

# THE SEMINARIAN

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## CONGRATULATIONS

....On July 18, 1945, the Lancaster newspapers brought us news of Dr. Harner's resignation, and his acceptance of the presidency of Heidelberg College. This news was quite a surprise to most of us, and was also a source of much regret. We hated the thought of Dr. Harner leaving us -- not only were we losing an excellent teacher, one of the best in his field, but also a dear friend. Dr. Harner, both in and out of the class-room, has impressed us with his integrity, with his sincere desire to be of help, and with his untiring zeal in behalf of the Seminary and its students. We've admired his sound scholarship and ability to teach, and we've admired, too, his tolerance and wide perspective. He's given us a knowledge of and an appreciation for the best in Christian Education, and he's helped us to see its place in relation to the rest of the church's work. He has helped us see the possibility of making the work of the local church dynamic and significant, and he has linked us beautifully with the work of the whole denomination, and with the cause of the Church universal.

....Dr. Harner is a man who has served the Church well, and we know he will continue to do so. We regret indeed that he is leaving our Seminary, but we rejoice in knowing that he will still be vitally engaged in the work of our Church. Heidelberg's gain is our loss, and we congratulate her on her rich acquisition. We congratulate Dr. Harner too -- we know that he leaves us, not for glory, but to further the Cause that he loves so well -- the cause of Christ! May God bless him in his labors.

- - W.H.D. - -

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## THE EDITOR'S EDITORIAL

....Too often a paper serves merely as a "hobby rider" for its editor. A constant alertness is necessary to avoid such an error. This is YOUR paper, and what its composition is to be will be determined by you. This issue was composed with the express purpose of offering a diversity of opinion and interests, attempting to relate topics particularly pertinent to the life of this seminary and the religious forces with which we are faced in our lives as students and future ministers. Some articles will be in conflict with your way of thinking. May they inspire healthy and zestful discussion periods on the campus, provoking respect for each other's views, as we strive to reach the common goal of an effective Christian ministry, even though it be through varied channels. The limitations of space handicaps the articles. We hope student interest will, in time, result in the enlargement of The Seminarian to the proportions of effective coverage of problems arising out of the needs and desires of its readers.

- Herb Reichert -

Such Gains on....

When Bill Daniels asked some of his fellow classmates what kind of work of study he ought to do to help prepare him for his work in China, Kelly suggested -- that he work in a Chinese laundry. - No ticks -- no washes.

...Since Dick Scheffhase was at the spiritual Conference in Elizabethtown, where Dr. Bair shared a few thoughts, -- everything is "ALL -- RIGHT"

...Chapel attendance is quite commendable. Let us keep up the fine spirit, and all unite in our periods of worship together.

...The Seminary Choir is scheduled to sing in Hazelton on September 23rd, 1945 both in the afternoon and evening. They are practicing hard for this fine work,

## DIFFICULTIES AND ADVANTAGES IN THE PROPOSED MERGER OF THE EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

### Major difficulties

1. The two denominations represent two major types of Protestant polity. Our own is presbyterial in type. We speak of our Synods and General Synod as "judicatories," with an implied power of judgment over individuals and congregations. The Congregational Christian Churches, as their name implies, have stressed historically the autonomy of the individual congregation. The task of combining into one body these two polities would be well-nigh impossible, were it not for the fact that the two communions are much closer to each other in this respect in actuality than they are on paper.

2. The two denominations represent different attitudes toward creeds and creedal standards. We are a "confessional" Church. Our Constitution accepts the Heidelberg Catechism, Luther's Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession as doctrinal standards. The sister Church is a "non-confessional" Church. While deeply interested in theology, it has not typically accepted any particular verbal expression of our Christian faith as binding upon individuals or congregations. Again, the difference is greater on paper than in actuality. Within a confessional framework, we have achieved a high degree of freedom. Within a non-confessional framework, they have achieved a considerable measure of theological oneness.

3. It is always hard to combine two denominations with their separate boards, endowments, institutions, financial systems, and the like. In some respects, the present is a bad time for us to attempt another merger, because we are just getting the former one consummated truly. In other respects, it may be easier now than twenty-five years from now when our denominational set-up would be fixed and inflexible.

### Anticipated Advantages

1. The new denomination would be more geographically representative than either of the present denominations. This means that fewer of our members would be lost when they move to other states and communities.

2. The new denomination would be more sociologically representative than either of the present denominations. Our greatest success has probably been in rural areas. Congregationalism has shown more facility in ministering to urban constituencies. Within the city, a considerable part of our membership (according to the observations of Dr. H. Paul Douglass) is drawn from the industrial classes. Congregationalism on the contrary has appealed more to the professional classes.

3. There would be valuable cross-fertilization of spiritual life in the new denomination. For example, they might learn something from our worship tradition, and we might be stimulated to renewed missionary zeal by the magnificent heritage of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

4. The greater numerical and financial strength of the new denomination, while having no great intrinsic value, might make possible projects and undertakings which neither of us alone can contemplate at the present time.

5. The very fact of a merger between two denominations representing different polities, different attitudes toward doctrinal standards, and different European backgrounds would be a mighty demonstration of true Christian unity. Dr. Douglas Horton makes much of this point. If, despite our differences, we can find common standing-ground in our common Christian faith and purpose, the whole movement of Christian unity will be set forward.

- Dr. Nevil C. Harnet -

## THE NEED FOR A PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

What I believe about God -- by -- John Bucher

(This is the first of a series of articles on theology. Others will appear on the subjects of Christ and Man.)

The worst foe of theology is intolerance. It closes the mind to finer ideas, rends the church in schisms, and leaves a trail of hatred and grief wherever it appears. What I state, then, I acknowledge as open to debate. As a Christian, I must believe in several basic ideas concerning God; but beyond these fundamental beliefs, I would not hold my ideas essential to Christianity, nor declare him an enemy of my religion who differs from me. Consider these eight statements concerning God:

(1) God does all things in a spirit of perfect goodness. (2) God is the creator and sustainer of the universe. (3) He has created man with an intelligence which, while imperfect, is capable of striving toward his perfect goodness. (4) God, in his goodness, loves man and wishes man to love him and obey him. (5) Likewise, he desires man to love his fellow man. (6) God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. (7) God, in his unity, manifests himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- the creator, revealer and sustainer -- in his universe. (8) God is accessible to man in prayer and meditation.

Beyond these statements, my own belief develops along lines which, while quite unoriginal, may differ widely from those of the reader. Yet who is there among us who can stand as final judge as to which belief is right to the exclusion of all others?

From (1) above, God's creation is not planned in a spirit of malice. Rather, as science has shown, it is orderly through a complex system of laws. That is God's manner of working in his universe. Those laws appear to be unbroken, and are useful because of their dependability. But if they are misused, the results are disastrous.

Turning now from the realm of nature to that of human relationships, the presence of divine law is not quite so apparent. Nevertheless, law is there also. Some human actions tend for harmony and love, and others tend for disharmony. These laws of ethics are the laws Christ revealed to us through his teachings and demonstrated in his life.

A glance at the laws of nature and those of human behavior will show how closely related they really are. Ask the psychologist whether the action of the glands causes anger, or anger causes the action of the glands.

Expanding upon (7), it is possible that imperfect man, using his free will, might misuse God's laws. Such misuse causes the evil, social and sometimes physical, which appears in the world. That leaves no room for a devil in opposition to God. To me, the devil is an invention of man and a scapegoat.

I cannot think that God himself ever breaks his law. If he does not, as we know, break it in the many cases when innocent men suffer, then his "perfect goodness" demands that he must never break his law. He limits himself by his law because that law itself is perfect. The way for man to eliminate evil and improve his lot is by using God's law correctly -- by obedience to God.

Further, if man has the free will to use God's law, then God has not pre-ordained the exact course of human life. Your decisions are your own, and not just the pre-planned of God. If that were not so, then God must be blamed for the evil of man. Omniscience is not a part of his nature.

But God is not limited by space, so that he has a perfect knowledge of all current events. Hence omnipresence is a part of his nature.

What I believe about God - continued.

And (8) requires an acknowledgement of God's power of dealing with man directly. Through the communion between God and man, man seems to receive a power which otherwise he cannot know. This is not contrary to God's law, but may be considered the highest pinnacle of that law in human relationships.

That, briefly, is the essence of my belief concerning God. If the reader can accept with me the eight propositions first given, then surely we have a basis for common faith and fellowship with Christianity whether he follows my conclusions or forms of his own.

J. R. B.

STUDENT SURVEY

What is your opinion concerning the proposed merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational-Christian Church?

Time of consummation:

- ☐ Within the near future  
☐ Within five years  
☐ Merger unfavorable

Will the benefits to be derived from the proposed merger be great enough to offset any loss which may result in the abolishment or broadening of the confessional creeds now held by the Evangelical and Reformed Church?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you think the consummation of the proposed merger will be of such weight that it will be an effective factor in influencing the oecumenical movement.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Give your answer to a member of the editorial board. The results will be published in the September issue of The Seminarian.

(William Daniels, Herbert Reichert, Paul Manroadt )

CHECK - UP !!



HAPPY is he who has all his term papers finished.

HAPPY is he who is all set for his final tests.

HAPPY is he who keeps up daily with all assignments and work.

HAPPY is he who has a big reading list to hand in to the instructor.

WE HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY.