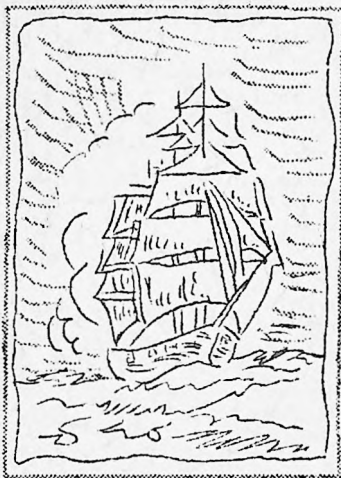


THE SEMINARIAN

Published monthly by the Society of Inquiry of
Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.

JANUARY 1947



A THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR

King Arthur's Farewell..

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfills Himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

More things are wrought by prayer than
this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for no night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life in the brain
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

- - - Tennyson

EDITORIAL Henry K. Haines, Editor

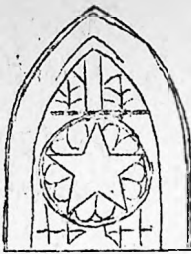
In this, our immediate post-Christmas issue of the Seminarian, we present the articles from our student body. The first carries over the flavour of the Christmas season into our medium of the more intellectual view behind much that is too often blind faith. It is entirely fitting that Mr. Boun's article on the Virgin Birth appear in a post-Christmas issue since the impact which Christmas makes upon our lives — entwined as it most necessarily is, in the beautiful narratives of Matthew and Luke — should not be snatched from us so rudely by intellectualism at a moment when faith which is of the heart is sought by everyone. But then we are at Seminary and it does not behoove us to be naive or innocent concerning the scholarly work in the subject. Rather, I say, let us look at it now, in January, so that by December it will have taken its proper place in our attitudes — making us ever more vital to our congregations in our interpretations but not obscuring, as intellectualism so often does, the beauty which is Faith's.

Mr. Huntley's contribution is by way of a set of New Year's resolutions. Let us treat them as such and may their fate be less that of a secular resolution and more that of a "high resolve".

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...Richard T. Schellhase, our president, expresses his thanks to the many committees for their fine work during the past term. Particularly does he thank the worship committee for the fine Choral Eucharist planned, and the Program committee for the Christmas Party, which turned out to be a gay evening for all. He also expresses his thanks to all the fellows and professors for the fine cooperation in all activities and hopes that the new term will hold much in store for us.

At the same time the Society members express their Christian sympathy to Dick and his family in the recent death of the father, Dr. Adam Schellhase. May the blessings of God be with them in their time of trial.



THE VIRGIN BIRTH . . . Vernon H. Baum

The birth stories of Jesus being yet prominent in our minds, we are confronted once more by the age-old question of the Virgin Birth. The issue is familiar to nearly everyone, yet many hesitate to take a stand on either side of the question. Perhaps a brief review of the matter would be helpful in formulating our own opinions.

On the affirmative side, it is pointed that accounts of the Virgin Birth occur in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Both agree to the fact of the supernatural birth, the place (Bethlehem), the time (reign of Herod), and the residence of Jesus (Nazareth). The two accounts differ in their approach, the story being told in Matthew's case from Joseph's side, and in Luke's case, from Mary's side. In Matthew we have the description of the visit of the magi, the massacre of the innocents, and the flight into Egypt. In Luke we have the song of the host, the journey of the shepherds, and the visit of the parents to the temple, including the prophecy of Simeon and Anna.

These differences would seem to indicate that no one common birth narrative was in possession of these writers. At the same time it may affirm that the theory of the Virgin Birth is older than either, as well as independent of both.

At all times the fact should be kept in mind that Matthew was writing from a Jewish point of view, and in so doing, endeavored to point that Jesus fulfilled Hebrew Prophecy. He referred to Isa. 7:14 ("Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel") in support of the birth as he recorded it. It may be noted that in Hebrew the word "virgin" means nothing more than a young marriageable woman. When the Septuagint was written, the Greek mind probably conceived of virgin in a new light, and it may be that Matthew was influenced by this coloring. Moreover, Hebrew belief did not include any virgin birth theory. Family life was exalted; virginity was not a thing to be desired. Greek thought with its godman relations may have provided some sort of an incentive for this concept.

Further attempt to fulfill Hebrew prophecy is seen in the tracing by Matthew of the lineage of Jesus through the Davidic line, down to Joseph. Here also there is an inconsistency, for Jesus' royal descent depends on Joseph, who according to the virgin birth theory, has nothing to do with his conception (there are some who claim that the purpose of the lineage is solely to show Jesus' legal position in the Davidic line). Luke does the same thing, tracing Jesus from Joseph to David, and back to Adam.

On the negative side of the problem, we may first consider the annunciation. The angel tells Mary (Luke 1:35) "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called a son of God". Nothing here excludes human paternity; and some maintain that it is consistent with such paternity on the ground that it might be said of any child, since every child is a child of God. (Palmer)

Those who deny the Virgin Birth point to the gospel of Mark, (that which is generally conceded to be the most historically reliable) which nowhere gives mention of a miraculous conception. They also remind one that St. Paul never says anything about the matter. For further consideration, they refer to Jesus and Mary. Jesus acknowledged the fact of his unique relationship with the father, but never mentioned anything about his birth. Mary, quite obviously, was the only person who knew the full circumstances, and as far as we know, there is recorded no testimony on her behalf. However, several scriptural references seem to indicate that she did not consider the birth of her firstborn to be unusual. She never hesitated to refer to Joseph as the father of Jesus. ("Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing".) Furthermore, if she had considered his birth to be supernatural,

THE VIRGIN BIRTH Continued.

why would she have joined his brothers in attempting to restrain his activity, convinced of the fact that he was possessed by demons? Moreover, it is logical to assume that she would have informed John the Baptist, and later the apostles, concerning Jesus' birth. The evidence seems quite conclusive that Mary regarded the birth of Jesus as a normal event. Finally what good would the absence of a physical father do in the presence of a physical mother?

In the end, it remains for each believer to formulate his own opinion of the conception of Jesus. In doing this certain factors should be kept in mind. In discussing the birth stories, we should remember that they have little bearing on the ministry of Jesus. His mission and message are affected little by the nature of his birth, consequently we need not feel bound to accept them in one form or another on the basis of validating Jesus' existence. There are those who are of the opinion that if we make Jesus the product of a hundred per cent human birth, he will be of greater meaning to us, because so being, he shares all the aspects of a normal human origin, and thus has more in common with us. At any rate, the important thing is the divinity of Christ, and the Virgin Birth is in no way connected with it, unless we regard the divinity as material. Mary's virginity is too physical a basis for Christ's holiness. "The crowning evidence of the divinity of Christ is that in yielding ourselves to him we find God." (G.E. Horro) The true miracle is not the virgin body of Mary, but the virgin soul of Jesus.

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CHAPEL WORSHIP . . . Joseph Huntley, Chairman of Worship Committee

For sometime the feeling has been expressed by individuals to members of the Worship Committee that some sort of a norm or standard should be set up for the chapel services. The Worship Committee felt that the need expressed by the individuals was genuine and appointed a committee composed of John Zinn and Grant Harriety to draw up a list of recommendations. The recommendations they proposed, and all of which were passed by the Committee on Worship are listed below. It should be noted that the below are merely recommendations, and that the committee has no desire to infringe upon the liberty of any freedom-loving soul.

1. If the Confession is used in the service it should be said kneeling.
2. All hymns should be sung standing unless the Liturgist indicates otherwise.
3. In the use of the Apostles' Creed the words "rose again from the dead" should be used instead of "rose from the dead."
4. The Liturgist should provide the organists with full information regarding the mechanics of his service at least one day before the service is scheduled.
5. All ansens should be sung with the exception of the Confession and the Lord's Prayer.
6. The versicles "Praise ye the Lord" and "The Lord be with you" should be used in their appropriate positions as introductions to praise and prayer respectively.
7. General prayers should be said standing or kneeling.
8. It is suggested that all choir members be suitably attired.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR.

