, hail, the gang's all here
 What the hell do we care now.

Second, to what human need is the psalm addressed? The need is also quite clear: our sinful state. (hell)

Third, does it speak of Christ? The exegetes fail us miserably here and indicate how often the theological depths of a passage are obscured by scholarly preoccupation with trivia. In every line the Psalmist speaks of Christ: e.g. vs. 1&4 gang - the Church - the body of Christ.

2 & 3 we - the Trinity - including the 2nd person.

vs. 5 now - the "accepted time" when the Eternal Word (Christ) confronts us demanding a decision: yes or no.

With this wealth of theology shining through every word of the exalted and elevated language of the Psalmist, the outline springs to life in the familiar pattern of predicament-cure. (Some alteration in the sequence of the words is demand-

ed for the most effective homiletical impact.)

Intro. A story from the New Yorker

A. The Predicament

1. Here we are (The gang's all here)
 - a. Who? The gang. We. All.
 - b. All? Yes, all.
 - c. Where? Here.
2. The desperate nature of the situation.
 - a. What do we care?
 - (1) Oh! The pathos of that line.
 - (2) Lives torn asunder by the emptiness of life in our midst!
Illus. Drunk in the gutter.
3. You are in this desperate situation. (hell)
 - a. Hell. In the past.
 - b. Hell. Here and now.
 - c. Hell. In the future.
4. Do you care?
 - a. Really?
5. Now
 - a. Decision. (This section would be expanded considerably. This is the real meat of the sermon.)

B. The Cure

1. Hail
 - a. Praise

Conclusion. John 3:16.

The sermon is strongly evangelical. (Note A3abc and 5a). It meets a desperate need and lively option (Note A3abc and 5a). Note the fine downward progression of thought from A1 to A3abc and 5a, and thence a strong positive upward movement to the doxology in Bla. Note, too, the effective use of the catechism in Alabc; the color and life in the illustration under A2a(2); the fine positive impact of the sermon in Bla and the conclusion.

Much, of course, will depend upon the deft handling of transitions.

A NEW GOOD WORK

-- John G. Huneke

In our day there is a new good work. It is, among our continental forbears, called "Glaube." Here, it is called "belief." That is the shocking truth: the beloved belief and confessions of Lutherans have become a new good work. For many so-called good Lutherans who believe the unbelievable for the sake of God, there may be no consciousness on their part of seeking merit. Yet, that idea is deep down beneath their outward confession of belief. It is unbelievable that the living God should be killed as a derelict between two other derelicts. So they believe it because it is unbelievable, and God will look with favor upon them for so believing. Sometimes, it takes a death bed situation to place the point about belief in sharp focus. Of course, believing in unbelievable things to win God's favor is the distortion into which belief has fallen. It is my purpose here to redefine belief and faith in the light of their classical and biblical meanings.

In every age certain emphases have to be made. Luther had to emphasize that the free grace of God -- not the merit of his own good work -- saves men. The emphasis made here is that faith is altogether different from belief. These two Christian signals, faith and belief, have to be decoded, so that they may be understood by Christian people.

Dr. Tillich, to whom I am indebted for many of the thoughts here expressed, and for which I assume responsibility, has put his finger on the "Achilles' Heel" of Lutherans. He says, in effect, that faith is distorted in the minds of some to mean a sacrifice of one's "cognitive and intellectual honesty," whereby a man believes in unbelievable things to win merit. That is a misinterpretation. It is rooted in the work of the orthodox Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century and their followers. It is the consistent witness of Martin Luther, whom the all too rationalistic theologians misunderstood, that there is no merit in us. There is no synergistic co-operation of man with God in salvation. Man is a sinner, and only God is able to change him so that he may have the right orientation, the proper God relationship, that is, the relation of trust toward God, and active love toward his neighbor.

God loves us without any merit and worth on our parts. He loves us and creates in us the object of his love. That does not mean that God's gift and grace are irresistible. Man always retains the damning possibility of rejecting God's saving action in his own life. Man's freedom is, therefore, both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing unto salvation when he does not resist God, but remains open and receptive to him.

Freedom is a curse unto damnation (estrangement from God's presence) when man rejects the living God. That's the awful possibility of our humanity.

In the Latin phrase "haerere Deo" Augustine spelled out what it means to have faith. One of the English derivatives of the verb "haerere" is "to adhere," which means to stick. Thus, Augustine made it clear that faith involves sticking to God, like good adhesive tape sticks to skin. Man's independence necessitates complete dependence upon God, the source of his life. Such a relationship is the work of God.

There is sufficient power in faith to save man and the fallen creation. But faith is not belief, especially not belief in unbelievable things done for the sake of achieving some merit. It is by faith alone that we are saved. That is fine - if it is understood. I think that H. E. Cock's book By Faith Alone is clear about what this means. For our purposes, I choose a somewhat longer definition of salvation, that is: justification by God's grace (a free gift) through faith (which he has empowered in us) for Christ's sake without any works of the law (like sacrificing our intellectual integrity by believing unbelievable things for merit). In short form, salvation is "justification by God's grace through faith for Christ's sake without the works of the law." That is what it means to trust God, to have faith in God.

Now about belief. There is no reason for us to tolerate being restricted to man's feelings, his heart. Nor, for that matter, are we to be confined to the top of his head. Man's mind, his heart, his will, and every other faculty he possesses plays its significant role in the Christian life. In the Christian religion man is involved with all the faculties of his being. That is the nature of God's claim on our life. We read in the book of symbols,

"I know thy works; that thou art neither cold nor hot: would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." -- Rev. 3:15,16.

Holy Scripture witnesses to the fact that the orientation to God is of man's entire being. This is the I-Thou relationship. God confronts man in his totality and as a responsible being. Christianity, therefore, cannot tolerate being restricted to one tiny area of existence, like the pietistic good feeling that a certain kind of worship may bring.

Lutheran orthodoxy was wrong in restricting Christianity to the mind, that is, right thinking. The mind can be just as tyrannical as any self-indulgent pope. There is far more to Christianity than intellectual assent to correct doctrine. Christianity involves man in his entirety, all in all.

Belief has its role to play. I do not feel that it should be dropped from our language; that would be an irresponsible

way of saving the meaning of faith and trust in the living God. Belief plays its part in the Christian life. Do we believe that God who was in Christ is the fountain of our life and that we are completely dependent upon his mighty saving deeds? If this be so, then our faith is given expression. The historic creeds and confessions of the Church point back to Christ, in comparison with whom we are all judged sinful and in need of God's saving actions.

Above all, keep open for God to take hold of your life and to set it straight. Faith is different from belief in unbelievable things, and that done for merit. Again, keep open for him.

* * *

THE SUMMING UP . . .

I was tempted to call this "In Conclusion," but decided that if I must profane, better to profane Maughm than -- well, after all, some few things are sacred. Seriously, though, the student body includes a budgetary item of \$250 for publications, and it is only fair, I think, that you be given some accounting here of just how and for what that money has been spent.

Incidentally, by the time the bill for this issue of The Seminarian has been paid, the staff will have exceeded its budget for the year. How we have done this, while publishing only five issues of the magazine (one less than last year's staff) is herewith explained.

Five issues of The Seminarian have been published, but these five have included a total of 96 pages, counting the four pages of the Student Directory, which was distributed with the Advent Issue. In addition, we have used photographs on the covers, an attractive (but expensive) addition to format, as have been color on the cover and the larger page-size used this year.

Part of our allotted sum went to meet the final payment on the new typewriter, and we have also purchased our own stapler.

This year's magazine has included articles by eighteen different contributors, illustrations by John Bucher and Paul Bosch, and photographs by Allan Gibson. And the editor expects to be remembered by future generations as that "courageous and bold seer" who published the original articles in the ontological debate of the decade.

I owe special thanks to the staff; to those individuals who volunteered for such unendeared tasks as folding; to Don Bravin who has handled the news end; to Al Gibson for his cooperation and assistance; to Chuck McAdoo, who has played "staff car" on many occasions; to Calder Gibson and Don Safford who have shouldered the wearisome, uninteresting job of typing the stencils; and to patient room-mate Grochau. L.A.B.