

PHILIP SCHAFF'S CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS ROLE IN THE MERCERSBURG MOVEMENT

1844 - 1864

by

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To my father, clergyman, librarian, and theological professor, whose ministry has inspired many sons, including two of his own, to serve Christ and his Church in the spirit of Philip Schaff.

## PREFACE

Philip Schaff the Church historian and early advocate of Christian union is widely known. Philip Schaff the theologian, liturgist and co-leader of one of America's most significant theological movements, the Mercersburg movement, is lesser known. The purpose of this dissertation is to present Schaff's concept of the Church as expressed in his early works written during his professorship at the Mercersburg Seminary, and to describe his role in the controversy which marred the harmony of the German Reformed Church in the United States during most of the last century.

As in Schaff's day, so in ours, we too are concerned with the doctrine of the Church. Thus, this study is relevant not only to the current theological discussions between the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches who, in 1957, organically merged to form the United Church of Christ in America, but it also impinges upon the important issues underlying the "church question" which is currently being debated by the members of the World Council of Churches. In this sense, we can say that the subject matter of this dissertation is relevant to the whole ecumenical movement. While not suggesting that we can live in the twentieth century with a nineteenth century outlook, it is nevertheless the conviction of the writer that the voice of Philip Schaff has much to say to those of a later generation, who, like Schaff, also look forward to the time when "they all shall be one."

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T. L. T.

Note: American rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar have been used throughout this dissertation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### I

Philip Schaf<sup>1</sup> was born January 1st, 1819 in the village of Chur, canton of Graubünden, Switzerland, and baptized in the Reformed Church a week later. His father was a carpenter who died at the early age of thirty when Philip was only a year old. His mother, who lived to be eighty-seven and from whom Schaff received his rugged physical constitution and a deep sense of Christian piety, was left with the responsibility of supporting her only child.

Young Philip was educated in the elementary schools of Chur. His unusual talent for learning attracted the attention of teachers and friends, who encouraged him in his studies and later contributed financially toward his academic expenses. At the age of twelve Philip entered the Cantonsschule where he made rapid progress; he by-passed several forms and graduated first in his class.

By far the most influential person in Schaff's boyhood was the Reverend Paul Kind, the village Antistes. "He was an able and faithful preacher of the Gospel," wrote Dr. Schaff, "and for this reason unpopular with his colleagues, who were either rationalistic or indifferent to religion."<sup>2</sup> It was largely

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1. In 1847 Schaff changed his surname spelling from Schaf to Schaff. His journal, personal papers and correspondence reveal no reasons for this change. However, his friend, Dr. William Mann indicates that Schaff did not like the English translation of his surname, i.e. "sheep" or even, "simpleton". In a letter written to Schaff, dated November 30th, 1847, Dr. Mann humorously commented, "Diese fallen freilich nicht ganz zu Gunsten der Neuerung aus. Denn einmal ist es nie und nimmer eine Schande gewesen, den Namen eines Tierleins an sich zu tragen, sintemalen dieselben Geschöpfe Gottes sind, so gut, wie wir; sodann hat unser Herr selber den bekannten Herodes einen Fuchs (animal sine ratione et sensu) genannt; hat sich selber ein Lamm nennen lassen und allen den Seinen deinen Namen als einen wahren Ehrentitel der Gottseligkeit erteilt." See Adolph Spáth, D. Wilhelm Julius Mann, Erinnerungsblätter, Reading, Pa., 1895, p. 45.

2. Philip Schaff, "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, The Life and Work of Philip Schaff in part Autobiographical, New York, 1897, p. 7. These reminiscences were begun by Dr. Schaff in 1871 and continued at intervals until his death in 1893. Written in English and intended primarily for his family,

through the urging of Pastor Kind that young Schaff left Chur in 1834 to attend the boys' academy in Kornthal, Wurtemberg.

Philip Schaff spent five years among the people of Wurtemberg, studying first at Kornthal, then at the gymnasium in Stuttgart and finally at the University of Tubingen. "To Wurtemberg," he wrote, "I owe under God my spiritual life and the best part of my education. Had I remained in Switzerland, my career would probably have taken a turn very different from that which it took."<sup>3</sup> The young student was very much impressed by the genial people whose little kingdom became a second fatherland to him. He never ceased to be amazed at the number of great men who either were born in or resided within its borders.<sup>4</sup> But it was not simply the good natured, kind-hearted people whose "Gemütlichkeit" abounded in all its peculiar charm and attractiveness, or the fame of her sons, which made the strongest impact on young Schaff. Rather it was the quality of the Wurtembergers' religious life, their great tradition of evangelical piety which exalted Christ above creed. Schaff was well aware that some of the most learned opponents of Christianity had come from Wurtemberg, e.g. Paulus, the champion of deistic rationalism; Baur, the head of pantheistic rationalism, and Strauss, who reduced the life of Jesus to a fiction of the religious imagination. But he never felt that the theories of these men really captured the hearts or minds of the Wurtembergers, as was the case in other sections of Germany. Writing in 1857, Dr. Schaff declared that he was confident the people of Wurtemberg, "... cherish with grateful reverence the unbroken succession of pious divines and ministers, from Bengel to

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they contain recollections of his life and of persons he knew before coming to America. Schaff also kept a journal of his travels abroad and a diary. Unfortunately the original copies of this material are lost, however, they furnish the autobiographical portions of David Schaff's biography of his father.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

4. For example, Schiller, Uhland, poets; Schelling, Hegel, philosophers; Kepler, the astronomer; Andrae, Bengel, Storr, Schmid, Dorner, Protestant theologians; Moehler, Hirscher, Hefele, Roman Catholic divines.

Hofacher, who faithfully taught and preached the way of life during the infidel apostasy of the last and present centuries." <sup>5</sup>

The Protestants of Württemberg were originally Lutheran in doctrine and discipline, except for a small colony of Huguenots who eventually became "germanized." In 1535 the Reformation in Württemberg was accomplished through the cooperation of the Lutheran leaders, Brentz and Schnepf and the Reformed pastor, Blaur, a native of Constance and more inclined toward a simpler worship service of the Helvetic type. Thus, liturgically, the Württembergers were more Reformed than Lutheran. In the seventeenth century the pietist movement of Philip Spener, August Franke and Nicholas Zinzendorf took root in the kingdom of Württemberg and shifted the theological focus from an exclusive emphasis on confessionalism and dead orthodoxy to a more vital type of piety, which stressed regeneration and conversion. Although often strongly ascetic and at times fanatically emotional, especially in rural areas, pietism was modified considerably and experienced a rebirth not only in Württemberg, but in most of Germany during the early nineteenth century in opposition to the rising tide of rationalism. <sup>6</sup> It was this modified type of pietism which attracted the young Swiss student, a Christo-centric, biblical pietism, which combined solid learning with a certain mysticism. It had the power to break through the theological differences between Lutheran and Reformed confessions, contributing to a union of the two churches in Prussia in 1817 and in Württemberg in

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5. Philip Schaff, (hereafter designated P.S.) Germany, Its Universities, Theology and Religion, Philadelphia, 1857, p. 95.

6. Actually, the pietist revival in Württemberg began in the latter part of the eighteenth century under the influence of Johann Bengel. Among the great preachers of the movement were the Hofacker brothers, Ludwig and Wilhelm. The center of the movement was in Wupperthal, the home of the hymnwriter, Gerhard Tersteegen, and the famed Reformed pastor, Gottfried Krummacher, whose son, Frederick, preached at Schaff's ordination. For an appraisal of the religious situation in Württemberg, see Wm. Mann, "Der kirchliche und religiöse Standpunkt Württembergs" in Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund, IX, July, August, 1856, pp. 215-227; 278-285.

1827, seven years before Schaff had entered Kornthal. Dr. Schaff points out that the Württemberg pietists for a long time occupied a position similar to the Methodists in the Anglican communion. The government wisely tolerated these people and allowed them to hold separate prayer meetings conducted by Stundenhalter (a class of lay leaders). But the vast majority of Württemberg pietists, at the same time, attended public worship in the state Church and received the Sacrament from regularly ordained clergymen.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Dr. Schaff contended, the pietists were a blessing to the Church, since they helped revive her life. A new hymnbook and a better liturgy were introduced and the Church took an interest in the benevolent operations of Christianity, formerly carried on exclusively by the pietists, e.g. domestic and foreign missions, care of the poor and destitutes, etc.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the pietists modified some of their peculiarities, became more churchly, but never succumbed to symbolical Lutheranism.<sup>9</sup>

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7. P.S. Germany, op. cit., pp. 96, 97. Schaff commends the majority of pietists who stayed in the state Church (Lutheran until 1824). He notes that only the congregations at Kornthal and Wilhelmsdorf ever left the established Church.

8. Under the influence of pietism about fifty missionary societies had arisen in Württemberg by the year 1800, of which the most significant was the Christentumsgesellschaft. The Basel and Barmen missionary societies arose out of this development and sent many missionaries to America. In the years following 1840 a number of Württembergers emigrated to America under the auspices of the above societies and settled mainly in Missouri. A number of these immigrants later united to form the German Evangelical Church Association of the West which subsequently became the Evangelical Synod of North America.

9. Thus Schaff explained, "The church in that country [Württemberg] calls itself now officially no more Lutheran, but Evangelical. Its best ministers and laymen ... [support] in fraternal communion with the Reformed Christians of Switzerland, the missionary establishment of Basel, most of whose teachers and pupils are natives of Württemberg, and may be said to be attached in principle and practice, to the cause of evangelical union. The theology which prevails there, has the same character, and is based upon the consensus of the two churches. Some of the most eminent divines of Württemberg found no difficulty to follow a call to a Reformed university, as Schneckenburger, or to chairs and pulpits in the United Prussian Church, as Kling, Staib, Dorner, Hoffman." Germany, op. cit., pp. 97, 98.

The village of Kornthal was founded in 1819 by pietists who were utterly dissatisfied with the rationalism and indifferentism in the Lutheran Church. Philip Schaff studied at the school in Kornthal for eight months. The most important part of his education was religious, especially the catechetical instruction he received from Dr. Kapff, then chief pastor of the village church and later Prelate and Cathedral Preacher at Stuttgart. Of the influence of Dr. Kapff on his life, Schaff wrote:

"He preached from out of his own experience of Jesus Christ and him crucified as the ground of our salvation. He confirmed me after a thorough course in religious instruction and from that time I looked up to him as a spiritual father." <sup>10</sup>

The people in Kornthal accepted the Augsburg Confession and Schaff was confirmed according to the Lutheran rite. Yet it is important to remember that he was not confirmed in the spirit of a rigid confessionalism or uncompromising orthodoxy, but rather in the spirit of an evangelical Lutheranism tempered by pietism. Dr. Schaff considered Kornthal his "spiritual birthplace", where he was introduced to the mysteries of evangelical truth and where he dedicated himself at the altar in the school chapel to the service of God. <sup>11</sup>

Philip Schaff completed the remainder of his pre-university course at the gymnasium in Stuttgart, where he mainly studied German literature. He lived in the home of William Julius Mann and shared his room. The two young men became life-long friends and both later came to America. Mann rose to high positions of leadership in the German Lutheran Church, and Dr. Schaff dedicated to him his revised Church History. The two men kept up their correspondence with one another in the United States, especially during the controversies within the German Reformed Church.

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10. P.S. "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 12.

11. In a letter to the son of Pastor Kapff, written in 1880 on the occasion of the father's death, Dr. Schaff said, "... No philosophical analysis can explain that religious and moral change which, on its divine side, is called the new birth, and on its human side, conversion. Most Christians can only say in

David Schaff considers the social and religious influences of his father's two years in Stuttgart as having had much to do with keeping him from rationalistic thinking at the University of Tübingen.<sup>12</sup> Schaff never forgot the piety of the Mann family, but equally significant, in so far as making a lasting impression on him, were the sermons of the pietist, William Hofacher, and the devotional lectures of the poet, William Knapp. Indeed Philip Schaff always retained much of the fervor of Württemberg piety which was centered in a strong devotion to the person of Christ as Redeemer and Saviour and was void of sectarian exclusiveness.

## II

German theology at the beginning of the nineteenth century was in a stage of transition and reconstruction. The first half of the previous century had witnessed the rise of the German Aufklärung, partially influenced by the thought of the English and French deists. Although pietism had preceded the Aufklärung in Germany and had broken the grasp of confessional orthodoxy, neither the Pietists nor the Confessionalists produced any great leaders in the eighteenth century to replace the older dogmatic theologians. The result was that the Enlightenment invaded Germany with new thoughts and concepts and found the intellectual field wide open.<sup>13</sup> The Aufklärung represented many shades of opinion. To call it rationalism *per se* is not quite true, although that is what it largely became. What is of permanent significance about the Aufklärung is that more than in England and France, the critical and positive contributions of the rationalists in Germany paved the way for the creative developments of the nineteenth century.

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regard to it that, while they were once dead, they now live, and their life is hid with Christ in God. This much I know, by the grace of God, and under the guidance of your father, ... a change occurred within me which determined all my after life and activity." Quoted by David S. Schaff in *op. cit.*, p. 13.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

13. For an account of the effect of rationalism on religion see, K.R.Hagenbach, History of the Church in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, I, London,

The speculations of Leibnitz (1646-1716), had furnished material which was later incorporated into the systems of the rationalistic theologians, and the writings of Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), of Halle had spread the rationalistic spirit without developing a system. But it was Christian Wolff (1674-1754), who became the great protagonist of the early Aufklärung<sup>11</sup>. Like most philosophers of the preceding century, Wolff had been trained in mathematics. His thought was closely related to that of Leibnitz, but he never really grasped the latter's deeper thoughts. For Wolff that alone was true which could be demonstrated by logical certainty, like that provided by mathematics. The "pure reason", innately residing in the mind, he thought capable of rationally deducing all truth. Whatever comes to us via experience is only confirmatory. The world is regarded as a huge machine which operates according to fixed mechanical laws. The cause of the world is God; the laws of all rational thinking and acting are divine attributes, which man possesses within himself. The highest aim of being is for the soul to reach the divine completeness, involving a conscious apprehension of these divine attributes. Thus the principles of right action reside naturally in man; they are part of his divinely appointed constitution. Wolff never denies that there might be such a thing as revelation, but if there is, it contains nothing which would contradict reason. Likewise, it is possible, but improbable that there are miracles, which would involve an interruption in the order of nature and a restoration of that order after the event. Wolff held a very optimistic view of man, who is on the way individually and socially to a higher completeness, a larger fulfillment of himself by his own effort.

Wolff's views constituted an obvious break with both the older orthodoxy and pietism, since no longer was there a supernatural revelation in the Scriptures to confront and contradict the natural man; nor was there a supernatural rescue from

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1870, pp. 312 ff.; Gustav Ecke, Die Evangelischen Landeskirchen Deutschlands im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert, Berlin, 1904, pp. 65 ff.; Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, New York, 1950, pp. 525-536.

sin and death provided through the person of Christ. On the contrary, humanity is conceived as potentially capable of realizing its own salvation. Reason, natural religion, original endowed morality, and progress toward moral perfection became the proper objects of religious regard. <sup>14</sup>

Even more radical than Wolff was the rationalism of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768). He had traveled in England where he adopted the views of the deists and defended them in his Wolfenbützel Fragments, <sup>15</sup> published posthumously. Reimarus, like the deists, rejected the supernatural element in religion. He believed in a wise Creator, even in immortality, but these truths, he claimed, could be ascertained by reason, not revelation. Reimarus went so far as to claim that the writers of the Bible were not even honest men, but were motivated by fraud and selfishness. <sup>16</sup>

But the most significant theory favoring the rationalist point of view, was presented by Gotthold Ephriam Lessing (1729-1781). In his Education of the Human Race, published in 1780, Lessing argued that the human race, like the individual, passes through the successive stages of childhood, youth and manhood. The Scriptures are given by God, (not literally, however,) to help man progress through these various stages of development. Thus childhood is motivated by the hope of immediate rewards and punishments. Some grown men, however, are still in the childhood stage and for them the Old Testament is a divine book of spiritual training, promising long life and temporal blessings as a reward for obedience. Youth

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14. In opposition to Wolff's views the pietists obtained an order from King Frederick Wilhelm I in 1723 demanding Wolff's removal from the University within 24 hours or face execution. He escaped to Marburg but was restored to Halle by Frederick the Great in 1740.

15. So named because his views were written on fragments found in the library at Wolfenbützel. Their contents, published by Lessing between 1774 and 1778, aroused much controversy and discussion.

16. In his seventh Fragment, Reimarus applied to the life of Christ the same methods of historical investigation used by secular scholars. He was predisposed to reject anything miraculous or supernatural in the life of Jesus. The results

is the stage represented by the New Testament where there is an emphasis on self surrender and the need to sacrifice for the sake of future success and happiness. But manhood is the highest stage, where one acts according to duty without hope of reward or fear of punishment. Manhood has for its guide not the Scriptures, but reason. Lessing's book definitely hurt the cause of historic Christianity by creating the notion that the Christian religion belonged to the past or to a lesser period of man's development.

It is not surprising that one effect of the Aufklärung<sup>11</sup> was to spread the opinion that the Scriptures were valuable only in so far as their truth was compatible with that of natural religion. Jesus was regarded as a moral teacher, not as the center of a personal faith. Rationalist preaching was reduced to moralizing.

The rationalist point of view dominated not only much of the theological thinking in the 1800's, but also was kept alive in the nineteenth century in various forms and systems, and is still prevalent in some German theological schools today. In the eighteenth century, confessional orthodoxy continued to exist as did pietism, but with decreasing intellectual persuasiveness.

A second effect of the Aufklärung<sup>11</sup> was to revive an interest in Church history and to stimulate the development of textual and historical criticism of the Bible.<sup>17</sup> Although the presuppositions of natural religion often affected the conclusions of the biblical scholars and in many instances biblical research was carried on in a most unscientific manner, yet definite gains were made which

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of his scholarship are barren, but he raised many questions pertaining to the method of N.T. investigation which were discussed again by later scholars.

17. Pioneer work in the field of Church history was done by Johann von Mosheim, (1694-1755) a famed preacher, vigorously opposed to orthodoxy, unsympathetic with pietism, yet unable to support Wolff's extreme rationalism. Von Mosheim, (essentially a latitudinarian) nevertheless sought to tell events exactly as they happened, free from partisan bias. His Institutiones (1726, revised in 1755) was the first unbiased attempt to present a comprehensive, objective history of the Christian Church. His Commentarii de rebus Christianorum (1753) gives a fuller account of the early history of the Church than his previous work.

cannot be minimized. <sup>18</sup>

A reaction to the cold, one-sided, intellectualism of the eighteenth century was inevitable. If, during the first half of the century, the goddess of "common sense" and "reason" ruled supreme, as the century moved on, she had to contend for her position of honor with the goddess of "feeling". The reaction came in the philosophy of Romanticism, which set out to prove that man was a being with feeling and not an exclusively "thinking" being; that he had an emotional nature as well as an intellectual one. Although often extreme in their emphasis and frequently hostile or indifferent to religion, the Romanticists, nonetheless, were able to stimulate a renewed appreciation for classical and medieval culture, to revive an interest in poetry, drama and the arts, and even to recognize the place of the supernatural in religion, although often vague and obscure. <sup>19</sup>

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was the first to take cognizance of the place of feeling in philosophy. His Critique of Pure Reason dealt the death blow to the then dominant thought of the rationalist Wolff by showing that the attempt to prove God's existence through the use of pure reason was intellectually impossible. <sup>20</sup>

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18. We call attention especially to the work of the following scholars. Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) whose N.T. Gnomon (Index), 1742, was a remarkable commentary for its time and examines the N.T. text on the basis of sound grammatical principles. Johann August Ernesti (1707-1784) applied the historical and grammatical methods used in studying classical literature to the N.T. text. Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791) distinguished between what he considered to be the "permanent truths" in the Scriptures and those portions which were due to the beliefs and superstitions of the times, i.e. he held that all parts of Scripture were not of equal value; there is revelation in the Scriptures, but all Scripture is not revelation. Semler also noticed the existence of a Petrine, Judaizing party in the early Church and an anti-Judaic, Pauline faction. It was not the results of his scholarship which were of prime significance, but the path he indicated for future N.T. investigation.

19. Goethe, Schiller and Lessing were the leaders of the German literary renaissance.

20. Kant, who is called "the father of modern philosophy" contends in this work that knowledge is the product of two elements, a content from without and a form given to it by the laws of the mind. Yet these two elements do not give us absolute knowledge, i.e. knowledge of things as they are in themselves, but only of what our minds make of what comes into them from without. Therefore God's

But in theology, the great leader to come out of the Romantic movement, whose thought shaped the theological thinking of the whole century, was Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher (1768-1834), whom Dr. Schaff called "the Origen of German Protestantism", pointing out that he was "neither orthodox nor heretical, but independent, original, emancipating and stimulating in different directions."<sup>21</sup> Educated by the Moravians and retaining much of their piety and feeling, Schleiermacher studied the views of Wolff and Semler, but was more impressed with the writings of Plato, Spinoza and Kant as well as with the philosophy of Romanticism. In 1796 he became a hospital chaplain in Berlin, which was then a center of the Aufklärung.<sup>11</sup> Here in 1799, he published his remarkable Discourses on Religion (Ueber die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern), delivered in rationalist circles.<sup>22</sup> From 1804 to 1807 he was a professor in Halle but returned to Berlin in the latter part of 1807 where he subsequently became pastor of Trinity Church. In 1810 on the occasion of the founding of the University of Berlin, he was appointed Professor of Theology, a position he held until his death. His mature views were

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existence cannot be demonstrated by pure reason since reason does not give us any knowledge of what He is in Himself, but only of what our minds think He is. In the Critique of the Practical Reason, 1788, Kant developed his famed theory of the categorical imperative. Even though absolute knowledge of that beyond experience is impossible by a purely intellectual process, Kant calls attention to man's conscious feeling of moral obligation within. His religious ideas were set forth in his Religion within the Bounds of Reason Only, 1793. Since the prime content of the practical reason is morality, religion is reduced practically to the level of theistic ethics. Kant is really a rationalist operating on principles different from those of his predecessors. W. Walker in op. cit., p. 532, claims, "Kant's contribution to Christian theology was not his rationalizing interpretation of doctrines, but his vindication of man's profoundest feeling as bases of practical religious conviction and moral conduct."

21. P.S. Theological Propaedeutic, New York, 1909, p. 13. This work is a theological manual for divinity students based on Schaff's lectures prepared in the course of fifty years of teaching.

22. Shortly after his Discourses were written, Schleiermacher published his Monologues (Monologen, eine Neujahrsgabe, Berlin, 1800; 2te Aufl., 1818; 3te Aufl. 1829) which, despite apparent divergencies, fundamentally reflect the same point of view as the preceding work, although in the latter, Schleiermacher no longer studies man in the face of the universe, but in his individuality.

set forth in 1821-22 in his two volume work, Christian Belief According to the Principles of the Evangelical Church (Der Christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt, Berlin, 1821; 2te Aufl., 1831).

Schleiermacher's great contribution to theology was his incorporation of the results of previous philosophical and theological tendencies into his own system, giving theology a new basis and giving to the person of Christ a new meaning largely ignored in his age. <sup>23</sup> Orthodoxy and rationalism had tended to make religion largely a matter of accepting an intellectual system and an externally authoritative rule of conduct. For orthodoxy religion involved assent to a corpus of revealed truth and obedience to the "will of God", based on the Bible and certain creeds. To the rationalists, however, religion involved the acceptance of the truth of natural religion, ascertained by reason, and also adherence to a universal morality. Both parties regarded religion primarily as a means for securing a happy immortality, despite disagreement on the nature of this immortality. But for Schleiermacher, the whole basis of religion was inward, psychological, in the feeling. In its essence religion is neither doctrines, revealed or rationally determined, nor a system of conduct, although both belief and conduct flow from religion.

Schleiermacher pointed out that in our experience we perceive the antitheses of the many and the changing over against a principle of unity and permanency. These two antitheses give us God, the Absolute and the Eternal, without whom everything would be chaos and the world empty. Since the Absolute is throughout all, God is immanent in the world. Man, as Leibnitz had said, is a micronism, a re-

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23. P.S., Germany, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155; 243-244; George Cross, The Theology of Schleiermacher, Chicago, 1911, pp. 3-66; Frederick A. Lichtenberger, History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century, (tr. by Wm. Hastie) Edinburgh, 1889, pp. 45-166.

flection of the universe. When contrasted with that which is Absolute, Eternal and Universal, however, man feels finite, limited, temporal, and, above all, dependent. It is this feeling of dependence, Schleiermacher contended, that is the basis of all religion, and the purpose of religion is to bridge the gap between the finite and the infinite, between man and God. Thus, from a practical point of view at least, the value, if not the truth, of all religions depends on how effectively this aim is accomplished. Religions are not to be divided into rigid categories of true and false; they can only be classified according to relative degrees of adequacy in their attempt to effect the real purpose of religion. Schleiermacher thus held that all religions are in the fullest sense products of revelation in that they involve a fuller manifestation to the human consciousness of the immanent God.

Schleiermacher maintained, however, that Christianity is the best religion yet known to man, because it most fully achieves the real purpose of religion; it deals with problems which are universal: sin, pardon, separation and reconciliation. It is in Christianity that the person of Christ is central. He is the reconciliation of the finite with the infinite, the eternal with the temporal, the union of God and man. Christ is the Mediator who brings this reconciliation to others; He mediates a quality of life to the human consciousness, a life which is divine and thus immortal. Therefore, while an immortality in duration is a great hope, real immortality is a quality of life, available to the human consciousness now, rather than exclusively in the future.

For Schleiermacher the person of Christ is the dominant, central, all-controlling factor in Christian theology. He alone is eternal and unchanging. Thus, Schleiermacher relegated doctrines to a secondary position, maintaining they are fundamentally just religious experiences, interpreted and defined intellectually. Because doctrinal interpretations, as well as doctrines themselves, change from time to time, and will change again, they can only be considered the man-made forms

in which abiding Christian truth expresses itself in the historical process. Since the leaders of orthodoxy were unaware of this fact, preferring instead to put much emphasis on creeds and dogma, they were thereby giving absolute authority to that which was only relative. Likewise, Schleiermacher attacked the rationalists, who put so much stress on morality as the chief purpose of religion, by pointing out that morality is not religion and religion is not morality. It is in the light of Christ's permeation of the human religious consciousness, that one is faced with the question, "What ought I to do?" Perhaps naively, (especially in his early writings) Schleiermacher thought that if an individual allowed his Christian consciousness to come to full maturity, selfishness and self-centeredness would be destroyed and he would be able to fulfill his moral obligations in the family, community, and state, since sin would be replaced by the ever increasing presence, and dominion of Christ in the human consciousness.

Schleiermacher was considered "too radical" by the orthodox and "too visionary" by the rationalists. Yet, despite the numerous faults of his system, the new significance he gave to the person of Christ and "religious feeling" cannot be minimized. His theology prompted the rise of the Evangelical School of German theologians, with whom Dr. Schaff became so intimately associated.<sup>24</sup> His theology also had a practical bent which led to his participation in movements for Church union, the most significant being the Prussian Union of 1817, of which Schleiermacher is called "the spiritual father." The Evangelical Church of Prussia resulted from that union of Lutheran and Reformed congregations and was the church into which Dr. Schaff was later ordained.

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24. See Luther Binkley, "The German Antecedents of the Mercersburg Theology" in The Mercersburg Theology, Manheim, Pa., 1953, pp. 23-38. Also see Binkley's more detailed paper, "The German Theological Antecedents of the Mercersburg Theology" in The Bulletin of the Theological Seminary of the Evang. and Ref. Church, XXI, July, 1950, pp. 120-148.

## III

Philip Schaff entered the University of Tübingen in the fall of 1837. At the time two schools of theological opinion contested for supremacy on the Protestant divinity faculty. The first was the New Critical School of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) and the second, the Evangelical School, was represented by Christian Schmid (1794-1852) and Isaac A. Dorner (1809-1884). The conflict between the two schools became especially evident in the departments of New Testament study. The older biblical criticism of Reimarus and Steudel had been replaced by the newer theories of Baur, who applied the practical implications of Hegel's dialectic to the history of early Christianity.<sup>25</sup> Baur was shaking to their foundation's traditional theories pertaining to the origins of Apostolic Christianity and the composition of the New Testament writings. His main views were set forth in a study of the parties within the Corinthian church in his article "Ueber die Christuspärthei zu Corinth" which appeared in the Tübingen Zeitschrift in 1831.<sup>26</sup> Like Hegel Baur felt that all historical progress must pass through the three stages of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Seiler had called attention to the existence of Petrine (Judaizing) and Pauline parties in the early Church. Baur proceeded to apply the Hegelian formula to the history of

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25. Schaff recalls how, upon his arrival in Tübingen, "The philosophy of Hegel ruled without a successful rival among the students, and filled them with enthusiasm for absolute knowledge. They thought they could reconstruct the whole universe by rethinking the thoughts of God, who comes to His self-consciousness in man." (from Schaff's "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.) The power and profundity of Hegel's "dialectic" cannot be questioned. Marx applied it to his concept of historical materialism; Schaff used it in his concept of historical development, however, in a modified form and within a different context than that of the rationalists, whose Hegelianism became pantheistic.

26. Baur's summary of his most important investigations and theories is contained in his Church History of the First Three Centuries, (tr. by Allan Menzies) 2 vols., London & Edinburgh, 1878.

the New Testament Church. Thus, Baur argued, Christianity began essentially as Messianic Judaism- the thesis. The antithesis arose in Pauline Christianity. The Patrine and Pauline views contended with one another well into the second century, but a new synthesis was inevitable and came in the development of the old Catholic Church, which honored both Peter and Paul and seemed unaware that the two leaders ever stood in serious opposition to one another.

In order for his theory to make sense, Baur necessarily had to re-date many of the New Testament books, especially those which he believed clearly showed biases or tendencies, applicable to one of the three stages of historical development. Therefore, applying the test, Baur concluded that only Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians were genuinely Pauline epistles, since they alone reveal evidence of a fundamental conflict with Judaizing Christianity. Because the other epistles, traditionally ascribed to Paul, do not show traces of a struggle, they had to be dated later after the conflict was forgotten. By the same reasoning, Revelation, because of its Judaizing tendencies must be early. In 1847 Baur applied his formula to the gospels,<sup>27</sup> and concluded that Matthew, because of its Judaizing bias, must be the oldest. Luke he considered a re-working of Marcion's gospel; Mark tried to conceal the conflict, and therefore was later. John, the most irenic gospel (and the favorite of the disciples of Schleiermacher) betrayed a familiarity with the struggle between the two parties and consequently could not be dated before the latter half of the second century. The most obvious conclusion of Baur's theory is that the greater part of the New Testament was written in the second century and that Paul is virtually the founder of Christianity.<sup>28</sup>

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27. Kritische Untersuchungen über die Canonischen Evangelien ihr Verhältniss zu Einander, ihr Ursprung u. ihr Charakter, Tübingen, 1847.

28. See Baur's Vorlesungen über N.T. Theologie, Tübingen, 1864, (published posthumously by his son.)

Even more extreme in its thesis and impact was the book by David F. Strauss, (1808-1874) Das Leben Jesus, published in 1835, which aroused the hostility not only of the orthodox and evangelical schools, but of the rationalists as well. Strauss was a pupil of Baur, a disciple of Hegel and acquainted with Barthold Niebuhr's discoveries, bearing on the place of myth in Roman history. Strauss concluded that, although we cannot know much about the earthly life of Jesus, what we do know must be understood as having taken place entirely within the realm of human experience, like any other historical event. He claimed that none of the gospel writers were eye witnesses and that John was of the least historical worth, while Matthew was written, first. Assuming that miracles were inherently impossible and claiming that they could not be rationally explained, Strauss maintained that the real facts of Christ's life were covered over with myth. The New Testament writers were looking for a wonder worker Messiah; they expected Him to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies; they were essentially honest men, holding noble ideas, (e.g. that the human race is partly divine and partly human, rising above death by union with God.) Christ personified all these ideas and they were attributed to Him by the gospel writers. Certainly the man Jesus lived, but, according to Strauss, the Christ of the New Testament, with all His superhuman characteristics, was essentially a creation of myth. <sup>29</sup>

The Evangelical School at Tübingen was headed by Christian Schmid, whom Dr. Schaff described as, "... a profoundly learned, pious, conscientious, and estimable scholar, but modest to a fault. He published nothing of importance during his lifetime, and his posthumous publications on Christian ethics and the theology of the New Testament... do not do him justice. ... He sympathized with Neander, and, independently, wrought out a similar reproduction of Apostolic teaching under the

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29. Lichtenberger, op. cit., pp. 321-359.

four leading types of James, Peter, Paul and John..."<sup>30</sup> It is not surprising that Schaff was attracted to the Evangelical School. His religious antecedents had been conservative. He had a profound regard for the person of Christ and objected to rationalism, not so much because of its speculations and fantastic theories about the biblical writings, but because of the irreverent way its adherents attacked the divine-human Christ.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Schaff also felt that rationalistic exegesis threatened to undermine Christianity, for reason was raised above faith and made the judge of revelation. The Bible was treated only as a human production, its genuineness questioned and its doctrines assailed. The value of the Scriptures was measured by the standard of utilitarian morality. Schaff had little sympathy for those who sought to explain away the miraculous elements of Christianity, (e.g. Paulus and Wegscheider) or sought to deny the supernatural a significant place in the Christian faith. "Rationalistic exegesis," Schaff wrote, "like Phariseism of old, but from an opposite point of view, diligently searches the letter of the Bible, but has no sympathy with its life-giving spirit. It investigates the historical and human aspects of Christianity and ignores or denies its divine character."<sup>32</sup>

Schaff regarded the mission of rationalism as chiefly destructive and negative, but at the same time he believed it was a justifiable and necessary re-

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30. P.S. "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Schmid's Biblical Theology of the New Testament was translated into English (1870) and widely used in Scottish and American theological institutions.

31. Schaff vigorously attacked the position of Strauss and the French critic, Renan in his book, Die Person Jesu Christi: das Wunder der Geschichte, Gotha & New York, 1865. This work was translated into Dutch, French, Italian, Greek, Russian, Bulgarian and Japanese. For English readers, Schaff incorporated much of the same material in a different book, The Person of Jesus Christ: The Perfection of His Humanity Viewed as Proof of His Divinity, with a collection of impartial testimonies, Boston, 1865. The English version appeared in thirteen editions, the last published in 1895. See also Schaff's The Moral Character of Christ, the Perfection of Christ's Humanity, a Proof of His Divinity, Chambersburg, 1861.

32. P.S. Propaedeutic, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

action against bibliolatry and symbolatry. Rationalism helped emancipate the mind from the tyranny of dogmatic systems, achieving lasting merits in grammatical, critical and historical research. Toward the end of his life, Dr. Schaff could say of rationalistic exegesis, "... it forms a transition to a new age of faith in harmony with enlightened reason and fortified by critical learning." <sup>33</sup>

Schaff felt the Evangelical School of theologians was able to combine sound scholarship with sincere Christian piety. Evangelical theology, he considered, was based upon a revival of faith in the Bible and the principles of the Reformation. The immense results of Christian scholarship, Schaff was sure, would at last accrue to the advantage of the Church. Like other Evangelical theologians, Schaff always stressed the divine and human qualities of Christ, the Bible and the Church. The human qualities or aspects of Christianity, he believed, were subject to investigation and criticism, but the divine affirmations of the historic Christian faith were not to be challenged or denied, but vigorously proclaimed as statements of faith, unascertainable by natural reason but known through revelation.

Although Schaff disagreed with Baur's New Testament theories, he nevertheless attended his lectures at <sup>II</sup>Tubingen. He admired Baur's rare genius and scholarship, his magnetism as a teacher, and the ease with which he handled the most difficult problems of higher criticism. Dr. Schaff said of Baur, "he was at the time, next to Neander, the most influential academic teacher in theology in Germany. I gained from him my first idea of historical development or of a constant and progressive flow of thought in the successive stages of the church. He made sad havoc with the literature of the apostolic age, ... But his bold, critical researches stimulated an immense activity in every direction, and led to many valuable results. His

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33. Ibid.

personal character was above reproach and among all the modern opponents of traditional orthodoxy, he is the ablest, the most honest and earnest. ..." 34

Next to Baur, the most celebrated lecturer at Tübingen was Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875) who created a revolution in the higher criticism of the Old Testament. 35 But it was Isaac Dorner who became Schaff's favorite professor and most trusted friend at Tübingen. Dr. Schaff believed that Dorner possessed the critical acumen of Baur and the Christian piety and Scriptural soundness of Schmid; he felt that Dorner knew as much of history as Baur but was more fair and sober in his judgment. Although lacking Baur's boldness, originality and style, Dorner's unique gift as a teacher was this: having passed under the training of Schleiermacher and Hegel, he was just the kind of man to satisfy the theological wants of advanced students who wished to discuss the critical and speculative problems of the age without losing their Christian faith.

In his lectures on dogmatics and apologetics Dorner attempted to demonstrate how Christian theology and philosophy could be harmonized. He indicated that both undergo development in history and thus no theological or philosophical system can be made absolute for all time. For Dorner the incarnation was the most important doctrine of the Christian faith, because it most fully testifies to the nature of God. Schaff regarded Dorner's study of the development of Christology as one which would long remain a classical statement. 36

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34. P.S. "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, op. cit., 19, 20 (emphasis, mine.)

35. Although a member of the Protestant Union, Ewald was extremely opposed to the school of Baur and to Baur, personally. He was highly independent, somewhat eccentric, and often bizarre in his critical judgments. Yet he holds a unique place in the history of biblical exegesis. A number of his works, too numerous to list, were translated into English.

36. See P.S. "Isaak August Dorner" in The Encyclopedia of Living Divines, New York, 1891, pp. 57, 58. Also P.S. Germany, op. cit., pp. 376-380.

During university vacations young Schaff often journeyed to Switzerland. On one occasion he met the philosopher Schelling, whose acquaintance he later renewed in Berlin. Schaff records that he heard from Schelling's dying lips, "... his last views on the philosophy of Church history, that is, the progressive stages of development as marked by the apostolic types, Peter, Paul and John. He confessed his faith in Christ as his only comfort in death." 37

An examination of Schaff's lecture notes, books and manuscripts shows the almost flawless precision and neatness with which he recorded the teaching of his professors. The acquisition of new knowledge thrilled him with enthusiasm. His devotion to Christ was not clouded over by academic theories. Just before leaving <sup>//</sup>Tubingen he wrote:

"I confess it aloud that in Christ I have found what my soul's deepest needs cry out for,- the satisfaction of my longings, the calming of anxious fears -- turning darkness into day. ... He [Christ] has been wonderfully present, healed my wounds, and shows daily his kindness and faithfulness, proving to me indeed that he lives and that his holy Gospel is not a garland of myths which abortive effort has sought to bind around his brow, and keeping me from erring in the labyrinth of the wisdom of the age." 38

Schaff developed an interest in poetry and the arts at <sup>//</sup>Tubingen which later developed into a concern for hymnody and sacred poetry. On the first Monday after Easter in the year 1838, the young Swiss student preached his first sermon on his favorite text, Jn. 3:16. The sermon, although rather long, is filled with the excitement of one who has understood the real significance of God's love for man, made known in the gift of His only Son. The sermon shows that Dr. Schaff's pietism had not been lost and that his deep faith in the personal Christ had not been weakened at the University. The sermon was preached in the Gustav Schwab

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37. P.S. "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 25.

38. Ibid., p. 25.

pulpit at Gomaringen, a town in Wurtemberg. 39

In September, 1839, Schaff entered the University of Halle. His last year of formal theological study was spent at Halle and at the University of Berlin, where he became acquainted with the chief leaders of the Evangelical School (Conciliatory School) of theologians, especially Friedrich A. G. Tholuck, Julius Müller, and Johann August Neander. These men, while holding different theological opinions, were all united in opposing the vulgar rationalism of Wegscheider, Paulus and Strauss. Their mission was to regain the positive and historical Christianity which seemed in danger of being lost. 40 They strove to encourage the combination of sound religious convictions with brilliant scholarship, in the hope that a new Christocentric theology would develop, worthy of a lasting place in Church history.

Young Schaff arrived in Halle carrying a letter of introduction to Tholuck from Dorner; he became Tholuck's amanuensis and librarian. Schaff considered Tholuck a "man of genius", "extensive learning" and "fervent piety," whose greatest theological strength lay in the realm of biblical exegesis. It was largely through his teaching, Schaff felt, that rationalism was defeated at Halle and evangelical theology re-introduced. Even more than for his lectures, Schaff admired Tholuck's devotion to students, especially those who were honest skeptics. 41

Next to Tholuck, Schaff's favorite professor was Julius Müller, whom he con-

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39. The original copy of this sermon is in the Historical Collection of the Evang. and Ref. Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa.

40. Other divines belonging to the Conciliatory School included C. Nitzsch at Bonn; R. Rothe (the best systematic theologian of the group), and C. Ullmann at Heidelberg; J. Lange, and a little later, G. Ebrard at Zürich.

41. See P.S. Germany, op. cit., pp. 278-294; P.S. "Frederick August Tholuck" in The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IV, 3rd edition, revised, New York, 1891, pp. 2351-52.

sidered not as brilliant as Tholuck, but "more solid and deep." Schaff described Müller as a "... humble, conscientious, kind, Christ-like man, [there being none greater] unless it be Neander. He lives in my memory as an evangelical saint. In his sincere modesty he refused to publish his lectures on dogmatic theology which would have taken rank as one of the very best systems of Protestant theology and he ordered his manuscripts destroyed at his death."<sup>42</sup> Schaff thought Müller's Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde (2 vols., Berlin, 1839-1844) was one of the most able and valuable works of its day since in it he showed the inadequacy of Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin. While Schaff could not accept Müller's contention that sin originated prior to Adam's fall, he appreciated Müller's critique of Schleiermacher's view.<sup>43</sup>

Schaff spent six months at Halle and then went on to complete his work at the University of Berlin. Here he met Ernst W. Hengstenberg (1802-1869), who at first was partial to the mediating theology but later broke completely with this school and became a zealous proponent of orthodoxy and the New Lutheran movement. Hengstenberg insisted on the genuineness, integrity, inspiration and divine authorship of the Bible. His special interest was the Old Testament, which he defended against the historical criticism of the rationalists, at times more by dogmatic assertion than by logical arguments. Schaff said he was not a philosophical and systematic divine but an eminent critic and controversialist; he was not an originator of new ideas but a skillful advocate of old ones.<sup>44</sup>

Although Hengstenberg taught at the University of Berlin from 1826 to 1869, he is remembered more as a journalist than as an Old Testament scholar. In 1827

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42. P.S. "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 31, 32.

43. P.S. Germany, op. cit., pp. 340-346; David Hupfeld, "Julius Müller" in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VIII, New York, 1910, pp. 41, 42.

44. See Germany, op. cit., pp. 304 ff.

he founded the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, a journal which in the beginning favored the mediating point of view. However, in 1830 Hengstenberg denounced not only the rationalists, Wegscheider and Gesenius, but Schleiermacher and Neander as well, a step which caused a number of evangelical theologians to refrain from contributing to his magazine. In 1840 the Kirchenzeitung officially broke with pietism, allied itself to the confessional party in the Union Church and bitterly attacked the Evangelical School. After 1843 Hengstenberg did not even support the Union but threw his full strength behind the confessional orthodoxy of the New Lutheranism. 45

Although Schaff felt that Hengstenberg was entirely too severe in his judgment of Schleiermacher and Neander, nevertheless he was sure that Hengstenberg provided a much needed corrective to the left wing Hegelians. Moreover, Schaff agreed with Hengstenberg in his thesis that the divine authorship of the Old Testament must be maintained against all critics. In regard to New Lutheranism, Schaff appreciated the churchly tendencies of the movement, but was opposed to the narrow denominationalism of this school about which he wrote:

"And here is the defect in the high-churchism of Hengstenberg and his school. The churchly tendencies which are indeed needed, should not flow in the narrow channel of Lutheran denominationalism, or any ism or sect, but be as broad and comprehensive as the Kingdom of Christ, and in harmony with the deepest wants and movements of the age that hates despotism and loves freedom in Church and state." 46

When Schaff arrived at the University of Berlin in 1840, it held the first rank among the twenty-two German universities, although the most recently established. Hegel and Schleiermacher had died, but their colleagues remained. Schaff attended the lectures of Hengstenberg, Twisten, Strauss (the court preach-

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45. Ibid. Hengstenberg's Kirchenzeitung became a most reactionary journal, not adverse to namecalling and unfair distortion.

46. Ibid., p. 319.

er), Therenim, Ranke, Ritter, Steffins, Schelling and Neander.<sup>47</sup> But it was Neander, who more than anyone else, stimulated Schaff's interest in the Church and in Church History. "Berlin never had a more beloved teacher," Schaff declared, "... He was one of the greatest and best men I ever knew. ... He sympathized with all vital types of Christianity, and had liberal intuitions for a free church in a free state. ... Neander's great merit is that he introduced into the treatment of church history the spirit of evangelical catholicity and transformed its periods into a book of quickening and life-giving impulse."<sup>48</sup>

Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789-1850) of Hebrew parentage, but baptized in 1806, was undoubtedly the most eminent disciple of Schleiermacher. Though lacking his creative genius and speculative ability, Neander properly complimented him by comprehending the concrete phenomenon of history while retaining those ideas of Schleiermacher which he considered true and practical. After completing his theological studies at Halle, Neander, prompted by Schleiermacher, undertook a psychological analysis of the religious sentiment. He studied its origins, developments and diverse phases, and became aware of the importance of Christian fellowship in community as well as its particular nature and distinctive part in history. He was further influenced by G. L. Planck, whose erudition, impartiality, charity and recognition of the relevance of history to the present, impressed him. Neander went on to become professor of Ecclesiastical History at Heidelberg University in 1811 and then at Berlin in 1812. Neander's first work

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47. Neander's unpublished lectures on Church history, as well as his entire library, were purchased by the German Baptist Seminary in Rochester, New York, now called Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

48. P.S. "Personal Reminiscences" in David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 34. For a fuller estimate of Neander's life see P.S., *Augustine, Melancthon, and Neander*, New York, 1886; a brief portrait of Neander is given in *Germany*, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-272. Also see Schaff's German monograph, *August Neander*, Gotha, 1886 and "Recollections of Neander" in the *Mercersburg Review*, III, Jan., 1851, pp. 73-90.

was written in 1812 entitled Über den Kaiser Julianus und sein Zeitalter. This monograph described the struggle between Christianity and paganism, and indicated how the tendencies of the age met, clashed and criss-crossed in the person of Julian, who was a man personally repugnant to Neander, but for that very reason he undertook the study in order that he might be as objective as possible in his scholarship.

Then followed what is perhaps Neander's best historical monograph, Der heilige Bernard und sein Zeitalter, 1813, which was another attempt to reveal how the whole spirit of an era was embodied in a man, this time Bernard. His attention then turned to gnosticism where he examined carefully the distinction between "pistis" and "gnosis." His Genetische Entwicklung der Vornehmsten Gnostischen Systeme, 1818, was an early attempt to group the various conflicting gnostic systems into certain psychological categories. Although he may have placed too much stress on the origin of gnosticism in Neo-Platonism, this work is still of enduring value. Neander then wrote two works on Chrysostom and Tertullian, the former (Der heilige Chrysostomus, 1822) emphasizes the significance of Chrysostom as a preacher in the Eastern Church, his influence on the age, and the relevance of some of the problems pertaining to organization and worship in his time to the ecclesiastical discussions of Neander's own day. The work on Tertullian (Antignostikus, Geist des Tertullians und Einleitung in dessen Schriften, 1825) promulgates the thesis that Tertullian was the first to begin a science of Christian ethics.

But it is Neander's Church history that is by far his most significant contribution to Christian scholarship.<sup>49</sup> Like other Evangelical divines, Neander opposed

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49. Neander's Church History was translated into English by Joseph Torrey and appeared in twelve editions. It includes five volumes and an excellent preface by Dr. C. Ullmann. The full title is General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Boston, 1871.

both rationalism and ultra supernaturalism, i.e. the contention that Christianity is solely a body of doctrines produced by reason or supernatural revelation. Christianity to Neander is a force not emerging from human nature, but issuing from heaven. This force, superior in essence and origin to anything produced by human nature, cannot be created by itself; rather it is a gift bestowed by God, effecting a new birth in man and resulting in a transformed life. Therefore, the history of the Church is the record of the permeation of human life by the divine life, communicated by God in Jesus Christ according to the law of the parable of the leaven, i.e. the divine principle is destined to permeate the whole mass of society.

Neander, however, recognized that since there are numerous varieties of personalities in men, (i.e. no two men are alike) Christianity adapts itself to these distinctive differences, producing various "forms" or "expressions" through which the Christian life is made manifest. This is to say that each Christian life, so to speak, reproduces the life of Jesus Christ under a particular form. The same is true regarding communities of Christians at given stages in their history. Prof. Frederick Lichtenberger points out that "Neander was the first to understand that in narrating the history of the church, it was the history of the Christian life which it was above all incumbent to trace out, and in some sort to reconstruct."<sup>50</sup> Neander does not make sacrifices to science, neither does he construct psychological artifices in order to explain events. He tries diligently to respect every individual feature of history; his work is more polemical than apologetic, yet it breathes a spirit of tolerance and understanding. If he is criticized as an historian, it is on the ground that he is prone to stress the individual element over against the community, thus making history appear little

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50. Lichtenberger, op. cit., p. 177.

more than a galaxy of biographies or subjective judgments.

In his concept of the Church, Neander was unwilling to confine its definition to a particular creed or confession. In the broadest sense the Church is the Kingdom of God, whose successive developments and various manifestations have appeared in history. Dogmatic symbols were to him transitory formulas containing only relative expressions of Christian truth which change as the Holy Spirit acts upon the hearts and minds of Christians at different times. (This view is substantially the same as Schleiermacher's.) Neander is sure, that the action of the Holy Spirit within the Christian community is a progressive, positive one and, although dogmas change, the fundamental revealed truth of the Church, as manifest in the Scriptures, is to be preserved. Those who would try to replace the revealed truth of Christ with man's truth are outside the pale of the Church. The duty, however, of holding fast to the truth of the Christian faith is not incumbent on a privileged class or the clergy; rather it is the responsibility of all the members of the Christian community. Neander believed in the priesthood of all believers and laid the groundwork for the triumph of Christian individualism. He felt that the end of history would come when the spirit of Christ had permeated the whole of the society, when God would be all in all, and Christ indeed would be Lord of all. Later we shall have occasion to note specific criticisms of Neander's concept of the Church by Dr. Schaff.

While at the University of Berlin, Neander lectured in New Testament exegesis as well as in Church history. He was convinced that the New Testament would be the battle ground where the various theological tendencies of the age would engage in decisive conflict. In 1832 Neander published his work on the History of the Apostolic Age,<sup>51</sup> the period which is believed the most difficult to under-

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51. Geschichte der Pflanzung und Leitung der Christlichen Kirche, 2 vols., Berlin, 1832.

stand. In this study he again applied psychological concepts in order to discover "types" of New Testament Christianity, based on the assumption that believing Christianity is a principle which adapts itself to all individuals in order to transform them, while yet preserving their particular physiognomy. He finds four types of Christian testimony in the New Testament, those of Paul, James, Peter and John. While there is no question that Neander frequently "blunts the angle" and tries to fit his patterns where they just will not fit, this work is nevertheless important because in it he points out that uniformity regarding ecclesiastical organization in the apostolic Church cannot be proved from the New Testament. In his Das Leben Jesu Christi, 1831, Neander attacked the position of Strauss previously referred to. This book, more hostile than any of the others, is significant for two reasons: first, because Neander is convinced that one cannot study the life of Jesus without having a certain dogmatic bias beforehand. He admits it is necessary to regard Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or it is impossible to understand the Gospels. Christ's image must be fixed upon the mind of the New Testament investigator by the Holy Spirit. Secondly, this book is valuable because of the emphasis Neander placed on the humanity of Jesus, which he felt also must be stressed, lest one fall into the docetic heresy. Lichtenberger comments that "it is one of the great merits of Neander's book that he applied to Jesus Christ the ordinary laws of psychology, and showed that there was development and progress in His intelligence and His holiness, but without ever having passed through sin and error." 52

Neander's students not only felt his desire to communicate knowledge, but to save souls by bringing them to the feet of the Master. Despite the unfortunate epithet that he was a "pectoral theologian;" 53 that his religious feelings got

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52. Lichtenberger, op. cit., p. 182.

53. From the maxim, "Pectus est quod facit Theologum."

the better of his scientific judgment; that he was often vague and obscure, Neander was successful in bringing his students to realize that both science and faith were to be made subservient to Jesus Christ. He protested against intellectualism, either orthodox or rationalistic. To Dr. Schaff and others, he pointed out that in an age of skepticism, theology was really the science of divine things.

In 1841 Schaff completed his theological education at the University of Berlin and was granted the degree, Licentiate of Theology. Neander examined him in Church history, Hengstenberg in Old Testament, Marheineke in dogmatic theology and Twisten presided at the disputation. The degree was conferred magna cum laude. After passing the examination he tutored the son of Baroness Von Krocher, to whom he had been introduced by Hengstenberg's mother-in-law, and in the spring of 1841 he traveled throughout southern Europe where in Rome he had an audience with the Pope.

Commenting on the conclusion of his father's formal academic study, David Schaff observes, "A richer conclusion to his studies he could scarcely have coveted. He had enjoyed rare opportunities during his school years and his university course. He had already come into close personal contact with some of the most distinguished German theologians of the century, and also met some of the chief literary men of Germany, such as Uhland and Tieck. The impressions of travel, to which he now proved himself receptive, placed his mind under a permanent debt, which in after years he was quick to acknowledge as a most valuable preparation for his life-work."<sup>54</sup>

It is necessary at this point to deviate from our biographical account of Philip Schaff in order to examine more thoroughly the general characteristics of

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54. David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 37.

the Evangelical School of theology, with which he was identified and to discuss the relation of this school to the Prussian Union Church.

#### IV

The conciliatory theologians were the disciples of Schleiermacher, mostly of Lutheran descent; they did not, however, favor a return to the rising Lutheran confessionalism, which, they believed, would take the Church back to the orthodoxy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Neither could they accept the radicalism of the rationalists, who took the supernatural out of religion and had little regard for historic Christianity as it had been handed down through the centuries. What these men wanted was to occupy a middle ground, an intermediate theological position between the extreme right and the radical left. Hence, while the designation "Evangelical School" was the name Dr. Schaff applied to its adherents, the label "School of Conciliation" and that of its "mediating theology" (*Vermittlungstheologie*), is perhaps more familiar, though not necessarily more appropriate.

The aim of this school was not to reconcile rationalism and orthodoxy (which would be impossible), but rather to find some way by which a new synthesis might arise, wherein the positive contributions of orthodoxy would be preserved without excluding the positive insights of the rationalists. To say they wished to seek a "practical means" between the two, without becoming identified with either the right or the left is not correct. The conciliatory theologians were not eager to compromise with truth; they sought diligently to discover it, not only for the purpose of refuting others, but rather to satisfy their own religious and scientific interests. In a sense Pascal's famous insight could be applied to the mediating theologians, i.e. "... we do not show our greatness by being at an extremity, but rather by touching two extremes at once, and occupying all that is between

them." 55

Schleiermacher's writings had prompted an investigation into the nature of the religious sentiment and its psychological manifestation within the individual. The study of history revealed, first, how the religious sentiment has expressed itself from time to time, and, secondly, how God has made Himself known in the course of specific events. Lichtenberger suggests that what the School of Conciliation proposes, "is to explain history by the light of the religious consciousness, and the religious consciousness by the light of history. It finds in this relation the nodus of all difficulties, and the point at which parties usually divide in theory as well as practice." 56 Thus, if supernaturalism and rationalism exclude each other by their false elements, there is no reason why they cannot be united by their true elements. Orthodoxy is right in regarding revelation as a special manifestation or impulse from God, evidenced in the origin and development of humanity. Rationalism is correct when it asserts that the development of man's religious life takes place in accord with rational laws. This same argument, as we shall see later, applies to Dr. Schaff's theory of Church union. If, for example, Lutheran and Reformed Christianity exclude one another by their contradictory doctrines, they may yet be united by their common element, namely, mutual love and reverence for the person of Jesus Christ, who shatters the dogmatic chains in which men bind Him.

The mediating theologians even envisioned a time when science and faith would not exclude one another but would be mutually complementary. Schaff expressed the mediating point of view in a discussion on the relationship between philosophy and theology. He contended that there need be no fundamental antagonism between the two sciences, as little as there need be between revelation and reason and between knowledge and faith, since they both, "... proceed from the same God of

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55. Quoted in Lichtenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 468.

56. *Ibid.*

truth and ultimately will meet in perfect harmony." <sup>57</sup> Yet philosophy and theology pursue independent, parallel lines of investigation and may agree or disagree, but, if they disagree, this is not the fault of philosophy or theology but of the individual philosopher or theologian. Theology starts from revelation and the consciousness of God (Gottesbewusstsein) while philosophy starts from reason and self consciousness (Selbstbewusstsein). Theology is guided by the revealed Word of God, found in the Scriptures and interpreted in various ways by the Church. Philosophical truth is judged by the principles of logical consistency and conclusiveness. While sound philosophy must be rational, sound theology must be biblical. Theology, Dr. Schaff suggests, is in possession of Truth; philosophy is in quest of the truth; theology knows there is a God, philosophy contends there may be a God. What then is the purpose of philosophy according to Schaff?—to show the need for revelation. In so far as it does this, philosophy is not contradictory to theology but its handmaid.

In addition, the mediating theologians felt there was no need to choose between affirming either the absolute immanence or absolute transcendence of God. If God is a personal being apart from the world, as the religious sentiment knows Him to be, then God already has the character of transcendence. On the other hand, if God is immanent in the world, as science knows Him to be, we cannot deny His immanence, for to do so would involve our saying the world is separated or isolated from Him. Transcendence and immanence are not contradictory attributes, the Conciliatory School contended, but it is impossible for our intelligence to fathom how these paradoxical attributes are united in the being of God.

But it is the person of Christ who is the all-controlling, dominant, normative figure with the mediating theologians; their theology was Christocentric. While aware of the way in which the Church has attempted to explain the Christo-

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57. P.S. Theological Propaedeutic, op. cit., p. 84.

logical problem, they add nothing new to the question, even though they are not averse to speculating about the way in which Christ's divine and human natures are combined. To wrestle with such a speculative problem the Conciliatory theologians believed was part of their task as scientific theologians. Yet, if science cannot explain this union adequately, the obligation nevertheless still rests upon the Church to proclaim the fact that God did become man in Christ Jesus in an act of special divine intervention in a particular historical event, the incarnation of Christ. While some day man may be able to explain the nature of this mystery, (or to discover a law through which the incarnation was accomplished), at the present time our minds are ignorant of such a law, but this does not mean the incarnation did not occur.

This same principle applies to miracles. While Schleiermacher rejected much of the miraculous in the life of Jesus (e.g. the virgin birth, Christ's bodily resurrection) the Conciliatory School is not as willing to deny categorically the possibility of miracles, since they may have occurred through God's divine laws, which are yet unknown to us. At the same time, the mediating theologians were aware that some of the biblical miracles bear traces of re-working and legend, but they were not willing on that account to discount all miracles and claimed the right to examine each particular case thoroughly, reserving the right of private judgment as to a given miracle's authenticity.

The Conciliatory School also gave greater authority to the Scriptures as a record of divine revelation than the rationalists ever did. At the same time, this school did not accept the infallibility of the canon or the doctrine of literal inspiration, and applied the test of historical and literary criticism to the texts. But since Christ is normative for the religious consciousness, being both divine and human, God and man, He is the one who confers on the Scriptures an authority and integrity which man cannot give or deny. The Bible has been and will always be the revealed Word of God.

Dr. Schaff considered both the Old and New Testaments the "sacred books of the Christians, the inspired record of divine revelation and the supreme rule of faith and practice."<sup>58</sup> Here he asserts the fundamental principle of the Reformation. But Schaff goes on to claim the Bible "... has a double origin and a double character melted into one."<sup>59</sup> The Bible is a "theanthropic living being" like our Lord and Saviour. As the divine Logos became flesh and assumed our human body, so the Word of God became flesh in the letter of the Scriptures. Schaff rejected the mechanical theory of literal inspiration because it confounds "... inspiration with dictation and reduces the sacred writers to passive organs or clerks of the Holy Spirit, contrary to the dealings of God with men as free, responsible agents, while the rationalist theory ignores or minimizes the divine element and obliterates the distinction between biblical inspiration and extra-biblical illumination."<sup>60</sup> Since the Bible is both divine and human without mixture or separation, one is not permitted to say that the thoughts are altogether divine but the words are human. Both the thoughts and words, content and form are divine as well as human. "The fact of inspiration, that is, the action of the divine mind upon the Prophets and Apostles," Schaff wrote, "is as clear and undeniable as the action of the human soul upon the human body; but the mode of inspiration is as mysterious as the mode of the soul's operation upon the body. The Christian creeds and confessions assert or assume the fact, but do not define the mode of inspiration and leave this an open question for theological science."<sup>61</sup>

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58. Ibid., p. 56.

59. Ibid., pp. 94,95.

60. Ibid., p. 95.

61. Ibid., p. 95, 96. Schaff notes the only exception to this statement is the Helvetic Consensus of 1675 where the literal inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit is affirmed.

If the mediating theologians sought to place themselves under the authority of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, they also saw in the traditions of the Church another authority which was worthy of respect, primarily because it is the past that has formed us, is still with us, and, to a large extent, determines what we are. We spring not dogmatically, but historically from the Church and her symbols. The individual, for example, possesses the right to accept or reject, to criticize or revise certain theological doctrines, but he has no right to ignore the past or to assume that it has nothing to say to us in the present. Christian individualism is possible when understood within the context of certain valid limitations and natural restrictions imposed upon a person by historical tradition. This is to say that the Church through the centuries has defined the limits within which Christian individualism may be expressed. This matter we shall take up in greater detail in another chapter, but we can point out now that one reason Dr. Schaff objected so vehemently to sectarianism, especially in America, was because the sectarians had no respect for the historical traditions of the Church and, therefore, no standards, except their own subjective interpretation of the Bible, within which to set the limits of their individualism.

We cannot conclude this general survey of the Conciliatory School without calling attention to some of its major defects and difficulties. The first is that it failed to speak with power to the masses. In its attempt to be "simple" it became "complicated." In seeking to avoid speculation in regard to the formulation of theological doctrines, the leaders of the school, especially Dorner, Rothe and Muller, became speculative theologians themselves. There is a lack of precision and clarity in the theological language of the school; terms are not clearly defined; the real fundamental issues involved in the theological controversies are not always understood or adequately answered. There was a tendency for this school to say one thing and yet to mean another. The mediating theologians were not able to defeat rationalism or orthodoxy in Germany; no compromise was really

possible or lastingly effective. Even within the Conciliatory School itself, there were just too many competing religious and scientific interests working at cross purposes with one another for there ever to be perfect harmony or unanimity among these theologians. The Lutheran theologian and historian, Reinhold Seeberg, calls attention to the fact that within the mediating school, "... strenge Biblizisten (Nitzsch) standen neben Orthodoxen (Müller), Hegelsche Tendenzen (Dorner) vertrugen sich mit Schelling'scher Theosophie (Rothe), der ins Orthodoxe gewandte Schleiermacher (Twisten) mit dem ins Liberale gegogenen Schleiermacher (Benschlag), Pietisten (Tholuck) mit Altorthodoxen (Köstlin), Vertreter einer durchaus 'positiven Union' und der 'Mittelpartei' (Benschlag)."<sup>62</sup>

And yet in granting these defects and admitting that there are serious flaws in the respective systems of these men, we cannot overlook their common conviction that the person of Christ was more important than their own theological formulations and doctrines. The spirit of cooperation and conciliation which motivated their work, is of far greater significance than their theological writings and it is because of their love for Christ, which surpassed the limits of their own systems and theories, that a spirit of ecumenical scholarship and Christian tolerance was born. This spirit grew and developed in Dr. Schaff and it was his personal contact with these men, as well as his familiarity with their ideas, that helped to shape his own ecumenical attitudes.

We cannot ignore the role of the Conciliatory theologians in fostering the principle of Church union. We have previously called attention to the Prussian Union Church established in 1817, a union of Lutheran and Reformed congregations which spread to other parts of Germany in subsequent years, officially constitu-

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62. Reinhold Seeberg, Die Kirche Deutschlands im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, I, Leipzig, 1903, p. 263.

ting the Evangelical Church in Germany. <sup>63</sup> Although its establishment in Prussia came during the reign of King Frederick William, III (1797-1840) Erich Foerster's contention that the origin of the Union began with the Royal house is no longer tenable. <sup>64</sup>

Dr. Schaff calls attention to earlier attempts at merger between Lutheran and Reformed Christians, e.g. the Marburg Conference in 1529, the Wittenberg Concordia signed in 1539, Melancthon's Revised Augsburg Confession of 1540 designed to suit the Reformed Church, and to serve as a symbol for a United Evangelical Church. <sup>65</sup> During the seventeenth century Leibnitz, Spener and Zinzendorf also labored for Christian union but without much success. But in the latter part of the eighteenth century the question was again opened. Pietism appeared anew, thus tempering the denominational distinctions; a large number of persons in both the Lutheran and Reformed confessions were opposed to rationalism. Furthermore, the sense of national solidarity had been heightened by the French wars. For three decades preceding the establishment of the Prussian Union Church, the possibility of union had been discussed, notably by Schleiermacher. <sup>66</sup> On September 27th, 1817, the third centennial jubilee of the Reformation, the King publicly declared his desire to unite the separated Lutheran and Reformed confessions into

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63. One of the most enthusiastic advocates of the union was Julius Müller. See his Die Evangelische Union, Berlin, 1854, for a detailed account of its history and growth as well as for a discussion of the point of view held by most of the mediating theologians in relation to the union.

64. See Carl Schneider The German Church on the American Frontier, St. Louis, 1939, pp. 1-14.

65. P.S. Germany, op. cit., p. 180.

66. Schleiermacher also served on the King's Liturgical committee in 1814. He had advocated the re-organization of the Church in 1808 in his official memorandum, which called for the separation of Church and state, and in his Abhandlung bei Gelegenheit der Ersten Gemeinschaftlichen Abendmahlsfeier, Berlin, 1818, he argued that a separation between Lutheran and Reformed Christians was no longer justifiable.

one Evangelical Church and personally set an example in his own congregation at Potsdam by joining in a united celebration of the Lord's Supper. The event was hailed as the most important work of the whole century.<sup>67</sup> The Union itself was not the result of an enforced decree of an absolute monarch, but rather an event which many people sincerely anticipated. Schleiermacher himself was far too independent a thinker to be part of a movement merely because it was sponsored under the auspices of the Crown. It was generally believed at the time that religious dissension between the two sister churches of the Reformation had passed forever; that they were agreed on the essential articles of the Christian faith, and that they would readily cooperate with one another in opposition to rationalism and infidelity. Despite the spread of the movement to other provinces, the hope of permanent harmony soon disappeared. The Conciliatory theologians did their best to keep the Union together but instead of their being one Church, three developed, Lutheran, Reformed and Evangelical.

Dr. Schaff cites three reasons why discord prevailed in the Union Church.<sup>68</sup> First, it did not grow by itself out of the inner spiritual life of the Church, but was implemented (although not originated) by the power of the King. While the great mass of clergy and laity were at first heartily enthused with the new measure, this was largely due to a vague latitudinarianism, or sheer indifference, since they were hardly conscious of the distinctive doctrines of their respective confessions. Secondly, after the slumber of indifference was over, the leaders realized the necessity for recovering a healthy, positive confessionism, but in attempting to do so, old animosities were uncovered, hostilities were rekindled and splinter parties sprang up within the Church, which frequently allied

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67. See C.C. Bunsen's statement pertaining to this event in Signs of the Times, (tr. by S. Winkworth) New York, 1856, p. 310. Also note Letter X of this same work, pp. 308-353 for a brief but excellent history of the Union.

68. P.S., Germany, op. cit., pp. 187-189.

themselves with the government in exchange for ecclesiastical favors. Finally, opposition came from a revived Lutheranism, which resented the fact that the Union had been directed by a German Reformed king, whom they believed could never be sympathetic with the distinctive Lutheran theological positions. <sup>69</sup>

The introduction of the King's Liturgy in 1821, commonly called the Agenda, aroused a tremendous reaction within the Union Church. Although composed primarily from Lutheran sources, but constructed equally to suit the Reformed, and the result of extensive liturgical study prior to the Union's consummation, the Agenda was not acceptable to the majority of people. <sup>70</sup> The Reformed congregation at Wupperthal resented not so much the Agenda, but its imposition upon them, contrary to their desire for freedom in regard to matters of public worship. But it was the conservative Lutherans (Old Lutherans) who objected most to the Agenda, especially the substitution in the Eucharist of the words, "Christ says, 'This is my body'" for the traditional Lutheran formula, "This is the true body of Christ." Those who opposed this new order of worship were fined or imprisoned. Many of the Old Lutherans emigrated to America, <sup>71</sup> and it was not until 1840 that the

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69. The first dramatic reaction against the Union occurred in 1817 when Klaus Harms issued his "95 Theses" objecting to the Union and said, "They wish now to enrich the Lutheran Church as a poor servant by a wealthy match. But pray do not perform the marriage ceremony over the bones of Luther; for they will be roused to life by the very act, and then woe to you." Quoted in P.S. Ibid., p. 188.

70. Neander and Schleiermacher, both partisans of the Union, resented the imposition of the Agenda upon the churches, and the growing tendency to deny lay leaders a roll in the affairs of the Church. Schleiermacher's pamphlet Ueber das Liturgische Recht Evangelischer Landesfürsten, 1821, is considered a masterpiece of religious polemics on the liturgical question.

71. Most notable was a group of about a thousand immigrants, called the 'Synod of Exiles from the Lutheran Church of Prussia who settled in Buffalo, New York in 1839. Under the leadership of J. Grabau they organized the Buffalo Synod in 1845. A larger number of Old Lutherans settled in Missouri and Ohio in 1839 and led by the Walther brothers, Karl and Otto, established in 1847 the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States which included the Buffalo Synod. This branch of the Lutheran Church today is called The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and retains its very strict confessionalism, remaining officially separated from the main body of Lutherans, namely, The United Lutheran Church in America. The Missouri Synod, however, is a very strong and in-

Old Lutherans who remained in Germany were permitted to organize a separate ecclesiastical body.

In the beginning it was not contemplated that the Union would take place on a doctrinal basis; the symbolical books of both confessions were not even mentioned. Lutherans were not to become Reformed or Reformed, Lutherans. The Union was to be one of polity and worship, out of which it was hoped a higher unity would develop, which would pass over the confessional differences. But in order to prevent further secessions like that of the Old Lutherans, the King found it necessary to issue another decree on February 28, 1834 declaring that the symbolical books of both confessions were still valid. This move was considered a concession to Lutheranism and intended to create "a spirit of moderation and mildness." Yet, once the confessional tendency was allowed to flourish publically, it grew more and more, especially under the aegis of the New Lutherans, notably Hengstenberg, and Ludwig von Gerlach (both originally of Reformed background), Stahl and Goschel. The New Lutherans, while holding a high regard for the Reformed Church and recognizing her peculiar excellencies, nevertheless vehemently detested rationalism and latitudinarianism in any form and objected to any plan the Union fostered, which did not do justice to the ancient creeds. They came to regard the Union merely as a confederation of the two churches. This attitude could not be accepted by the mediating theologians. In 1852, Nitzsch, whom Dr. Schaff thought represented the real purpose of the Union, declared that he belonged to both the Reformed and Lutheran churches, i.e. to the consensus of both. <sup>72</sup>

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fluent denomination in the United States, though not a member of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. or of the World Council of Churches.

72. See his Urkundenbuch der Evangelischen Union, Bonn, 1853, in which Nitzsch defends the position that the Union is a positive doctrinal union in regard to all the articles in the Confessions of Faith which are not contradictory to the Bible. See also "Evangelical Consensus as agreed upon by the General Synod of Prussia of 1846," in Bunsen, op. cit., pp. 436-440.

By 1853 three distinct divisions existed in the Union, the Reformed, the Lutherans and what Dr. Schaff called the "Positive Unionists," or "Evangelicals" proper.<sup>73</sup> Most of the Reformed members were either anti-confessional or latitudinarian unionists, holding the Bible as the only norm for Christian faith, rejecting church symbols, and partial to the left wing of the Schleiermacher school. Moreover, most of these divines shared conflicting liberal theological opinions but were held together by a mutual abhorrence of the reactionary policies of the Confessionalists. The positions of power, however, were held by the New Lutherans (Confessionalists) who were comparatively small in number but highly influential and complete absolutists in matters pertaining to Church and state. It seemed they would rather unite with Rome than with the Reformed Church. The Evangelical unionists, the consensus party, while accepting the Bible as the sole norm for Christian belief, still regarded the common dogmas of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions as valid interpretations of biblical truth, but were resolved that the differences should not prevent their mutual fellowship or common worship. Although in the minority in the General Synod of the Union Church (Oberkirchenrath) the consensus party was strongest in the universities. This is highly significant because not only were these men able to transmit the spirit of the mediating theology to Schaff and to nurture his ecumenical interests, they also taught many of Schaff's own American pupils and colleagues, who came to Germany to study. The result was that while the Evangelical School did not make a lasting impact in Germany, it did so in the United States, where its practical applications led to movements for church union and inter-denominational cooperation.

Having decided that he was called to a career as a teacher of theology rather than to the parish ministry, Philip Schaff returned to Berlin in the fall of 1842 to begin the arduous task of preparing for a German professorship. On December 16,

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73. P.S. Germany, op. cit., pp. 196-198.

1842 he was granted the venia legendi, the right to lecture in the university as a privat-docent. His first test lecture entitled The Apostolic Types of Doctrine was based largely on insights gained from Neander's study of the Apostolic Church; his second lecture was a Latin disputation on The Nature and Aims of Theology (de Natione Theologiae). He later published his trial essay, (Habitationschrift) written in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the venia legendi, a new Testament study on James, the Lord's brother.<sup>74</sup> As privat-docent, Schaff advanced to give lectures on the catholic epistles and on the theology of Schleiermacher.

Schaff's career as an author began before he became a privat-docent. He contributed several articles to Tholuch's Anzeiger and Hengstenberg's Evangelische Kirchenzeitung between 1837 and 1842.<sup>75</sup> His most significant writing, however, was a tract on the Sin Against the Holy Ghost, published in 1841. It was dedicated to his honored teacher, Theremin, the famed Reformed court preacher in Berlin. In 1836 Olhausen had said that there were three degrees of sin against God, corresponding to the three persons of the Godhead. Schaff denied this three-fold division of sin and claimed it is the Son of Man in his humanity, against whom the sin of blasphemy is committed, not the second Person of the Trinity. The sin against the Holy Ghost occurs only when, as He operates on the soul, an

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74. Das Verhältniss des Jakobus, Bruders des Herrn zu Jakobus Alphaei, Berlin, 1842. This work would be equivalent to a Ph.D. thesis in an American or Scottish university. Schaff argued that James was the natural brother of Jesus, but not one of the original disciples. Later, however, he took the place of James the son of Alphaeus among the disciples. Original copy of this manuscript is in the Historical Collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Lancaster, Pa.

75. It is unfortunate that the articles written in these periodicals are not authored. The only one which can be attributed to P.S. with certainty is "Welt-historische Vorbereitung auf das Christenthum," which appeared in the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, Sept. 1838. David Schaff in op. cit., p. 511, claims that this was his father's first published work.

individual rejects God. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the rejection of God Himself and presupposes a higher degree of knowledge than blasphemy against the Son of Man. To reject God as He operates through the Holy Spirit is the final consummation of evil, yet it is not for us to say with infallible certainty, when the sin against the Holy Ghost is committed. At the end of the book Schaff appended an account of the life and remorse of Francis Spiera, the reprobate of the Reformation.

This work is noteworthy for two reasons: first, because its literary style and sound scholarship drew the acclaim of Schaff's teachers who regarded him as a promising young scholar. Julius Müller, in his book on Sin, called Schaff's tract a complete discussion of the topic, worthy of respect and confidence. Secondly, the book is significant because in it Schaff advocated a doctrine similar to that of purgatory, i.e. he claimed there is an intermediate state for all men, beginning at death, even for those who had rejected God made known in Jesus Christ in this life.<sup>76</sup> Although written when he was only twenty years old as a part of the requirements for his Licentiate of Theology, and published with the approval of Neander, Hengstenberg, Twisten and Marheineke, The Sin Against the Holy Ghost raised serious questions respecting Dr. Schaff's orthodoxy after his call to the German Reformed Church in America.

Even more remarkable than his scholarship, lectures or books, was the high esteem in which the twenty-four year old privat-docent was held by the most distinguished German theologians. Schaff's strength did not lie in the theoretical but few surpassed him in mastering theological and historical details. His warm personality made for many friends, and, while in Berlin, he would frequently

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76. Die Sünde wider den Heiligen Geist, Halle, 1841, pp. 145 ff.

spend Saturday evenings with Hengstenberg, and on Mondays he attended conferences at the home of the genial university president, Ludwig Von Gerlach, "whose views of the Church," writes David Schaff, "had a permanent influence upon his mind." <sup>77</sup> His most intimate friends in Berlin included Frederick Godet, and Neander.

Dr. Schaff loved classroom teaching. Like Neander, his purpose extended beyond the literary and scientific realm. He regarded the sense of a spiritual or religious calling as the pre-requisite for a theological professor. "A theologian," he advised, "without faith, is like a sky without a star, a heart without a pulse, light without warmth, a sword without an edge, a body without a soul." <sup>78</sup> Because Schaff combined a deep Christian piety with a sound theological training and practical aim, it was most appropriate that he should be the one called from a German university to serve the German Reformed Church in America. There is no question that Schaff's biographer is correct when he writes:

"This change, which occurred in 1844, undoubtedly introduced him to a career of wider usefulness and influence than Germany would have afforded him, and resulted in his doing more than anyone else of his generation towards the naturalization of the evangelical scholarship of Germany in the United States, and in fact in his securing a unique distinction as mediator between German and American religious thought." <sup>79</sup>

## VI

The circumstances surrounding Dr. Schaff's call to the German Reformed Church in America were occasioned by the death of Frederick A. Rauch, a young and promising theological professor at the Mercersburg Seminary. On January 24, 1843 a special meeting of the Eastern Synod of the German Reformed Church was

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77. David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 67. Schaff was especially interested in the liturgical emphasis prevalent in New Lutheranism.

78. P.S. in *Ibid.*, p. 69.

79. David S. Schaff in *Ibid.*, p. 71.

held at Lebanon, Pennsylvania, to elect a successor to Rauch. The seminary wished to secure a man who was both a German scholar and capable of strengthening the ties between the Mother Church and the German Reformed Church in the United States, whose constituency as well as ecclesiastical symbols and traditions were taken from the Palatinate and German Switzerland. The Synod unanimously voted to extend the call to the Rev. Frederick W. Krummacher, then pastor of the largest Reformed congregation in Germany, and an outstanding pulpit orator, whose sermons had been widely read in the United States in translation. On July 8th, 1843, the Rev. Dr. Theodore H. Hoffeditz and the Rev. Benjamin S. Schneck arrived at Elberfeld and informed Dr. Krummacher of the Synod's decision.<sup>80</sup> He asked for time to consider the matter but on August 12th, Dr. Schneck wrote home that Dr. Krummacher had declined the call.<sup>81</sup> Yet, even before his declination, Krummacher had suggested that Hoffeditz and Schneck contact Philip Schaff, then professor extra-ordinary at the University of Berlin, to inquire if he might be interested in accepting the position in the event Krummacher would not be. Tholuck, Julius Müller, Neander, Hengstenberg, Strauss (the Court preacher), agreed with this recommendation. After Krummacher's decision, the two Americans again visited Schaff and secured permission to submit his name to the Synod. Schneck and Hoffeditz returned to America

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80. Whether or not Krummacher had any previous inclination to accept the call is uncertain. Dr. James I. Good in his History of the Reformed Church in the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century, New York, 1911, claims Krummacher had been privately in correspondence with members of the Synod and was said to have been in favor of the proposal. Yet in his own church paper, The Palm Leaves, Krummacher indicates that when he first heard the rumor of his election, he disapproved, and when the call finally came, he was surprised. See Good's History, p. 204.

81. The reasons for his declining are not altogether clear. The main reason seemed to be that Krummacher felt his place was in the pulpit rather than the professor's chair and that at 47, he was too old to succeed in a new sphere of activity. Dr. Good also points out that various rumors were circulated in Germany to the effect that Krummacher would receive a salary of \$20,000 a year. This rumor prompted the King to promise Krummacher a high Church position if he remained at home, which he did get, later becoming court preacher at Potsdam.

October 8th, the former going immediately to Winchester, Virginia, where the Synod was in session. Krummacher's declination was formally acknowledged and Philip Schaff's name officially presented as a candidate.<sup>82</sup> The enthusiastic testimonies of his German teachers were read, and copies of his Sin Against the Holy Ghost were distributed. On October 19th, the Synod unanimously elected Dr. Schaff to the chair of "Church History and Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania."<sup>83</sup>

At the time Dr. Schaff had no reason to suspect that he would not receive a promotion to a full German professorship. Nitzsch and others were urging him to accept the vacant chair of Church history at Zurich, which later went to Ebrard. But Schaff decided to come to America, although he did not intend to stay there the rest of his life. Eichorn, the Prussian minister of education, promised that a position would be open for him when he returned. "I have never regretted my decision," Schaff said, "and never doubted that I followed the will of God, clearly indicated in the recommendations and counsel of my beloved teachers and friends."<sup>84</sup>

The prime reason for Schaff's acceptance was his urgent hope that he might be able to strengthen the bond of union between the churches of the new world and the Mother Church in Germany. He began at once to study English, in which he later gained a remarkable fluency. On April 12, 1844, he was ordained in the Reformed Church at Elberfeld by the Pastor's Aid Society, first organized at Langenberg

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82. Prof. Ebrard's name also was suggested, but it was felt that Schaff, because he was a Swiss, would adopt more easily to America's "republican ways."

83. See The Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of the German Reformed Church in the U.S. of North America, at Winchester, Va., 1843, pp. 57,58. This document announcing Schaff's election was signed by the Rev. Joseph Berg, president of the Synod, who, in less than a year, was to become the chief antagonist at Schaff's "heresy trial."

84. P.S. in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 74.

for the purpose of aiding Germans in America. The rite was administered according to the traditional Rhine Ritual, accompanied by the laying on of hands. Although the service was performed in the Reformed Church by the Pastor's Aid Society, technically, Schaff was ordained into the ministry of the Evangelical Union Church.

Following an address by the Rev. Dr. Husselmann, superintendent of the Society, who preached on the text, "the harvest is great and the laborers few," the esteemed Dr. F. W. Krummacher delivered the charge. Krummacher's previous nomination for the position to which Dr. Schaff was called, heightened the significance of his words. After reading Jeremiah 1: 17, Krummacher instructed Schaff to go forth as "... the bearer of a pure German national spirit, to assist in restoring to new life a German population whose national character is already half destroyed by the admixture of foreign elements, to rescue its original dignity and proper independent existence." Krummacher then admonished Schaff to, "... transport German theology in its thoroughness and depth [in order to meet and dispell] the many headed monster of pantheism and atheism issuing from the sphere of German speculation, ... spreading desolation and terror." Krummacher said Schaff should meet this challenge girded "in the armor of the shepherd boy of Bethlehem. ..."<sup>85</sup>

The young ordinand then mounted the pulpit to preach his ordination sermon, based on Paul's vision of the man of Macedonia in Acts 6: 8.<sup>86</sup> The main part of the sermon dealt with the religious condition of America. Like Krummacher, Schaff sincerely believed the situation was deplorable; vividly he imagined American religious life as an amalgamation of irreligious tendencies wherein the life of

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85. "Krummacher's Address" in the Weekly Messenger, IX, Aug. 28, 1844, p. 1867.

86. The original German manuscript of this sermon is in the Historical Collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa. It was translated into English and appeared in the Weekly Messenger, IX, Sept. 4, 1844, p. 1869.

Christ was viewed as a fable. He saw the western territories as a place where "... men thirty and forty years of age, descendents of German ancestors, have not been so much as baptized." <sup>87</sup> Three great foes, he felt, threatened to overcome America; Paganism, Romanism, and Sectarianism. He claimed the Puritans and Quakers were more religious than recent German immigrants. Then he went on to criticize the sects. With strong sarcasm, Schaff contended that America was a country where "every enthusiast in whose brain has engendered overnight a new theological concept, builds the next day a chapel and baptizes it with his own name as a legacy for future generations." <sup>88</sup> Schaff concluded on a more irenical and catholic note, however, hoping that the time would come when Christians would pass "... far beyond sea and land, mountain and valley, ... space and time, ... sin and death into the land of true liberty endlessly manifold and yet one, ... where there shall be no Europe, no America, no Catholicism and no Protestantism, but an undivided Kingdom of God: No old world and no new world, but one glorious Church of the redeemed." <sup>89</sup>

There is no question that the young professor greatly exaggerated the religious situation in America and later he changed his views considerably. Yet it should be remembered that such misrepresentation was then widely current in Germany. Krummacher himself accepted the descriptions as completely accurate. Schaff, however, had to pay the price for his youthful exuberance and exaggerated assertions. The German-American press secured copies of his sermon and he was bitterly attacked with charges of being "anti-German" almost immediately after his arrival in the United States.

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87. "Dr. Schaff's Sermon at Elberfeld" in Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

Schaff spent six weeks in England, following his ordination at Elberfeld. Here he was very much impressed with the practical Christian activity and venerable dignity of English Christianity. He had occasion to meet such celebrated preachers of their day as Baptist Noel, Hugh McNeil and Stowell of Manchester. He visited Thomas Carlyle, dined with F. W. Maurice and then moved on to Oxford to spend several days with Dr. Pusey with whom he engaged in a vigorous discussion of the Tractarian movement before embarking for his new home in America.

Dr. James I. Good in his summary of the early life of Philip Schaff points out the following facts: first, though traditionally Reformed, Schaff was not confessionally so, being confirmed in the Lutheran Church and theologically educated at the Lutheran University of Tübingen. Secondly, his historical views came from Neander of the Evangelical Church of Germany composed of both Lutheran and Reformed. Thirdly, it was not until Schaff came to America that he promised adherence to the Heidelberg Catechism. "He therefore," Good concludes, "did not come to us bringing the old theology of the Reformed Church of Germany as represented by her leaders in the past, Ursinus and Olevianus, Pareus of Heidelberg, Wendlein of Anhalt, Lampe of Bremen, or of the Reformed in their conferences with the Lutherans of Leipsic 1631 and Cassel 1661, where they were strictly Calvinistic on predestination and the sacraments. But he came representing a new and different theology- the Mediating theology of Schleiermacher, but of the right wing, that is inclining toward orthodoxy. ...Dr. Schaff's ideal on coming to Mercersburg was the foundation of a German-American Church, uniting the Reformed and Lutherans, that is, he was unionistic rather than Reformed."<sup>90</sup>

What Dr. Good fails to take into account is the fact that Schaff was equally at home in both the Lutheran and Reformed churches. As a member of the Evangelical

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90. Good, History, op. cit., pp. 209-210.

Church he belonged to the consensus of both confessions. True, he did not represent the Old Reformed Church, i.e. the strictly Zwinglian branch of the Church, because he recognized that Zwingli did not represent the whole of Reformed theology any more than the Old Lutherans represented the whole of Lutheran theology. Moreover, although Schaff favored a merger of the Lutheran and Reformed churches similar to that in Germany, when this did not happen, he did not become a Lutheran but stayed within the Reformed Church, even to the extent of becoming a Presbyterian in 1870 when he began his professorship at Union Seminary. All his efforts for Church union were carried on while he was officially identified with the Reformed Church. If he was "unionistic" theologically, it did not contradict his understanding of Reformed theology. While we agree with Dr. Good when he writes, "it was probably best for Dr. Krummacher that he did not come to America," we take issue with his opinion that "we believe it was worse for our church."<sup>91</sup> Good feels Krummacher might have saved the German Reformed Church from her later controversies. This is a highly doubtful speculation. Nevertheless, we contend that Dr. Schaff's coming to America enriched the German Reformed Church, theologically and liturgically. Furthermore, Schaff was able to transmit his ecumenical attitudes into the German Reformed Church; indeed, it was through the "Mercersburg Theology" that a new concept of the Church was discovered, a concept which overflowed the boundaries of denominational distinctions and furthered the cause of a united Protestantism in the United States. We turn now to discuss the condition of Christianity in America during the first half of the nineteenth century, in the midst of which the Mercersburg theology was born.

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91. Ibid., p. 205.



## CHAPTER TWO

### I

The decade following 1840 (especially the year 1848) was an exciting period in the history of the world. Although Europe was marked by political upheavals, the United States had been spared a revolution. Nevertheless, America underwent a more subdued revolution in the realm of religion and society. The revolt against all kinds of real and imagined tyranny expressed a desire for personal freedom and respect for individual rights.

In religion this motif took a practical form in the rise of new sects. The most spectacular representative of the sect system was William Miller who predicted that the world would end in April, 1843. When the event did not occur Miller suggested a second date, October 22, 1844. The people reacted hysterically; some were driven insane; many gave away their shoes and bought white robes. Others climbed to the housetops on the night of the twenty-second; some jumped, believing they would be caught up in the air with their Lord. Again, the people were disappointed, but a new denomination was started, the Seventh Day Adventists, which continues to this day, based on the doctrine of Adventism, as interpreted by Miller and his successors.<sup>1</sup> By 1840 Joseph Smith had "received" the Book of Mormon from the Angel Moroni and had proceeded from New York to Iowa with his followers; the Mormon sect was established. Phrenology, Mesmerism and Spiritualism also attracted the attention of the populace in this period.

Professor Leonard Bacon writes that between 1835 and 1845 none of the larger organized churches were free from agitating controversies.<sup>2</sup> The Presbyterians

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1. An account of the history and theology of the Seventh Day Adventists is given by LeRoy Edwin Froom in The American Church (ed. by Virgilius Ferm), New York, 1953, pp. 371-386.

2. Leonard W. Bacon, A History of American Christianity, New York, 1907, p. 292.

split in 1837 into two separate organizations called the Old School and New School Presbyterians. The division occurred because of the issues arising out of negotiations for union with the Congregational churches and a difference of opinion on the question of revivals. During these years William E. Channing broke with the Congregationalists over the doctrine of the Trinity and formed the Unitarian denomination. Even the German Reformed Church was disturbed by divisions; first, Otterbein became affiliated with the United Brethren Church and then Winebrenner left the denomination to establish the Church of God; both men favored revivals. The slavery issue divided the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 and the Baptists in 1845.

Even the most trivial factors produced divisions. Members were known to leave a congregation merely because the minister gave out two lines of a Psalm instead of one before singing. Reacting against such a slavish devotion to custom, Alexander Campbell advocated a return to the basic teachings of the Bible. He did not want to form a new church but rather "...a society for the promotion of Christian Union and of 'a pure evangelical reformation, by the simple preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of its ordinances in exact conformity to the Divine standard.'" <sup>3</sup> Campbell and his followers adopted the names "Disciples of Christ" and "Christian Church". Although they had intended to heal a schism, they formed a new denomination. Their guiding principle was: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." <sup>4</sup>

The Protestant Episcopal Church was being shaken by the Oxford Movement from England. The party spirit was symbolized by two bishops, John Henry Hobart, a high churchman, and Alexander V. Griswold, an evangelical. The former refused

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3. Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, I, Cincinnati, 1890, p. 245.

4. Ronald Osborn, "The Disciples of Christ" in The American Church, op. cit., pp. 389-390.

to cooperate with other Protestant denominations because to do so he felt would discount the superiority of the Apostolic order. Bishop Griswold, on the other hand, took an active part in interdenominational affairs. The evangelical party objected to the concessions made by the Tractarians (especially in Tract 80) to the Roman Church, as well as to the return to Gothic architecture, publication of the Breviary, and the forming of monastic orders within the Episcopal Church.<sup>5</sup>

Even the Lutheran Church was rent by internal strife. The Rev. Samuel S. Schmucker sought to introduce a return to a moderate Lutheran confessionism by suggesting that the Augsburg Confession be used not as a taskmaster but as a guide in determining the distinctive character of Lutheranism in the United States; he was even willing to "Americanize" it.<sup>6</sup> In 1840 Schmucker urged that "The Lutheran Church, ... first to cast off the yoke of Roman superstition and oppression, should lead the way in breaking the bonds of Protestant sectarianism."<sup>7</sup>

Since Schmucker took an active part in the establishment of the Evangelical Alliance in London in 1846, most Lutherans regarded him with suspicion. The Synod of Maryland in 1843 attempted to stem any growing confessionism by supporting "revivals" and "evangelistic services", so popular on the frontier, while another section of the Lutheran Church urged a very strict confessionism contrary to the spirit of Schmucker.

During this period many immigrants entered America; most of them were Irish and German, (some of the latter even professed atheists). The native American ire was agitated against the intrusion of "foreigners," especially Roman Catholics

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5. See Walter Stowe, "The Episcopal Church in the United States of America" in Ibid., pp. 106-108, especially.

6. Virgilius Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheranism, New York, 1927, pp. 244-246.

7. Quoted in Ibid., p. 141.

and the movement called "Know Nothingism" resulted, dedicated to the maintenance of "Americanism", i.e. Protestant Christianity and Anglo-Saxon supremacy. At Charlestown, Massachusetts, a convent was destroyed in 1834. Shortly thereafter Roman Catholic property was damaged in Philadelphia. The reading of Scripture in the Public Schools became a political issue. Organizations were founded to oppose the Roman Catholic Church, e.g. The American Protestant Association and the Protestant Reformation Society. Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph and head of the American Protestant Union, announced in 1841 that the Union was opposed to the subjection of America to the control of the Roman Pontif. In 1842 a convention was held in New York which unsuccessfully sought to unite Protestants in a single front against Rome. Seminaries offered special courses to prepare theologs for the "Catholic Controversy."<sup>8</sup> The Mercersburg theologians, by claiming the Roman Church as part of the true Christian Church, ran into bitter opposition from most quarters of American Protestantism, which generally regarded the Roman Church as "apostate." Religious freedom was not always a reality in America.<sup>9</sup>

Yet the religious and social scene during the first half of the nineteenth century was not only one of conflict. The American Home Missionary Society was established in 1826. Tract and Bible societies were organized to disseminate

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8. Both Lyman Beecher and Horace Bushnell were concerned about the rapid growth of Roman Catholicism through immigration. In 1843 Bushnell joined the Protestant League which later became a part of the Evangelical Alliance. In 1846 Bushnell sent a letter to the Pope expressing his opinion of Roman Catholicism. See Theo. T. Munger, Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian, Boston, 1899, p. 62 ff.

9. The last connection between church and state was not severed in Connecticut until 1818 and in Massachusetts until 1834. The complete separation of church and state forced the churches to rely on their own resources for financial support. It can be argued that the principle of a self supporting church as opposed to the church-state relationship contributed to the individualism of American Christianity.

religious literature. Laymen often took the initiative in establishing Sunday School Associations, while churches frequently cooperated in temperance crusades. "Humanitarianism" was also a concern of many people who urged the abolition of capital punishment. In 1841 Dorothea L. Dix began a crusade for better care of the insane. In regard to the slavery issues, the churches at first did not take a positive or negative stand. Yet when Lane Theological Seminary forbade the discussion of slavery and abolition about three-fourths of the students, who were sympathetic with the anti-slavery movement transferred to Oberlin College, which claimed to be the first school in America to admit qualified students without regard to race.

The religious and social awakenings in the first half of nineteenth century America had two effects. On the one hand, nourished especially by the revivals, the common man was emancipated from the authority of conventional ecclesiastical organizations. A new doctrine appeared which Merle Curti has labeled "comprehensivism", i.e. the belief that all sects possessed portions of the truth and that matters of faith and creed were of little importance.<sup>10</sup> With this democratization of religion, individualism thrived; deeds not creeds became the paramount criteria for judging a man's religion. Thus humanitarianism was carried on in the name of religion, but without a specific theological motivation.

On the other hand, if the new individualism resulted in latitudinarianism, it also produced "exclusivism". Churches and sects were brought to a self-consciousness they had not known before. Each group sought to preserve its own peculiarities and to formulate its own doctrinal standards. Professor Bacon

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10. Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought, New York, 1943, pp. 307 ff.

points out that during the twenty years following 1827, seventeen theological schools were founded along denominational lines.<sup>11</sup> With such a multiplicity of sects and schools it is difficult to describe the precise content of American theology. Thus one critic writes, "Theologically this period was important, but it is an unsatisfactory one for study. New ideas originated and became potent without affecting the structure of theology."<sup>12</sup>

There was a sporadic rise of "would be theologians", a product of the frontier where new ideas originated. The Bible remained the sole source of authority for Christian faith and freedom to interpret it was granted to everyone. Because of the difficulties of the frontier there was little time to spend on the theoretical and historical aspects of Christianity and the latter were deprecated. In a phrase, American theology at the middle of the eighteenth century was cast in a "Puritan mold". Near the end of his defense of Puritanism, Edwin Hall states the Puritan principle:

"The divine right and duty of every man [is] to go to the Word of God for himself; the Word of God [is] the sole standard of faith, order and duty; it [is] the divine right of every Christian community orderly to associate together in congregations for the observance of the worship and ordinances of God, with no power anywhere on earth to prescribe to them the manner of their worship, or to overrule their own judgment and conscience; [it is] a liberty claimed, and a liberty allowed, to every man and to every congregation of men; a liberty which none can deny, with which none can interfere, without infringing upon the great charter granted by the Almighty to all his people and without, at the same time, impiously usurping the prerogatives of Heaven."<sup>13</sup>

Later we shall have occasion to note Dr. Schaff's analysis of this interpretation of Puritanism in his Principle of Protestantism.

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11. Bacon, op. cit., p. 252.

12. Carl R. Fish, The Rise of the Common Man 1830-1850, New York, 1929, p. 125.

13. Edwin Hall, The Puritans and Their Principles, New York, 1846, pp. 406,407.

## II

The German Reformed Church in America dates its origin from October 15th, 1725, when the first recorded communion service was celebrated in the church at Falkner Swamp, Pennsylvania.<sup>14</sup> Actually German refugees belonging to the Reformed Church came from the Palatinate and settled in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys as early as 1709.<sup>15</sup> Later they migrated to southeastern Pennsylvania.

The Reformed congregations were at first ministered to by laymen. Excellent leadership was provided by John Philip Boehm, a parochial school teacher from Worms, who founded three congregations including the one at Falkner Swamp. In 1729, he was ordained in New York by three ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. Together with a German pastor named George Michael Weiss, who had accompanied most of his flock from Germany to Philadelphia in 1727, Boehm petitioned the Church of Holland to take an active interest in providing for the spiritual needs of the "destitute" German Reformed people in Pennsylvania and adjacent colonies. In 1746 the Dutch Reformed Church sent out Michael Schlatter, a young Swiss minister, who on September 29th of the following year organized a missionary synod called the Coetus, which consisted of four ministers and twenty-seven elders, representing twelve congregations. It was not until 1792, however, that the Coetus, which had been sending annual reports to the Church in Holland, became independent and changed its name to the Synod of the High German Reformed Church

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14. For a full account of the history of the German Reformed Church in America see Joseph H. Dubbs, History of the Reformed Church in the United States, [American Church History Series], VIII, New York, 1903; and his The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, Lancaster, Pa., 1902. Also David Dunn "The Evangelical and Reformed Church" in The American Church, op. cit., pp. 296-299.

15. Another unit held services at Germanna Ford, Virginia in 1714. Apparently both the New York and Virginia congregations were served by two pastors named Haeger, (father and son) commissioned by the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. See J. Silor Garrison, History of the Reformed Church in Virginia, Winston Salem, North Carolina, 1948.

in the United States of America. For the first time the German Reformed Church was able to ordain her own ministers and support her own educational institutions. By 1819 the Synod had divided itself into eight classes (presbyteries) but in 1824, because of the difficulty of communicating with the Synod in the east, the Ohio Classis constituted itself as a separate synod, independent of the Synod in the east, yet continuing fraternal relations with the parent body. <sup>16</sup>

Dr. George W. Richards points out that despite the fact the German Reformed Church had been nurtured by the Dutch Church, the German people nevertheless sought to preserve the religious heritage of the Fatherland. The immediate reason for their holding "religious meetings" without benefit of clergy was to escape the errors of those in their midst, namely, Independents, Puritans, Anabaptists, Saturday Folks and Socinians. Thus, Dr. Richards concludes, "antipathy towards sects was inbred in the German pioneers of Pennsylvania before they came to America." <sup>17</sup>

In their relations with other denominations the German Reformed were willing to fraternize and work but not to unite. Michael Schlatter had encouraged the German Reformed Church to accept an overture for union from the Presbyterians but it was turned down on the grounds a union would mean "a change of religion." <sup>18</sup> Despite a close relationship with the Lutherans, (the two communions often shared the same building as some do to this day) a merger of the Lutheran and German

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16. See David Dunn in The American Church, op. cit., p. 297.

17. George W. Richards, History of the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa., 1952, p. 213. (Hereafter designated Hist. Theol. Sem.)

18. Ibid., p. 214. However, the possibility of union with the Presbyterians was discussed again between 1822 and 1838. But when the Presbyterians split into the Old and New Schools the German Reformed were at a loss to know to which General Assembly delegates should be sent. See Good, History, op. cit., p. 186.

Reformed churches was never consummated.<sup>19</sup> The original doctrinal differences brought from Europe could not be obliterated. Neither was merger with the Dutch Reformed Church realized but, as Dr. Richards explains, "the cause of failure was not a mere accident, it was the result of national, temperamental, social and doctrinal differences, which a century or two of cordial fellowship could not efface."<sup>20</sup>

Despite a professed loyalty to the Heidelberg Catechism, and a sincere desire to remain a "church" and not a "sect", the German Reformed were unable to resist the individualism of the nineteenth century. Many ministers and congregations held revivals; in some cases they were in danger of being swept into the current of an emotional type of revivalism. Yet the Synod tried to steer a middle course between formalism and fanaticism in matters pertaining to Christian nurture. In a report delivered at Synod in 1842 we read how congregations participating in revivals "have experienced...seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord--... never before were such outpourings of the Holy Spirit experienced."<sup>21</sup> While the very terms of this report are taken from the revivalistic vocabulary, Dr. Richards claims "... the agencies by which the evidence of revival were produced were the Word of God, the Sacraments, the teachings of the Catechism, social prayer and religious discussion, which did not contradict

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19. Even so, negotiations for merger were discussed by Synod in 1812, 1817, 1822, 1828, 1833. See Good, Ibid., pp. 182-186.

20. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 214. Good, History, op. cit., takes the following view: "But for the Mercersburg theology we believe these two churches, Dutch and German Reformed would be one today." p. 614. Donald H. Yoder, in his "Church Union Efforts of the Reformed Church in the United States to 1934" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1947) grants the immediate cause of the cessation of union negotiations was the theology of Névin and Schaff but recognizes an additional factor: "It was the Dutch Synod's fear, through her misunderstanding of the extent of the union of the German influence over her Zion, that made the separation necessary." p. 64.

21. Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, in Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1857, pp. 26, 27.

Reformed traditions." <sup>22</sup> It was the revivalistic system, however, which the Mercersburg theologians vigorously opposed.

On March 11, 1825 the Theological Seminary of the German Reformed Church was founded at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where permission was granted to use the lecture halls of Dickinson College, then under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. In exchange for the use of the college property, the first president and sole professor of the seminary, Dr. Lewis Mayer, was expected to teach history and German at the college. <sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the arrangement did not prove satisfactory either for the college or for the seminary. Few students wanted to study German and there were just not enough candidates for the ministry to assure Dr. Mayer of financial security. <sup>24</sup> Moreover, Dr. Mayer was charged with heretical teachings, largely derived from DeWette, and since his orthodoxy was in doubt, some suspicion was cast on the orthodoxy of the seminary.

Fortunately, the financial condition of the seminary improved when the Synod dispatched the Rev. James R. Reily to Europe in 1825-26 to secure books and money for the German Reformed Seminary. Mr. Reily's mission was a success; he returned to America with a library of several thousand volumes and money amounting to about \$6,700. <sup>25</sup> But while the financial problem was eased, the difficulties with Dickinson College remained. In 1829, therefore, with the approval of Synod and using his own money, Dr. Mayer bought a piece of land in York, Pennsylvania, where the seminary was relocated and remained until 1837. Because of the woeful

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22. Richards, Hist. of Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 219.

23. See Dubbs, The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, op. cit., pp. 285, 286; Good, History, op. cit., pp. 61-63.

24. Dubbs, Ibid., pp. 286-288; Good, Ibid.

25. See Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 139-167, also Dubbs, Ibid., pp. 288-291; Good, Ibid., pp. 64-67.

lack of classical training of theological candidates, a high school of the Reformed Church also was established at York in 1831. Under the leadership of Frederick Augustus Rauch the classical department expanded to the point where it was suggested that the high school be organized into a college. At the Baltimore meeting of Synod in 1836 the Board of Trustees petitioned the Legislature of Pennsylvania to incorporate the high school under the name of Marshall College, which would open its doors officially March 31, 1836.<sup>26</sup> The petition was granted. Previously the Synod of 1834, meeting in Pittsburgh, had decided that if the high school were to become a college it should be relocated in the town or city which would pledge the greatest amount of money for the support of the college.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, it was contemplated that the seminary also would be relocated. At the Synod of 1835 the inhabitants of Mercersburg indicated their willingness to make a "subscription of \$10,000," to provide a "stone building and a lot of ground," and to make "accommodations for the professors until suitable homes could be erected for their use."<sup>28</sup> By a two-thirds majority vote, Synod proceeded to name Mercersburg the new site of the college and seminary.<sup>29</sup> The fame of this isolated but picturesque little town was to extend beyond the borders of Pennsylvania. It was to become the center of the movement which bears its name, the Mercersburg Movement.

The seminary entered its most creative era when Dr. Frederick A. Rauch

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26. H.M.J.Klein, The History of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, Lancaster, 1943, p. 171. (Hereafter designated History of Eastern Synod.) Actually, however, instruction began at Marshall College in 1835.

27. Ibid., pp. 158, 159.

28. Ibid., p. 160.

29. Ibid. The seminary, however, was not removed to Mercersburg until 1837. In 1853 Marshall College was moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania and united with Franklin College to form Franklin and Marshall College. But the theological seminary was not moved to Lancaster until 1871. Today it is called Lancaster Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

(1806-1841) was elected Principal of the classical department at the college and Professor of Biblical Literature at the seminary. Rauch was born in Kirchbracht, in Hesse, Darmstadt, where his father was a Reformed minister whose congregation became part of the United Evangelical Church. Young Rauch was educated at Marburg, Giessen, and Heidelberg, where he came under the influence of the eclectic theologian, Carl Daub, whose thought came largely from Hegel and Schelling. An excellent scholar, Rauch served a short term as professor extraordinary at Giessen and subsequently was appointed to a full professorship at Heidelberg when he was only twenty-four years old. He seemed destined for a brilliant academic career when his liberal political sympathies brought him into conflict with the government. Apparently he spoke in defense of some imprisoned German war patriots and he was advised to flee Germany for his life. However, the exact incident which led to his leaving Heidelberg is unknown and Rauch refused to discuss the matter after his arrival in America in 1831. After teaching for a year at Lafayette College he became head of the Classical School at York, and professor at the seminary in 1832, the same year in which he was ordained into the ministry of the German Reformed Church. He was the first president of Marshall College and with the resignation of Dr. Mayer from the Seminary in 1839, Rauch became the sole theological professor at Mercersburg. <sup>30</sup>

Rauch is considered the philosopher of the Mercersburg Movement. He was interested mainly in the field of moral philosophy and psychology but he developed no systematic system in either department. He was an idealist whose thinking was more suggestive than scientific. He wrote some thirteen books, pamphlets

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30. See Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 219-223, 225, 226; Good History, op. cit., pp. 91-107; Dubbs, op. cit., pp. 296-300. For the latest and most reliable study of Rauch, Howard J. B. Ziegler, Frederick Augustus Rauch, American Hegelian, Manheim, Pa., 1953.

and articles published while at Mercersburg, yet not one of them is a theological work while all of them have theological implications. "As a theologian and Christian," writes Dr. Moses Kieffer, "he was not a puritan as some have intimated. He taught theology as it is symbolized in the Creed (Apostle's) and Catechism (Heidelberg). His notes on the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation...contain generally all that has subsequently been developed by the leaders of the Mercersburg School in the department of dogmatics." <sup>31</sup>

Professor Rauch introduced his students to the idealism of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, the theology of Schleiermacher, Neander, Tholuck and Dorner; the romanticism of Lessing, Herder, Goethe and Schiller. Dr. Rauch thereby prepared the way for the thought of Nevin and Schaff by emphasizing German philosophy rather than that of the English philosophers, Bacon, Locke, Berkley and Hume.

In 1840 the German Reformed Synod elected John Williamson Nevin (1803-1886) to fill the vacant professorship at the seminary created by the resignation of Dr. Mayer. Nevin was a Presbyterian, educated at Union College and Princeton Seminary. While Dr. Charles Hodge was abroad (1826-1828), Nevin filled his chair of Oriental and Biblical Literature at Princeton. In 1829 he was called to the professorship of Biblical Literature at Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania. It was while teaching at the latter institution that Nevin read Neander's General History of the Christian Religion and Church. This work, he claimed, "renewed my acquaintance with the Christian ages, where all that had been before such a wilderness of dreary disorder and confusion seemed to put on new form and to be lighted up with new sense. His writings broke up my dogmatic slumbers...They were for me an actual awakening of the soul, which had a profound

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31. Moses Kieffer, "Early Reminiscences of the Seminary, 1838-1851" in Reformed Church Messenger, XXXVI, July 6, 1870, p. 2.

influence on my whole theological and religious life." <sup>32</sup> In addition to studying the writings of Neander, Nevin also read several of the Oxford tracts which contributed to the growth of his "churchly spirit." He was not unfamiliar with German theology when he accepted the call to become a theological professor at Mercersburg. In his letter of acceptance, Nevin wrote, "I give myself wholly to the German Reformed Church, and find no difficulty in making her interests my own...I find no lack of consideration here to enlist my sympathies or to stimulate my zeal." <sup>33</sup>

Professors Rauch and Nevin worked together for only one year. Nevin acknowledged his debt to Rauch who taught him a great deal about German theology and philosophy. However, in 1841, Rauch unexpectedly died and Dr. Nevin remained the only professor at the seminary until the election of Professor Schaff.

Nevin became the theologian of the Mercersburg Movement and its foremost leader and controversialist. <sup>34</sup> He was a man of vigorous, positive and independent thought and was one of the first American theologians to be quoted in Germany. Dr. Ebrard commended his views on the Lord's Supper and both Dr. Dollinger and Dr. Pusey liked the originality of the Mercersburg Review which he started in 1849.

Historians of the Mercersburg Movement agree that Nevin sounded the first note of the impending conflict in his tract, The Anxious Bench (1843), although the "church question" did not draw wide scale public attention until he published

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32. John W. Nevin, "My Own Life" in Reformed Church Messenger, XXXVI, June 15, 1870, p. 1.

33. Theodore Appel, Life and Work of John Williamson Nevin, Philadelphia, 1889, p. 98.

34. Thus, the Mercersburg theology frequently is called "Nevin's theology". For an excellent and concise account of Nevin's writings, see Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 265-294.

an English translation of Schaff's Das Princip des Protestantismus. In his Anxious Bench Nevin attacked revivalistic fanaticism. He attempted to prove that the "new measures" were artificial and did not grow out of the true life of the Church.<sup>35</sup> Nevin viewed the Church as an organic, spiritual order, the mother of all her children. At baptism, the infant is received into the membership of the Church before ever being conscious of its membership. The children do not impart life to the Church, but the Church imparts life to the children through the sacraments and the preaching of the Word. Therefore, Christian nurture and evangelism are to take place through the medium of catechetical instruction, the family altar, and daily prayer in the home, but not through the "camp meetings." Despite vigorous protests against Nevin's Anxious Bench, there is no question the work did much to prevent both the Lutheran and Reformed churches from adopting the "new measures" and to revive a new concern for catechetical instruction within the respective denominations.<sup>36</sup>

Thus the groundwork had been laid for the controversy. Opponents were too pre-occupied with the discussion of the means of Christian nurture to realize the implications of Nevin's concept of the Church upon which the whole basis of his argument against revivals rested. With the arrival of Dr. Schaff, the subject was brought out into the open.

### III

Dr. Schaff landed in New York City July 28, 1844, where he was welcomed on behalf of the German Reformed Church by the Rev. Bernard C. Wolff, who became a

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35. Many pastors had hoped Rauch's successor would be one who used revivalistic measures and encouraged an emotional type of religion. See Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., p. 14.

36. Appel, op. cit., pp. 100-116, 126-177; Nevin, The Anxious Bench, Chambersburg, Pa., 1844, passim.

close personal friend and later Schaff's colleague at Mercersburg. The two men left New York, August 5, and proceeded to Somerville, New Jersey, where they were joined by Dr. Hoffeditz who, a year earlier, served as a delegate to extend to Schaff the call to the professorship. After stopping at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to attend several sessions of the Triennial Convention of the Dutch and German Reformed churches, Dr. Schaff and Mr. Wolff went on to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where a delegation of students escorted their new professor into Mercersburg on the evening of August 12th.

Both the people of Mercersburg and the students turned out to greet him. The college and seminary buildings were lighted; evergreens decorated the archway to the campus and a marching band played for the festive occasion. There were welcoming addresses in both English and German. Dr. Schaff made a short speech in German, expressing his reasons for coming to America and his prospects for the future.

He interpreted his call to mean that the German Reformed Church desired the literary and theological treasures of Europe to be transplanted to the fertile soil of America. He anticipated that the one sided German speculative interest might be corrected by the practical spirit of the American people.<sup>37</sup> David Schaff points out that his father believed "in an adaptation rather than a transplantation, transfusion rather than transportation of German theology."<sup>38</sup>

Following his reception Dr. Schaff went to the home of his colleague, Dr. Nevin, while the students shouted, "vivat Professor" and the professor replied, "vivant studiosi". Writing in his diary that evening, Dr. Schaff expressed his

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37. This address and a report of Schaff's welcome at Mercersburg is contained in the Weekly Messenger, IX, Aug. 21, 28, 1844.

38. David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 99.

feelings about the occasion, "It was too much honor; I do not deserve it. I am humbled by it." <sup>39</sup>

Summarizing the events of the day, the Rev. Samuel R. Fisher, editor of the denomination's official paper The Weekly Messenger expressed the sentiments of the German Reformed Church:

"Never before has so much expectation in the Old World been embarked upon a religious movement in favor of the New as now upon the mission of Dr. Schaff and we may add that never before has a foreigner from Germany made his appearance in this country under such general observation and in the face of expectation so large." <sup>40</sup>

In October 1844 the Synod of Allentown received Dr. Schaff into the ministry of the German Reformed Church. His inaugural address was delivered in German in the Reformed Church at Reading, October 25th. <sup>41</sup> After consulting with Dr. Schneck, he chose for his subject "The Principle of Protestantism as related to the Present State of the Church." The object of the address was to state clearly the fundamental ideas underlying the Protestant Reformation and their bearing upon the mission of the Protestant Church in the United States during the 19th century.

Reaction to the inaugural was generally favorable although there were some murmurs of dissent, even at Reading. Mr. Fisher, however, in the Weekly Messenger, claimed the address "...was a masterly performance. It abounded in deep and solid thought. ...Though it was somewhat lengthy, and many portions of it were evidently elevated above the usual sphere of thought of most of the audience, it still was listened to throughout with marked attention and interest.

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39. Quoted in Ibid.

40. Weekly Messenger, IX, Aug. 28, 1844, p. 1866.

41. Dr. Schaff began to use English in lectures and correspondence in 1845. His first English sermon was preached before the Synod in 1851 entitled "Systematic Benevolence."

...As it will doubtless be given to the public in a permanent form, we forebear any further comment upon its merit."<sup>42</sup>

The inaugural appeared in January 1845 under the title, Das Princip des Protestantismus, but it did not draw public attention until it was published in English during April of the same year. Dr. Schaff felt that were it not for Dr. Nevin's translation, the book would have remained in obscurity. The English edition contains an "Introduction" by Nevin, in which he tries to defend Schaff against the charges of the secular German press which still claimed Schaff was disloyal to American Germans because of the remarks he had made in his ordination sermon at Elberfeld.<sup>43</sup> Nevin's sermon on "Catholic Unity" also is appended to the English edition.

Dr. Schaff wrote three books on the church question which contain the essence of his concept of the Church. He stated his theory of historical development in the Principle of Protestantism, vindicated it at length in his tract called What is Church History? and in the "Introduction" to his History of the Apostolic Church Schaff's views were given their final expression. We shall now proceed to examine the Principle of Protestantism.

#### IV

##### Part One

Dr. Schaff began his book by discussing the principle of Protestantism in its original relation to the Roman Catholic Church. He pointed out that a reformation must always hold its course midway between a revolution (a radical

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42. Weekly Messenger (Hereafter designated W.M.) IX, Nov. 6, 1844, p. 1907. The "Introduction" and "Conclusion" of the inaugural were printed in the W. M., X, Apr. 9, 1845, pp. 1990, 1991, and Apr. 23, 1845, p. 1998.

43. Nevin, "Introduction" in The Principle of Protestantism, (Hereafter designated Principle) Chambersburg, Pa., 1845, pp. 5-7.

overthrow of an existing organization) and a restoration (a mere repetition of the old). A reformation must produce something new, while at the same time attaching "...itself organically to what is already at hand and grow forth thus from the trunk of history in regular union with its previous development."<sup>44</sup> Thus the Reformation was neither a complete restoration of primitive Christianity nor a violent separation from the Catholic Church of the previous centuries. To claim October 31, 1517 as the birthday of the Evangelical Church was an error since the spiritual wealth of the Middle Ages is thereby renounced and the promise of Christ's continual presence in the church is willfully denied.

Schaff insisted that the Reformation was not the creation of any one man or country, or the product of a single day. When Luther uttered the bold word which called the Reformation into being, there was an echo of approval not only in Germany but in France, England, Italy and Spain, as well. Schaff contended that Luther:

"...gave utterance to what was already darkly present to the general consciousness of his age, and brought out into full view that which thousands before him, and in their own time, had already been struggling in various ways to reach. Genuine Protestantism is no such sudden growth, springing up like a mushroom of the night, as the papist and certain narrow minded ultra-protestants would fain have us believe."<sup>45</sup>

There were certain tendencies in both secular and sacred life which foreshadowed the Reformation. Schaff discerned how Protestantism was closely related to the rise of national states and called attention especially to German national literature of the late Middle Ages which opened the way for reform in

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44. P.S. Principle, op. cit., p. 36. Accordingly, Christianity is itself a reformation not only of Judaism but of humanity. Yet Christ and the apostles respected the institutions of Judaism despite their defects, while at the same time the watchword of the apostles was Christ's affirmation, "Behold, I make all things new."

45. Ibid., p. 37.

religion, e.g. Eulenspiegel, Reineke Fuchs, and Hans Rosenblut's Fastnachtspiele. Furthermore, Schaff considered the German national character with "its deep apprehension of the Christian system," its love for truth and hatred of bondage as a prophetic preparation for Protestant Christianity. These qualities were best embodied in a single man, Luther, whom Schaff called "the most original, purest, and perfect representation of the German nation [possessing] indomitable energy, earnest childlike integrity and simplicity, unaffected humility, and a predominant tendency towards the world of thought and feeling; to which must be added, it is true, a blunt courage, running not infrequently into downright rudeness, and a certain undervaluation of the outward customs of life, not to be approved in any case. ..." 46

In the sphere of science, Ficino, Reuchlin and, especially, Erasmus prepared the way for the Reformation while in a negative sense the Albigenses, Beghards and Catharists anticipated the Reformation, although these sects lacked true church feeling; they were often "hyper-spiritualistic" and not infrequently Manichean and pantheistic, thereby tending to make war on the truth while witnessing against the tyranny of Rome. On the other hand, the Waldensians, Wycliffites, Hussites, Brethren of the Common Life, the Oratory of Divine Love, Nicholas of Clemange, Pierre d'Ailly, John Gerson, Savonarola, John of Wesel and John Goch, all evidenced a positive anticipation of evangelical Christianity. Mysticism also contributed to the preparatory stages of the Reformation by directing attention away from external observances to personal communion between God and man. Yet mysticism had no power within itself to produce a reformation, since it lacked practical energy and drive by over-emphasizing the subjective. 47

These tendencies, Schaff contended, made the Reformation an historical

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46. Ibid., p. 39.

47. Ibid., pp. 42-46.

necessity. "We go further," he wrote, "and affirm that the entire Catholic Church as such, so far as it might be considered the legitimate bearer of the Christian faith and life, pressed with inward necessary impulse toward Protestantism. ..." <sup>48</sup> The Councils of Constance and Basel alone proved the Reformation was grounded not in the sects and isolated individuals, but in the heart of the Church herself. Schaff felt the legalistic piety of the Middle Ages served as a school master to bring the evangelical doctrines to the consciousness of the reformers. He did not question the presence of the Gospel in the Roman Church any more than he doubted that "comfort" and "promise" were contained in the Old Testament Law. But in both cases the dominant principle was legalistic. The tension between Law and Gospel, Schaff believed, was best symbolized in the personal religious struggle of Luther, who was not ashamed to call the Roman Church his mother. The result of Luther's struggle, Schaff concluded, was the Reformation which he regarded as:

"...the legitimate offspring, the greatest act of the Catholic Church; and is on this account of true Catholic nature itself, in its genuine conception: whereas the Church of Rome, instead of following the divine conduct of history has continued to stick in the old law of the Commandments, the garb of childhood, like the Jewish hierarchy in the time of Christ, and thus by its fixation as Romanism has parted with the character of Catholicity in exchange for that of particularity." <sup>49</sup>

Yet for Schaff the Reformation was not only a product of historical necessity, it was also an historical advance on the part of the Church; an advance, however, only with regard to the previous apprehension of Christianity as expressed in the Church. The Gospel as revealed in the New Testament has been complete from the beginning; it will always remain the same, and is the final norm for

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48. Ibid., p. 47.

49. Ibid., pp. 49, 50.

Christian faith. It is only the Church's appropriation, understanding, and expression of Christianity which undergoes development. <sup>50</sup> Schaff used Hegelian frames of reference to argue that, "The Church not less than every one of its members has its periods of infancy, youth, manhood and old age." <sup>51</sup> Yet progress within the Church is not creative but only receptive. The Church as a growing organism only appropriates more and more profoundly the life and doctrines of Christ and his apostles. But no doctrine can be considered true which contradicts the essence of New Testament Christianity. Therefore, Schaff argued, the Reformation was not an advance of Christianity itself but only "... of its tenure upon the consciousness of the Christian world." <sup>52</sup> It was the subjective appropriation of the doctrine of salvation as expressed in the New Testament which was the greatest service rendered by the reformers.

Schaff attacked the false views of his many contemporaries, who argued the Reformation was an attempt to subvert the papacy or a mere struggle to free the human mind from dogmatic captivity. On the contrary, Schaff noted, the reformers did not wish to overthrow authority and restraint as such, but "rather to bind man to the grace of God, and to lead his conscience captive to God's word." <sup>53</sup>

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50. There is a material limitation to this principle, however. Christianity, when compared to Judaism, is something entirely new; the former is no mere development of the latter. Christianity is a fresh, creative act of God. In the Old Testament, God revealed himself to men only in a sporadic, transient way. See Ibid., p. 50.

51. Ibid., p. 51.

52. Ibid. Schaff admitted there are passages in the writings of Augustine, Anselm and Bernard of Clairvaux, which certainly come near a position of justification by grace, in fact, they even state the principle. But in their piety these men nevertheless held a legalistic notion of salvation and only in exalted moments did they affirm the evangelical point of view. Paul, however, did preach justification by faith. The wonder is that the Church did not see it earlier.

53. Ibid., p. 53.

Protesting was not the first and main constituent of the Reformation; it was secondary and rested on previous, positive affirmation. Equally false was the view dominant especially within the Reformed Church that the positive religious principle of the Reformation was the sole authority of the Scriptures as the rule of faith. This principle, Schaff claimed, was secondary and not primary, since in order for the Scriptures to be taken as the rule of faith it was necessary that "the faith in Christ of which they testify should be already at hand, that their contents should have been made to live in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying the Word and the Church."<sup>54</sup> Thus, according to Schaff, everything turned on the nature of one's faith in Christ!

At this point Schaff began his discussion of what Luther Binkley calls "the classical statement of the Mercersburg thinkers on the true nature of salvation"<sup>55</sup> namely the principium essendi of the Protestant Reformation, the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith. Schaff first contrasted the Roman Catholic and Protestant views of justification. He admitted that the Council of Trent acknowledged objectively and in thesi the truth that the grace of God as gratia praeveniens begins the work of conversion in man by calling him to the salvation which is in Christ. Yet the Roman theologians do not view man as in a state of positive, absolute corruption, rather, they hold that in his natural state he merely lacks supernatural endowments (as defactus iustitiae originalis) and that there is only a dehabilitatio of his natural powers of reason. Therefore, the Roman Church is really saying that man partakes in his own conversion and salvation when the power of good still in him ('though warped by sin') is set free again, thereby enabling him to acquire justification. For the Roman Catholic,

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54. Ibid.

55. Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., p. 81.

God's grace and the human will work in conjunction to effect justification, as God's grace illumines man's reason and a free consent is made by man to move toward the salvation offered by God! The result is that justification takes place both by works of love and by faith, which according to Schaff, is to confuse justification with sanctification. The emphasis in the Roman Church is on good works which can be done over and over again to the point where they take on more importance than faith; good works can even be carried so far as to make it theoretically possible perfectly to fulfill the law. Yet, Schaff pointed out, the New Testament says, "when we have done all we are still unprofitable sinners." The Scriptures know nothing of an opera supererogationis whereby a man may do more than his duty. It was such a doctrine which gave rise to the scandalous traffic in indulgence. Tridentine soteriology Schaff charged with the following defects: (1) a superficial knowledge of human sinfulness; (2) a confusion of justificatio with sanctificatio; (3) a most insufficient representation of the nature of faith; (4) an over evaluation of good works after conversion giving the Christian life a pelagianistic complexion, and (5) an entire want of evangelical freedom and assurance. <sup>56</sup>

Genuine Protestantism, on the other hand, Schaff claimed, is fully aware of the sin and depravity of man; it is not pelagian and its soteriology is an advance over that of the Middle Ages. For the Protestant, man's nature is fully corrupted so that he is unable to produce anything good. After he has chosen evil, he is no longer free! His soul becomes an object of the divine wrath, and is awakened to recognize its guilt through the legal function of the law, thereby creating a desire for repentance which is in itself not meritorious. The renovation of the sinner only proceeds from the grace of God (See I John 4:10)

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56. P.S. Principle, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

through the mediation of Jesus Christ, whose merits are appropriated to man not through "striving" but as a free gift received by faith. Faith consists of (1) notitia i.e. knowledge of Jesus Christ and his all-sufficient merit, (2) assensus or the free inward consent to all the Scriptures teach of the mercy of God and Christ, and (3) fiducia or "the act of the will moving toward Christ and resting in him for redemption, the confidence that this grace is not only of general objective force, but personally proper to the believing subject himself." 57

Schaff went on to discuss the relation between faith and works. He followed Luther especially in this matter, quoting freely from the reformer's treatise on the Liberty of the Christian Man. Good works are the necessary fruit of faith. As soon as we know God loves us we cannot help but love Him in return. The entire Christian life is a debt of gratitude for the boundless love and mercy of God made known in Jesus Christ. Sanctification is a gradual process, never completed in this life because of the presence of sin still remaining in every individual. Therefore, any good works done by a believer are wrought by the Holy Ghost. The Protestant faith forthrightly proclaims that man cannot save himself; his salvation comes only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. 58

The principle of justification by faith alone Schaff designated as the material principle of Protestantism. He called the doctrine of the normative authority of the Sacred Scriptures, in opposition to the Roman doctrine of tradition and the rationalistic over-evaluation of human reason, the formal principle of Protestantism. Actually, the material and formal principles are really two sides of one and the same principle. They are inseparably joined as content and form, will and knowledge; their living interpenetration is the criterion

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57. Ibid., pp. 62, 63.

58. Ibid., pp. 59-70.

of genuine orthodox Protestantism; and both principles resolve themselves into the maxim, Christ is all in all.<sup>59</sup>

Schaff attacked the Roman Catholic view of tradition, whereby it is made equal with the Scriptures as a source of revelation. Actually, Roman Catholicism deprecates the Word of God by so doing and in practice tradition is exalted above the Scriptures. And yet, Schaff argued, many of the dogmas and practices in the Middle Ages were accepted only by a small minority of the Church fathers. In several instances political pressure entered into their formulation rather than the guidance of the Holy Ghost. There was never an absolute, unanimous agreement about tradition in the history of the Church, Schaff declared, but on this point "the voice of history, with its thousand tongues is overwhelmed, not answered, by the Church of Rome, with the declaration that she is absolutely infallible..."<sup>60</sup>

The Roman assertion of infallibility Schaff claimed, "...forms the proton pseudos, the grand falsehood, on which the whole system rests; and at the same time it's central sin is creature deification, making itself identical with the universal Church, yea, with the absolute kingdom of God out of which all are heretics and children of perdition."<sup>61</sup> Protestantism has shaken this dogma from its place, by affirming that infallibility belongs to Christ alone. The Church militant is not free from sin. Despite the fact that she possesses the unerring Word of God, she bears this treasure in earthen vessels; she possesses a real human existence, subject to the conditions of the finite, not perfect now,

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59. Ibid., pp. 93, 94.

60. Ibid., p. 76. Even at the Council of Trent there was no unanimous agreement on tradition, especially at the Fourth Session. Likewise Moehler uses tradition differently from the Council of Trent. Schaff referred the reader to Moehler's Symbolik, 5th edition, 1838, p. 362 where the celebrated Roman historian distinguishes between a tradition in the objective and subjective sense, a distinction made by Schleiermacher.

61. Ibid., p. 76.

but engaged in a process of development, which will result in perfection only when the Church militant becomes the kingdom of God, triumphant. <sup>62</sup>

Protestants are correct in regarding the Scriptures as the normative authority (though not mechanically dictated, since such a view does not take into consideration the individuality of the sacred writers), containing all that is necessary for salvation but not, on that account, all there is to know about God. "All traditions, then," he wrote, "unless consequently drawn from the Bible are either positively false or contain only subordinate or unessential truth." <sup>63</sup>

Are Protestants then to disregard traditions entirely? Certainly not, especially those which do not contradict the Scriptures. In fact, Schaff proclaimed, a genuine evangelical Church affirms their historical necessity while at the same time it places them neither parallel with the Scriptures, nor over them, but under them, and measures their value by the extent of agreement with this standard. <sup>64</sup> Using Bellarmine's categories, Schaff noted three kinds of tradition: ecclesiastical, historical and dogmatic. The first includes ancient customs and usages pertaining primarily to Orders of Worship, e.g. distinctions in the clergy, Church festivals, symbolism, consecration of baptismal water, making the sign of the cross, etc. Since these were not established by Christ or the Apostles, they have no normative force and are open to evangelical criticism. Yet, in reacting against form, Protestants went too far, especially Puritanism about which Schaff wrote:

"I am constrained here openly to acknowledge, through a false spiritualistic tendency and an utter misapprehension of the significance of the corporeal and outward, [Puritanism] showed itself in this case, rash in its zeal, and has sacrificed many

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62. Ibid., p. 78.

63. Ibid., p. 79.

64. Ibid., p. 82.

beautiful customs, by which religious ideas were sweetly interwoven with common life, and outward opportunities continually supplied for the favorable application of truth to the heart." 65

Regarding the historical traditions of the Church Fathers, their testimony is not infallible. The worth of the writer depends on the historic credibility of what he says and mainly upon his connection with the Apostolic Age. Under no circumstances, however, should the writings of the Fathers shackle the progress of further exegesis as is the case in the Church of Rome. 66

As for dogmatic traditions, Protestants should reject all those not warranted by Scripture, e.g. veneration of the Virgin Mary, purgatory and indulgences, since they are merely arbitrary human inventions! But Protestants cannot afford to disregard the ecumenical creeds since they are expressions of the Church consciousness in fundamental agreement with the New Testament. Therefore, tradition, as embodied in the creeds, Schaff held, is absolutely essential because the creeds are apprehensions of the Scriptures as settled by the Church against heresies. They are not an independent source of revelation but flow from the one fountain of the written word as manifested in the consciousness of the Church. The reformers expressly declared their acceptance of this view of tradition. It is important, Schaff claimed, because men "...can be saved only in connection with the true Christian Church as it has stood from the beginning, ...and that all reformation, therefore, and further development of doctrine and life, must maintain essential unity with the collective consciousness of the Christian Church." 67 The evangelical creeds are not infallible but only the

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65. Ibid., p. 84.

66. Ibid., p. 85. Again Schaff referred to Moehler's Symbolik, 5th ed., p. 390, where the Roman historian admits there was no unanimous exegetical agreement among the Fathers.

67. Ibid., p. 88. Luther made the same point in his conflict with Zwingli, i.e. in the matter pertaining to Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Since the Church had always affirmed this doctrine, Luther thought it wrong for Zwingli to disregard the unanimous testimony of the Church. Cf. also Calvin, Institutes, IV, c.1.

evangelical answer to the interrogation of the divine Word. Furthermore, Schaff contended, the evangelical Church does well to remember that the integrity of the Bible, as well as its contents, is held only via the medium of tradition. To underscore the point Schaff quoted from Nietzsche's System der Christlichen Lehre: "'Die Kirche hat durch Anerkennung die Schriften nicht ächtgemacht, sondern die Schriften haben sich ihr erwiesen und machen von nun an die Kirche ächt.'" <sup>68</sup> Without a due respect for tradition the door is opened for ruthless subjectivity. <sup>69</sup>

Schaff summarized by writing that the Reformation Church is primarily evangelical (its positive element). Protestant is its second character, respecting only that which destructively invades the objective ground of the Gospel. Now we shall discuss the second part of Schaff's inaugural which investigates the disease of Protestantism.

### Part Two

Schaff introduced this section by again referring to his dialectical philosophy of history. He believed that history unfolds only through extremes by way of action and reaction. The interesting point is that for Schaff the "inherent dialectical process" exists and unfolds because of sin, yet, in the hands of God, history is used to serve His purposes. Schaff held that only blindness itself could deny that in modern history Protestantism has been the great moving force of history. Along with her defects the Evangelical Church still possessed material for a new Reformation. The diseases of Protestantism are rationalism and sectarianism.

Rationalism Schaff called dangerous, one-sided, theoretic subjectivism, which developed mainly in Germany within the Lutheran Church. The creative

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68. Quoted in P.S. Das Princip des Protestantismus, Chambersburg, 1845, p. 70.

69. P.S. Principle, op. cit., pp. 93, 94.

period of Lutheran theology ended with the Formula of Concord and was succeeded by the scholastic period of stiff orthodoxy, exclusive toward the Reformed Church and the Melancthonian school. Justification was separated from holiness; and the theory of inspiration regarding the Scriptures was such as to give the Bible a magical character.

The reaction came in pietism which asserted the importance of holiness and the verification of faith in practice, but the effect was to disregard all confessional distinctions and to disseminate a "religion of sickly sentiment and sighs".<sup>70</sup> Actually pietism was the first step toward rationalism since the underevaluation of the Church and her symbols led directly to the underevaluation of the apostles and their writings, terminating finally in the denial of the divinity of Christ. Pietism allowed the idea of religion to be resolved into simple morality or mere good citizenship.

Schaff proceeded to give a brief history of Rationalism. The popular Aufklärung tended to clear Christianity and the Church of all deeper meaning. Kant gave the rationalists a scientific form in which to present their philosophy, despite the fact his Critique of Pure Reason is motivated by great moral earnestness, although separated from the personal idea of morality, as seen in Jesus Christ, the God-man. The most destructive form of rationalism was that of the left wing Hegelians (Strauss, Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer) who resolved the life of the Saviour into myths. The latter were pantheists who made the keenest assaults ever made on the Christian faith. Yet rationalism is pelagian; the Bible is equated with other human books; the concept of the supernatural is re-

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70. Ibid., pp. 99, 100. Schaff admitted that J. A. Bengel, for example, was able to retain his pietism and still stand on the solid ground of the old Church faith. Bengel, however, proved the exception rather than the rule. The transition from pietism to rationalism, Schaff felt, was best illustrated in the case of Semler.

garded as a mere product of the religious imagination. Schaff claimed all that needed to be done now was to reduce rationalistic theory to practice "...by building temples for the worship of genius...and by composing liturgical forms, in which the human spirit may offer prayers and sing speculative hallelujahs in measured logico-dialectic process, to the honor and glory of itself." <sup>71</sup>

Schaff felt that the real enemy in his day was not the Church of Rome but the papacy of the subjective understanding. He believed orthodox Protestantism was more closely related to Rome than to such thinkers as Feuerbach and Strauss, since both the Evangelical and Roman Church believed in the Trinity, Christ's deity and atonement, and the divine infallibility of the Scriptures. True, the Roman Church is semi-Pelagian and half rationalistic by placing works on a par with tradition, but rationalism goes further by claiming all truth can be discovered by the strength of reason alone, without the help of divine revelation! Furthermore, the rationalists make the isolated will and reason of the individual capable of ascertaining the essentials of salvation without any regard for the thought of all Christian history. Certainly, were Luther and Calvin to arrive on the contemporary scene, Schaff believed they would undoubtedly attack rationalism rather than popery. <sup>72</sup>

Schaff admitted that in America abstract German intellectualism did not present an immediate danger, but he did see rationalistic tendencies in Unitarianism and Universalism. He also admitted that "where a man does not think, it requires no great skill to be orthodox. But the orthodoxy that includes no thought is not worth a farthing." <sup>73</sup> Again Schaff warned that rationalism is a great

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71. P. S. Principle, op. cit., p. 101.

72. Ibid., pp. 102-104.

73. Ibid., p. 105.

disease of Protestantism and that the Evangelical Church must be on guard against it, lest infiltration take place and catch America by surprise. <sup>74</sup>

However, the real problem in America, Schaff contended, was sectarianism, or, one sided practical subjectivism; even more dangerous than rationalism because it flourished in the guise of pietism! Schaff felt sectarianism was more prevalent in the Reformed Church than in the Lutheran. Rationalism is to Germany what sectarianism is to Great Britain and America. The reason for this phenomenon Schaff believed could be traced to the differences in character between the German and Anglo-Saxon. The former is characterized by inwardness, a love of contemplation, especially in the realm of philosophy and theology. The German delights in all sorts of theories and systems while caring little for the practical life and outward organization. But the Englishman and American are born realists, possessing a talent for organization, with little interest in philosophy and art; (Coleridge and Carlyle are exceptions) they have little regard for the speculations of German philosophers. <sup>75</sup>

Sects as such preceded the Reformation (cf. I Cor. 10ff.). They existed in the first centuries and the Middle Ages, but were gradually overwhelmed by the spiritual superiority and outward force of the Roman Church. Yet, after the

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74. Ibid., pp. 105-108. Regarding rationalism in America, Schaff called attention to a publication entitled Die Fackel edited by Samuel Ludvig and published in New York City. The motto of this paper was: "Out of the ruins of Judaism and Christianity, Rationalism will raise its head; out of the rubbish of temples and churches will rise the halls of science." Schaff quoted the following extract from the December 14, 1844 issue, "'Dass nach der Lehre des Herrn V. die Asteroiden Bruechstuecke eines grossen Planeten seien, ist in meinen Augen ebenso richtig, als der heilige Geist eines Gottessohn machen koenne. Wenn Planeten Junge machen koennen, so bleibe man doch ja fein im Glauben des alten Gottes, und lasse ihn durch seinen heiligen Geist hier auf Erden noch andere goettliche Jungfern-Kindern erzeugen. Wie aber seine keuschen Marien in jenen Planeten aussehen muessen, das begreift mein Hirnkasten nicht.'" Ibid., p. 108.

75. Ibid., pp. 107-111. (Perhaps Schaff over simplifies a little at this point.)

Reformation the sects gathered strength even though opposed by Luther and Calvin. In England, Elizabeth I was able to unite Protestantism for a while, (not without violence, however) but under her successors, the system collapsed. Schaff admired the Puritan revolution under Cromwell, its moral earnestness and stern self discipline; its war against the tyranny of false forms, but here, he added, is the fault of Puritanism:

"[It has] zeal for God, but not according to knowledge...it makes war upon form in every shape and insists on stripping the spirit of all covering whatever, as though the body were a work of the Devil. If the choice were simply between a bodiless spirit and a spiritless body, the first...must be at once preferred [by the Puritans]. But there is still a third condition, that of a sound spirit in a sound body; and this is the best of all, alone answering to the will and order of God." <sup>76</sup>

Moreover, Schaff indicated, Puritanism has no respect for history and would seek to restore pure primitive Christianity without regard to the development of the many centuries in between. Even the Wesleys and Whitefields, he felt, showed more prudence than their successors by laboring within the Mother Church until they died. By separating themselves from the Anglican Church, American Methodists especially, had fallen prey to a one sided emotional subjectivism, not controlled by any churchly restraint. But, according to Schaff, Puritan Protestantism forms the basis of the American Church. "...The reigning theology of this country is neither that of the Heidelberg Catechism, nor of the Augsburg Confession, nor that of the Thirty Nine Articles. It is the theology of the Westminster Confession." <sup>77</sup>

Schaff respected the Pilgrims for their moral earnestness, strong determination, and zeal for the Sabbath and the Bible, but he deplored the unhistorical and unchurchly character of Puritanism which he believed penetrated American

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76. Ibid., p. 112.

77. Ibid., p. 114.

Christianity. Puritanism, he thought, lacked a concept of the Church which subordinated the individual to the general. Ultimately, the principle of Congregationalism (i.e. Puritanism) he felt would lead to atomism, for when the Bible abstractly is separated from Church development and tradition, (as Schaff interpreted these terms) there is no guarantee as to the number of sects which may arise. Moreover, since Puritanism is not bound by the authority of its own ancestry, there is no reason to expect its children will be bound by its authority. The point has been reached, Schaff sarcastically remarked, where:

"...anyone who has or fancies he has some inward experience and a ready tongue may persuade himself he is a reformer. ...Though he does not understand a single book, he is not ashamed to appeal continually to the scriptures as having been sealed entirely or in part to the understanding of 18 centuries, and even to the view of the Reformers themselves, until now at last God has been pleased to kindle the true light in an obscure corner of the world." <sup>78</sup>

Schaff strenuously objected to denominational jealousies; he believed the various churches should show more charity toward one another, seek to subordinate their differences and work for the cause of a united Protestantism. In his advocacy of the reunion of Protestantism Schaff was a herald of the ecumenical movement. <sup>79</sup>

Professor Schaff felt Puseyism was an entirely legitimate and necessary reaction against rationalistic and sectarian pseudo-protestantism, as well as a needed corrective to the subjectivism of the low church party within the Church of England. While he did not agree that Puseyism provided the cure for the diseases of Protestantism, he had no doubt that the movement rested on "true

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78. Ibid., p. 116.

79. Ibid., pp. 117-121. Schaff argued that Protestantism could not be considered a sect, since it is actually the fruit of the better tendencies within the Roman Church. Had the Reformers been allowed to preach the Word of God with freedom, they would have remained in the Church. Separation, Schaff felt, was wholly the work of the Pope.

church ground" and properly stressed catholicity and unity. Moreover, Puseyism showed proper respect for history by cherishing the religious life of other days. It exalted the authority of the general over all that was simply single and made the reason of the Church to be more important than that of the individual, thereby counteracting the rage for independence. Schaff also honored Puseyism because it recognized the importance of the sacraments, stressed the objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist, restored church festivals and advocated Calvin's practice of frequent communions. Then too, the Puseyites recovered church art and did not fear to beautify sanctuaries and altars. In all this Schaff saw a decided advance and he urged the German Reformed Church to appropriate to herself what was good in the movement while at the same time preventing the errors of young Oxford from spreading in her midst. <sup>80</sup>

Schaff then turned to discuss his misgivings about Puseyism. "Its grand defect," he wrote, "forming an impassable gulf between it and our position is its utter misapprehension of the divine significance of the Reformation, with its consequent development, that is of the entire Protestant period of the Church." <sup>81</sup> Puseyism lacked the true idea of development and would fain carry the Church back to where she stood before the separation of the Eastern and Western communions. Also, the followers of Pusey regarded the Church as a system handed down under a given, complete, and unchangeable form. Therefore, the Reformation only could be regarded as an apostasy from the True Church and such a view would necessitate the unchurching of all Protestants who departed from episcopal tradition. Furthermore, Schaff objected to the unscriptural Anglo-Catholic idea of apostolic succession which was limited to an order of bishops,

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80. Ibid., pp. 121-124.

81. Ibid., p. 124.

who alone were competent to transmit ministerial power, thereby subverting the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. While Schaff personally respected the episcopal system, he did not think it guaranteed "the unity we seek, [nor did] ...it insure the kind of inward piety we seek." <sup>82</sup> Finally Schaff claimed the Puseyites were ignorant of the Protestant principle of justification by faith alone; he accused them of favoring the Roman Catholic dogma of tradition instead of the scriptural principle. "Puseyism then," he summarized, "looks backwards; we look forward. It tends towards Rome; and is there in spirit already; even though it should never outwardly complete the transition. We move towards Jerusalem, the new, the heavenly, the eternal." <sup>83</sup>

### Part Three

Schaff formulated his own theory of the nature of the Church in this last section of his treatise, which he called Protestant Catholicism or Historical Progress. How are the evils of Protestantism to be overcome? Schaff answered, by restoring a proper emphasis on historic churchliness and through the operation of the principle of historical development. He wanted to keep what was best in both the Protestant and Roman traditions, since by themselves, each represented only a half truth. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages developed a stiff objective character, incompatible with a proper respect for individual freedom. However, in legitimately reacting against the Roman Church, Protestantism

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82. Ibid., pp. 126, 127. Schaff interpreted apostolic succession in terms of successio Spiritus Dei, doctrinae evangelii and ministerii divini, an interpretation which he believed carried a perfectly rational meaning, necessarily included in his conception of the Church as the abiding and indissoluble communion of believers in Christ. He felt most Protestants would agree with his interpretation whereby the Word and Sacraments, ministry and ordination were regarded as historically derived from the Catholic Church. See Ibid., p. 125.

83. Ibid., p. 128.

developed the opposite error of loose subjectivity. Both extremes were wrong; their falseness rested in their one-sidedness. Schaff looked for an essential synthesis of the two positions, slow and painful as the process would be, yet in the hands of God, who rules history, such a union, he felt, was entirely possible. <sup>84</sup>

The fact is that if one accepts the theory of historical development, even rationalism and sectarianism could not be construed merely as the work of Satan; both have their conditional historical necessity; both diseases contain only partial truths which should be incorporated into the theology of the Church. Yet, Schaff was quick to point out, any good which resulted from either a divided Church or sectarianism and rationalism, was the work of God alone who "always writes on a crooked line." <sup>85</sup>

Schaff objected to the rationalistic and sectarian contempt for authority as embodied in the Church. But rationalism served a useful purpose in so far as it helped the Church to understand what was finite and human in Christianity, especially by freeing the Church of old prejudices. Its contributions to history and criticism had a purifying effect upon extravagant allegory and the magical theory of inspiration of the Scriptures. It erred, however, by failing to see the divine in Christ and by rejecting the supernatural in Christianity. If, Schaff felt, the good tendency in rationalism could be united with the old orthodoxy, progress in the Church would ensue. <sup>86</sup>

Likewise, sectarianism was provisionally justified in its protest against the affirmities of orthodoxy. Schaff wrote:

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84. Ibid., pp. 129-132.

85. From a Portugese proverb, quoted in Ibid., p. 131.

86. Ibid., pp. 132, 133.

"...they [the sects] are a disciplinary scourge, a voice of awakening and admonition by which the Church is urged to a new life and a more conscientious discharge of her duties. [Yet] a sect...can never, in its subjective isolation, provide successfully even for the particular interest to which it is pedantically devoted; since every single religious truth belongs to a great, organically constituted whole...Christianity is an indivisible unity; its truths are links only of an indissoluble chain returning unto itself." 87

However, a sect loses its right to exist whenever the body from which it seceded has corrected its faults. It was, therefore, incumbent upon the Church (especially the Reformed Church) to make special efforts to gather her estranged children into her bosom, so that they might again become part of the organic body of Christ on earth. 88

Schaff then expressed his views on the relation of Christianity to the world. Since Christ is "Lord of all", religion is not to be regarded as a single aspect of human life; on the contrary, Christianity is a quality of life which should penetrate every aspect of human endeavor. "There is no material element," he wrote, "that may not be sanctified; no sphere of natural life that cannot be glorified. ...Christianity is the redemption and renovating of the world. It makes all things new." 89 Schaff regarded American piety as indifferent to science, art and politics. Such a prejudice was a hindrance to the progress of the Church. Actually, Christianity was hostile only to sin and death; all that was human needed to be transfused with the leaven of the Gospel and placed on the altar of the Most High.

This motif of Christ's dominion over all, he believed, was best evidenced

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87. Ibid., p. 134. Schaff considered Quakerism a just protest against the dead formality of the seventeenth century Anglican Church, Anabaptism a legitimate reaction against many baptised persons who lived like heathen, Methodism, a justifiable complaint against dead orthodoxy.

88. Ibid., p. 135.

89. Ibid.

in the Middle Ages when all human pursuits were subservient to the Church; and philosophy and science were the handmaids of theology. Anyone with any unprejudiced historical feeling must admit there was excellence and beauty in this period, and that Protestant Christianity could learn much from Dante, Aquinas or St. Francis, for example. <sup>90</sup>

The grand defect of the Roman relationship to the world, however, is its utter disrespect for the world in its own right i.e. she seeks to subject everything to her own authority and to stymie growth and development in the fields of arts and sciences. For this very reason her children rebelled at the Reformation since they no longer needed the dictation of the parent. By granting the various disciplines their independence, men were free to serve Christ, Schaff declared, to the end that "...the world may resolve itself into the Kingdom of God, reason into revelation, morality into religion, earth into heaven. All sciences must be raised and refined into theosophy, all government into theocracy, all art into divine worship and the whole life into a joyful proclamation of the glory of God." <sup>91</sup> To realize this goal is the proper challenge of the Church.

Schaff optimistically believed that the Church of his day stood at the threshold of a new era in Christian history. He referred first to the mediating theology in Germany, which he felt was successfully combating the spread of rationalism and properly striving to unite "true church feeling" with a keen scientific interest. Schaff readily admitted that the new evangelical theology was largely influenced by secular science and philosophy. Even Schleiermacher,

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90. Ibid., pp. 136-140.

91. Ibid., p. 142.

he pointed out, had to start in the court of the Gentiles in order to teach his Wolffian and Kantian students about the nature of religion, but this was proper, he maintained, since all truth, if it really is truth, must ultimately serve to the advantage of religion.

Furthermore, Schaff claimed, "...at the very time when the most celebrated theologians cast away the cardinal evangelical doctrines of the incarnation and atonement, ...Schelling and Hegel stood forth in their defense, and claimed for them the character of the highest reason."<sup>92</sup> To the above philosophers Christianity likewise owed a debt of gratitude for restoring a proper respect for Church history. The left wing pantheistic Hegelians, Schaff believed, were destroying themselves amidst their own contradictions and extravagances.<sup>93</sup> On the practical level the growing numbers of ministerial associations, inter-confessional conferences, and liturgical discussions, Schaff interpreted as evidence of renewed interest in the objective nature of the Church. The greatest step toward catholicity, he felt, however, was the establishment of the united Evangelical Church in Germany, the merger of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions, which he believed was only the beginning of a larger movement for Church union and Christian unity.<sup>94</sup>

In utilitarian, practical America, Schaff found no immediate scientific and philosophic conflicts troubling the mind of the Church. But he did lament the sad state of theological and philosophical culture within the German churches

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92. Ibid., pp. 147-149.

93. Ibid., pp. 149, 150.

94. Ibid., pp. 150-155. Even the title Evangelical Church Schaff considered an advance over the former designations, Lutheran or Reformed. He felt it improper that the Bride of Christ should be named after a mere man; Reformed was a proper term, but its sectarian connotation in Germany precluded its choice as a name for the United Church.

in America. He believed in a well trained ministry, whose clergy recognized that the science of theology was as necessary for the regeneration of the Church now as it had been at the time of the Reformation. Some Americans opposed theology as harmful to practical piety; it was enough for a man to have a "religious experience" in order to preach the Gospel. Schaff had little use for those who "...in their wretched spiritual pride deal forth the stale conceits and fantastic soap bubbles of their own poor brains for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Alas for the congregations, whose want of discernment leads them to accept such husks for bread! Pentecosts are no common days in history; ...even our spiritual bread is to be earned by the sweat of our brow." <sup>95</sup> The mind as well as the heart is to be consecrated to God. Therefore, Schaff concluded, sound scholarship is more essential to the well being of the Church than a facile tongue. Against the utilitarians, who argued theology was merely useful, Schaff contended it was neither useful nor harmful but an end in itself; a discipline as indispensable to the clergyman as the knowledge of law is to the statesman. No well ordered condition of the Church can exist without a knowledge of theology. <sup>96</sup>

Schaff noted that in Church history practical piety and sound theology flourished side by side. Paul, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Spener, Edwards, et al., were not only devout men but had distinguished themselves intellectually. "Where a new religious movement," Schaff observed,

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95. Ibid., p. 157.

96. In regard to the relationship between reason and faith Schaff saw no conflict. "Christianity," he wrote, "is not against reason but only above reason. Only superficial knowledge is irreligious, ...thorough knowledge stands in covenant with faith and is not possible without it. But faith should be ever struggling to become knowledge; Christianity should enter always more and more into the comprehension of reason." Ibid., pp. 157, 158.

"is not rooted at the same time in sound doctrinal ground, [as is] the case of our later awakenings, too generally it is found to have no enduring force, or at all events cannot carry the Church forward as a whole." Schaff would not have the Church bound to seventeenth century theology, since this would involve a denial of the principle of historical development and progress, which, if the latter is predicated in the fields of science, law and politics cannot logically be denied in theology. Neither did he wish the recent struggles precipitated by German theology to be transplanted into America. His sole aim was to realize a religious synthesis of the best of modern German theology with practical Anglo-Saxon action, thereby creating a fresh, vigorous theology which united sound faith with a free and scientific spirit capable of restraining infidelity, popery, and semi-popery in all their forms. <sup>98</sup>

Schaff ended his Principle of Protestantism with a moving appeal for Christian union. The present divided state of the Church, he contended, was wrong; the proper condition of the Church is one of unity. Schaff, however, did not want a vague, spiritual unity. Neither did he understand unity as implying uniformity, which would only result in a dead sameness, lacking vitality. But, he wrote, "Visibility lies necessarily in the conception of the Church, which is the BODY of Christ; the mark of unity consequently must also clothe itself in an outward form." <sup>99</sup> Yet outward form did not require one visible head or necessitate a single organization as the Puseyites dreamed. The form which a united Evangelical Catholic Church would take, Schaff did not venture to predict. What was needed in his time, he felt, was a desire for union, a willing-

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97. Ibid., p. 160.

98. Ibid., pp. 161-168.

99. Ibid., p. 168.

ness to labor for it within one's communion by subordinating petty denomination-  
al interests to the greater welfare of the Kingdom of God. Eventually, however,  
Christian union would come; even the Romanists would not be excluded from the  
ultimate united Church. Schaff looked to the time when a higher synthesis  
would be a reality "...in which all past errors shall be left behind whether  
protestant or catholic, and the truth of both tendencies shall be actualized,  
as the power of one and the same life in the full revelation of the kingdom  
of God." <sup>100</sup>

Schaff finally referred to a series of lectures he had heard from Schelling  
in which the famed philosopher had divided Church history into three periods  
of development. The first he called "The Age of Peter", characterized by law  
and authority as manifested in the Roman Church. The second period, "The Age of  
Paul", emphasized evangelical freedom and justification by faith as expressed in  
Protestantism. Both stages, separately taken, are one sided and incomplete.  
The third period, however, "The Age of John", which is still to come, will be  
characterized by love and the principles of authority and freedom, law and  
gospel, Romanism and Protestantism, will be united in perfect harmony to form  
the ideal Church. Schaff admitted this "ingenious and beautiful theory" was not  
original with Schelling and he did not mean to endorse it by referring to it.  
Even so, Schaff hoped the nineteenth century would produce a magnificent union  
thereby consummating the memorable Reformation of the sixteenth century. <sup>101</sup>  
On this ecumenical thought, Schaff ended his Principle of Protestantism.

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100. Ibid., p. 174. Here Schaff is not only expressing his faith in the  
power of God, but basing his hope on the principle of historical development.

101. Ibid., p. 176.

## CHAPTER THREE

### I

We now proceed to discuss the reactions to Schaff's Principle, first outside the German Reformed Church and then within the denomination. In view of the consequences, this treatise undoubtedly was the most influential theological book in the history of the German Reformed Church and certainly one of the most significant writings of American Protestantism. The young Mercersburg professor was only twenty-five years old when he wrote the Principle; one senses both his sincerity and youthful self confidence amidst his wrestling with the doctrine of the Church. However, his positions regarding the objective nature of the Church, historical development, and the necessity of Christian union, as presented in this work, remained substantially the same throughout his entire life. In later years Schaff referred to the Principle as "a harmless little book" in which he merely had sought to present to the public what he had learned from his German professors. Not for a moment did he believe his views were not in accord with the general consensus of the German Reformed Church. In May, 1893, Dr. Schaff made his last appearance before the General Synod convening at Reading. He attended Sunday worship at First Reformed Church and was asked to pronounce the benediction. After the service, he remained standing in the chancel and said, "Here I stood fifty years ago and flung out a firebrand. However, I did it unintentionally." <sup>1</sup>

The Lutheran Observer reviewed Schaff's Principle favorably and praised the author's "originality, vigor, and thoroughness" as well as his "enlarged spirit, fearless candor and a devotion to Christianity which rises superior to

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1. P.S. Quoted in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 114.

all denominations." <sup>2</sup>

Schaff's book was also reviewed favorably by Tayler Lewis, a non practising lawyer who was teaching Greek and oriental languages at Nevin's old alma mater, Union College. Lewis, who probably was the most learned lay theologian of his day, felt Schaff's Principle was by far "the best and fairest" discussion of the church question he had yet read. Especially significant, he felt, was the emphasis Schaff gave to the "doctrine of the real and vital, instead of a mere moral or figurative union of believers in Christ." Regarding the discussion of justification by faith Lewis commented, "Nothing can be more purely evangelical than the manner in which Dr. Schaff presents this great article. ... As for divisions in the Church it was not necessary for Dr. Schaff to show the cure. It was sufficient for him to point out the disorder. The first and great thing is to revive a true church feeling. When the heart is prepared, God will provide the way." <sup>3</sup>

The most penetrating and significant review, however, was written by Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary, the very able and respected leader of the Old School Presbyterians. <sup>4</sup> While Hodge regarded the Principle as an important work, he confessed his inability to understand all of it; first, because of the difficulty inherent in the subject Schaff was discussing, and, secondly, because the book's character was so decidedly "German". Germans have many excellencies, Hodge conceded, "but they are seldom intelligible." The Princeton professor

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2. Lutheran Observer, XII, April 11, 1845, p. 59. (Reviewer's name not given; probably, Benjamin Kutz, editor.)

3. Tayler Lewis "The Church Question" (a review of Schaff's Principle reprinted from the Biblical Repository and Classical Review, II, Jan., 1846) in The Weekly Messenger, XI, Jan. 21, 1846, p. 2153.

4. Charles Hodge (review of Principle in Biblical Reportory and Princeton Review, XVII, 1845) reprinted in W.M. X, Nov. 12, 1845, p. 2113.

agreed with Schaff that the Reformation was neither a revolution nor a restoration; he praised the evangelical doctrine of justification, but the grand defect of the book was the author's failure to state precisely what he meant by the Church. Is it a "body of professors" or of "true believers," Dr. Hodge asked?

While Hodge did not object to Schaff's statement of the principle of tradition in its relation to the visible Church, he did fear the conclusions Americans might derive from it. Schaff, he wrote, "condemns not only the more rigid Puritans but most of the Reformed churches for repudiating the usages (ritual traditions) of the church, and commends the greater regard of the Lutherans for such traditions. In this respect he will find few American Protestants to agree with him." <sup>5</sup>

Since Schaff was ~~educated in Germany~~ it was natural for him to regard rationalism as more dangerous than Romanism. But in America Hodge felt the latter presented a greater threat to Protestantism than infidelity. Regarding sectarianism, Schaff was wrong in ascribing its origin solely to sinful pride. Hodge contended: "Such separations [e.g. Puritans and dissenters in Scotland] are a duty which we owe to God and to the real unity of the church, whenever unscriptural terms of communion are enjoined." <sup>6</sup> On the subject of Christian unity Hodge held that the true unity of the Church was "spiritual." Despite the sects, there did exist a unity of faith and love among denominations, independent of ecclesiastical union. While Hodge thought Schaff would not disagree with this view, he did not like the Mercersburg professor's emphasis on the objective. In regard to Schaff's claim that the end which the Puseyites seek is legitimate but the means wrong,

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5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

Hodge disagreed: "We think its end a mistaken one," he wrote, "and therefore its means illegitimate."<sup>7</sup>

Hodge believed there was "some truth" in Schaff's statement of the principle of historical development, although he was confused by the manner in which this theory was presented. Furthermore, he doubted that German philosophy and theology provided much hope of being the human means by which the Church would advance. In this respect Hodge felt Schaff had overestimated the superiority of German science, which, he granted, was not well understood in America. Perhaps Schaff would be able to clarify the situation.

Hodge ended his forthright review by referring to the positive merits of the Principle. "The evangelical character of the leading doctrines of this book," he wrote, "the seriousness and warmth of feeling which pervade it, and the high order of ability which it displays, give ground to the hope that Dr. Schaff will prove a blessing to the church and country of his adoption."<sup>8</sup>

## II

Within the German Reformed Church the reactions to Schaff's Principle were far less favorable. In fact, some individuals were convinced that the book contained "pernicious heresy." Professor Good has summarized the leading objections as follows: (1) Schaff was guilty of "Romanizing tendencies" (2) his view of tradition appeared to be substantially the same as the Roman view (3) he commended Puseyism and was "easy with Rome" while he was very severe on Protestantism (4) his philosophy was Hegelian (5) he was more friendly to Luther and magnified the German reformation while minimizing the Zwinglian (6) he was too optimistic about Church union, "a dreamer", "an idealist."<sup>9</sup>

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Good, History, op. cit., pp. 217, 218. Other attacks on the Principle containing the same objections were made in the Dutch Reformed Church paper, The Christian Intelligencer, Aug. 7, 14; Sept. 11; Oct. 16, 1845. Since the

The attack on Dr. Schaff's orthodoxy was led by the Rev. Joseph F. Berg, D.D., pastor of the First Reformed Church in Philadelphia and editor of the vehemently anti-Catholic publication, The Protestant Banner. On October 18, 1844 at the Synod of Allentown, Dr. Berg preached a sermon in which he too sought to define the mission of the German Reformed Church in America.<sup>10</sup> He opposed the "new measure men who teach customs which are unlawful" and he wanted the Church to return "to the good old ways established by the fathers." So far Dr. Schaff could agree with Berg; the point of difference, however, lay in the interpretation of the phrase "the good old way."

Berg admitted that it was an error to regard Zwingli as the founder of the German Reformed Church; he claimed that the doctrines of the Reformation always had been maintained" ... in their purity and strength from the days of the Apostles until the Age of Luther..." by faithful men "whom God had raised up to feed the remnant of his people." He cited the manuscripts of Perrin which were dated four hundred years prior to the Reformation and contained the essential doctrines of the Waldensian Church. Berg concluded that the fathers of the Reformed Church of the Palatinate were Waldensian brethren who were therefore the spiritual ancestors of the German Reformed Church in America. He observed there had always been a decided protest" ... against idolatry and the strong delusions both of pagan and Papal Rome from the second to the twelfth century." Finally, Berg reasoned, Perrin's documents of 1120 provided enough evidence to prove the Waldensians were neither Episcopalians nor Baptists (since they practiced infant baptism) but, on the contrary, they were Presbyterians whose ministers were equal in authority. Moreover, the Waldensians were not Independents for they were con-

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W.M. generally was favorable to Nevin and Schaff, opponents had to use the Dutch paper through which to express their point of view. After Oct. 16, however, the W.M. opened its columns to discussion of both sides of the case.

10. Reprinted in the W.M., IX, Nov. 20, 1844, p. 1913.

trolled by a Synod. <sup>11</sup>

According to this so-called Waldensian theory of the continuity of the Church, the Roman communion was looked upon as the great perversion of Apostolic Christianity beyond all hope of recovery and commonly referred to as "the Scarlet woman", "the great harlot", "the synogogue of Satan." Even so, throughout the entire history of Christianity there were always "churches in the wilderness" which sought to maintain the original purity of the New Testament faith in the midst of a perverted, hopelessly lost church. The Reformers were the heirs and bearers of the true primitive Christian faith, preserved by scattered refugees and groups throughout the Empire in the early and late Middle Ages. Actually a large number of American ministers and professors subscribed to this theory, which in effect was to say that the pure Christian faith was handed down through the sects and not by the Catholic Church.

Berg did not even regard the Roman Church as being within the fold of Christianity; she could not possibly claim to be the Church of Christ. The only hope of her redemption would be to unite with one of the Protestant churches (preferably the German Reformed Church in America). In 1840 Dr. Berg had presented a copy of his lectures on Romanism to the Synod which recommended it to all ministers and congregations. Two years later, Berg introduced a motion at the Synod of Lewisburg, which expressly would have put the German Reformed Church on record as condemning the Roman Church and papacy. The motion was not passed. <sup>12</sup>

We must remember that the Zeitgeist in America was decidedly anti-Roman. Opposition was expressed not only by the Know-Nothing political party and in the riots in Boston, but through the medium of sermons, tracts, and ecclesiastical

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11. Quotations taken from Berg's sermon, Ibid.

12. Good, History, op. cit., pp. 219, 220.

resolutions. Even the General Assembly of the Old School Presbyterians formally declared in 1845 that the Roman Church was "utterly corrupt and hopelessly apostate" and therefore even Roman Catholic baptism was invalid.<sup>13</sup>

Schaff's inaugural address directly contradicted the Waldensian theory of the continuity of the Church as well as the contention that the Roman Church was the "great apostate." As Dr. Richards rightly observes, both Schaff and Nevin believed that "... the Church after the Reformation was in vital organic union with the Church before the Reformation. The purpose of the Reformers was not to re-found the Church of the New Testament, not to re-store the undivided Church of the first four centuries; but to re-form the Roman Catholic Church of its errors, ... so that it would continue to be true to the Church of the Apostles and be recognized as the Church Universal."<sup>14</sup>

For Schaff all progress in the Church must be based upon the apprehension of the Gospel as contained in the New Testament. Therefore, the Church needs always to return to the source of her faith, the Holy Scriptures, for guidance and correction. But true progress in the Church consists in a cumulative apprehension of the substance of the New Testament faith. The Church is not, however, absolutely bound by the form in which this truth has been expressed in the course of history. On the other hand, if Protestants are to be true to the principles of their forefathers, they cannot regard the Reformation as a revolution condemning the past nor as a restoration of apostolic or patristic Christianity. Certainly Protestantism is an advance on the past, but it cannot be accepted as the final form of Christianity. The past "exists" to serve the future. Schaff wanted the Church of his day to continue the work of the on-going Reformation;

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13. Dr. Charles Hodge, however, publically dissented from this declaration of the General Assembly of 1845.

14. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 248, 249.

he did not want uniformity or division, but unity within diversity, which, he felt, would be harmonized in the Evangelical Catholic Church of the future. <sup>15</sup>

Dr. Berg began his preliminary attack against the Mercersburg professors in the Protestant Banner where he first accused Nevin of (1) Romanizing and (2) holding to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Nevin replied with a series of five articles printed in the Weekly Messenger between August 13th and September 10th, 1845. Appearing under the title, "Pseudo Protestantism", these articles are a masterpiece of religious polemics. Nevin regarded the positions taken against him as implying his disloyalty to the doctrinal standards of the German Reformed Church. Therefore, with keen insight and fortifying his arguments with copious notes, he set out to prove not that his views were contrary to the doctrines of the Reformed Church in Switzerland, Germany and America, but rather that the views of his opponents were at variance with the teachings of the Reformed confessions. Nevin concluded that it has never been the orthodoxy of the Reformed Church (German, French, Dutch, or English) either "to unchurch absolutely the Roman Catholic communion [or] to deny the spiritual real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper." In fact, Nevin added, to deny the first proposition" ... is an irregular departure from the established doctrine and practice of this Church, [Reformed] as well as from the historical authority of Protestantism as a whole; [and] to deny the second proposition is ... to do serious and material defection from the true and proper faith of the Church, as it stood in the beginning and is still preserved in the symbolic books." <sup>16</sup>

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15. See Ibid., p. 249.

16. Nevin, "Pseudo-Protestantism" in W.M., X, Aug. 13, 1845, p. 2061.

Nevin's reasoning, however, did not silence Dr. Berg. The very fact that Schaff's Principle had been praised by the Catholic Herald (a high Episcopalian publication) and the True Catholic (a Roman Catholic journal) added support to his contention that the teachings of the book were subversive.<sup>17</sup> At the spring meeting of Philadelphia Classis, Dr. Berg was appointed chairman of the Committee on the State of Religion which was instructed to report its findings at the fall Classis meeting. On September 16, 1845, Dr. Berg delivered the report. At last the rumors pertaining to the heresies of Dr. Schaff had crystallized into concrete resolutions.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Resolutions of Philadelphia Classis

- "1. RESOLVED, That we regard the doctrine that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice as fundamental and essential to the existence of Christianity, and that we utterly deny the propriety of asserting that Scriptures may under any circumstance be undervalued in favor of human addition or tradition. (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.)
- "2. RESOLVED, That we regard faith in Christ as the life-giving principle of Christianity, (Gal. ii, 20), and that under no circumstances may the efficacy of the sacraments be represented as superior to that of faith.
- "3. RESOLVED, That we deem the sentiment, that the sacraments depend not for their efficiency upon the spiritual state of the receiver, as contravening the great truth that the sacraments without faith are unavailing (Remember Judas).
- "4. RESOLVED, That we hold as a fundamental doctrine that we derive our religious life from Christ by the truth, through the quickening influence of the Spirit, and that while the ordinances of the Church are channels through which spiritual blessings are conveyed, they cannot confer religious life.

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17. Late in 1844 Berg sent Edward Leahy, an ex-trappist monk whom he had converted, to Mercersburg. Leahy was surprised to learn that Schaff regarded the Roman Church as part of the True Church and that he taught the real Presence in the Sacrament. Leahy also reported that the works of Moehler and Bellarmine were recommended to students.

18. Good interprets the difficulties occasioned by Schaff's Principle from a point of view uncritically favorable to Berg and his followers. See Good's History, op. cit., pp. 202-230.

"5. RESOLVED, That we hold that Christ is not bodily present with his people in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in any other way than symbolically, but is spiritually present with them to the end of time, and that this institution is intended to remind us of his death, UNTIL HE COME the second time in his glorified body; that we cannot admit that the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is corporal as it was in the days of his flesh, because his presence with his Church on earth is no longer human but divine and spiritual; and that in all cases in which the flesh and blood of Christ are said to be received in the Sacrament of the Supper, the language is to be understood symbolically and not literally.

"6. Inasmuch as it is believed by many that sentiments contrary to the above essential doctrines of God's Word are inculcated in a work entitled 'Principle of Protestantism' (pp. 122-124). Therefore,

RESOLVED: That the attention of Synod be called to the work in question." <sup>19</sup>

After a long debate, these resolutions were adopted by Philadelphia Classis and referred to Synod for appropriate action. The Rev. John S. Foulk, however, submitted a dissenting opinion since he did not believe Schaff's book propagated "dangerous and Romanistic errors." "While I do not feel prepared to endorse all the sentiments expressed in the 'Principle of Protestantism,'" he wrote, "... as really true, ESPECIALLY when wrested from their connection, and made to assume a mere isolated form, I feel as little prepared to pronounce them false, either expressly or implied." <sup>20</sup> The Rev. Jacob Helffenstein then moved that Philadelphia Classis publically declare its belief that "... the PAPAL SYSTEM be regarded as the great apostasy under the Christian dispensation, - 'the man of sin,' - 'the mystery of iniquity,' - 'the mother of abominations of the earth,'

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19. "Minutes of Philadelphia Classis" in Minutes of the Classis of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1846 to 1868, compiled by Isaiah M. Rapp, typewritten manuscript in Historical Collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster.

20. Ibid., p. 11. Three other delegates indicated their approval of the first five resolutions but expressed disapproval of the sixth, i.e. they did not believe the Principle of Protestantism contained views contrary to the doctrinal standards of the German Reformed Church.

... and as such destined to utter and fearful destruction." The motion was unanimously adopted. <sup>21</sup>

In examining the resolutions of Philadelphia Classis, it should be noted that there is no formal accusation of heresy against Dr. Schaff nor is his inaugural condemned in its entirety. Actually, these resolutions read more like a creed than an indictment. Their significance, comments Dr. Richards, is this: "They mark the beginning, not of a schism, but of two schools of theological thought in the Reformed Church which continued in controversy until the Peace Movement adopted by the General Synod of 1878." <sup>22</sup>

On October 16, 1845 the Eastern Synod of the German Reformed Church convened at York, Pennsylvania. The resolutions of Philadelphia Classis were given to the Committee on Minutes of Classis, whose chairman was the Rev. Bernard C. Wolff. This committee consisted of one delegate from each classis and one from the Reformed Synod in Ohio. On October 22nd, the Synodical Committee Report on the resolutions of Philadelphia Classis was presented on the floor of the Synod where discussion continued for two full days including the intervening evening sessions.

In the first five introductory paragraphs, the committee objected to the procedure whereby the resolutions had been admitted to the Synod. First, the committee regretted the conduct of Philadelphia Classis which had allowed the resolutions to be brought to the attention of the public in the columns of the Weekly Messenger. Such an action, the committee felt, was marked by "... an entire absence of consideration and forethought, unnecessarily exposing the serious charges against the professors to the whole community." Secondly,

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21. Ibid., p. 12.

22. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 251.

the committee believed the constitutional rights of the professors had been violated, since matters of this sort were supposed to be taken up with the Board of Visitors of the Seminary first and then referred to the Synod for appropriate action.<sup>23</sup> Thirdly, the committee felt that while the resolutions of Philadelphia Classis were not intended as formal charges against the author of the Principle of Protestantism, nevertheless, "... in connection with the last resolution they may be so regarded; as it was doubtless intended they should be, if they could be sustained before Synod."<sup>24</sup>

After entering the resolutions of Philadelphia Classis into the minutes of Synod, the committee went on to deny the implications contained in each resolution.

In regard to the first, the committee believed that Schaff's book "most decidedly" affirmed the principle of the sole authority of the Scriptures, and in no way suggested that the Scriptures were not essential to the existence of Christianity. The committee quoted from Schaff's work to support their opinion: "'All traditions, unless they be mere consequences drawn from the Bible, are either positively false, or contain subordinate truth and unessential truth. The Word of God is the highest norm and rule, by which to measure all human truth, all ecclesiastical tradition, all synodical decrees.'"<sup>25</sup>

The second resolution contained two propositions, namely, "that faith is the life giving principle of Christianity," and "that faith is superior in its efficacy to the sacraments." But where did Schaff deny this, the committee won-

23. Schaff and Nevin waved this constitutional technicality and requested the case to proceed.

24. "Report of the Committee on Minutes of Classes" in Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1845, York., Pa., p. 73.

25. Ibid., p. 77. The committee included several quotations from Schaff's Principle (pp. 53, 73, 78, 79) as arguments against the charges preferred.

dered. He stated that Christ is the only ground of the believer's salvation and His merits are appropriated only by faith. Likewise, in regard to the sacraments, Schaff "... admits the superior efficacy and importance of faith, and only asserts that in some instances the sacraments are not held in sufficient estimation." <sup>26</sup>

As for the third resolution, the committee found nothing in the Book under investigation which would contradict the fundamental truth that the sacraments depend for their efficacy upon the spiritual state of the receiver, i.e. in no place did Dr. Schaff say the sacraments conferred their benefits without faith. Indeed, he called the sacraments "objective institutions", which contained an "inward grace, of which they are an outward sign," but to say this is not "to contravene the great truth that the sacraments without faith are unavailing." <sup>27</sup>

The committee expressed some doubt about the meaning of the fourth resolution submitted by the Classis, which appeared to be at variance with the second resolution. The point the committee made was this: "... whether 'we derive our religious life from Christ, 'by the truth,' or 'by faith' the Book teaches nothing to the contrary." <sup>28</sup> Schaff presupposed that faith should already be at hand in order that the Scriptures might live in the heart through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Regarding the fifth resolution, the committee found nothing in the inaugural which was necessarily contradictory to this proposition of Philadelphia Classis. In fact, the committee observed, the subject of the Sacrament of the Lord's

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26. Ibid., p. 78.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

Supper was not even discussed in the Principle of Protestantism. There is a reference to the fact the Puseyites hold to the "living presence of Christ" in the Sacrament, but, the committee asked, "... does this mean a corporeal presence- a bodily presence in the popular sense of the term? May it not mean, ... a presence altogether different? And may not such a presence- a spiritual presence- be just as real, as when he [Christ] stood among his disciples in the days of his flesh?"<sup>29</sup> Concerning the fifth resolution the following opinion was expressed:

"After a careful examination of the 'Principle of Protestantism' and all that stands in connection with it in the way of 'Introduction' or 'Appendix', the committee deem it due to those concerned to declare that there is not one word contained in it, that, in its proper connection and according to its true meaning, should lead anyone to suppose that it taught the doctrine of a corporeal presence in the Lord's Supper."<sup>30</sup>

The report ended with the unanimous declaration that there was no evidence to justify the charges preferred against either Dr. Schaff or Dr. Nevin. The committee respectfully submitted its own resolutions for consideration of the Synod.

"1. That after a most earnest and thorough examination of the Book referred to them, together with its Introduction and Appendix, the committee is entirely persuaded that it does not contain anything by which the charges preferred by Philadelphia Classis can be sustained, or that it should lead to the suspicion or fear that our professors are disposed to depart from the true Protestant stand-point;- on the contrary that they are disposed firmly to maintain it; and that the Book if fairly understood is well calculated to promote the true interests of religion and entitles its authors to the respect and affectionate regards of the Protestant community.

"2. That the Professors in our Theological Seminary are deserving and should receive the affectionate sympathy and cordial support of every friend of the Church, in their earnest and untiring efforts to build up our Institutions and to advance the honor and welfare of the Church.

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29. Ibid., p. 79.

30. Ibid.

"3. That without desiring for a moment to limit the right, or to restrain the disposition of any individual or religious body in the Church freely to inquire into the doctrines or conduct of those having charge of our Institutions, or to question or reflect upon the motives which led to the recent movement on the part of the majority of Philadelphia Classis, Synod is decidedly of the opinion that the course indicated by the Constitution and sanctioned by the custom of the Church is the only safe, true and proper course to be pursued in bringing to the notice of Synod complaints against our Theological professors." 31

Unfortunately, we have no written records of the discussion which followed the reading of the above Synodical Committee resolutions. According to the Weekly Messenger, however, we know that "Dr. Nevin spoke for two hours" in favor of the report, followed by Dr. Schaff who delivered a speech in German of "about three hours length," and later he spoke in English for "one and one half hours. ... The facility with which he spoke the English language surprised everybody." Dr. Berg talked for "two hours" and later "made a few remarks." The Messenger correspondent referred to the discussion on the Synodical committee report as "... the most protracted one that has ever been held on the floor of the Synod. Yet all decisions were characterized by a spirit of the greatest moderation and exemplary Christian kindness. ... Our professors and those who differed from them met and treated each other as Christian brethren." 32

The committee report was adopted by the Synod; 40 yeas, 3 nays, 1 nonliquet. Prof. Schaff and his colleague had been vindicated. Dr. Berg submitted a dissenting report which was duly accepted and entered into the Minutes. In the concluding paragraph Berg acknowledged "the kind and affectionate manner in which his dissent had been received"; he confessed that "whatever unkind or harsh expression had been elicited in the previous controversy with the respected author (s) of

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31. Ibid., p. 80.

32. Quotations taken from the W.M., X, Nov. 5, 1845, pp. 2110, 2111.

the book, has been mutually forgiven and forgotten." Yet he felt "constrained to maintain an unwavering and stedfast (sic) opposition" to views which to his mind seemed dangerous. He ended his report with the famed words of Luther, "Hie stehe ich. Ich kann night anders. Gott helfe mir."<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Schaff admitted that if the Synod's decision had gone against him, he would have returned to Germany. Quite logically he interpreted his acquittal as a vote of confidence by the Church at large.<sup>34</sup> Yet, Schaff's vindication did not mean that the German Reformed Church had endorsed his views as set forth in the Principle; it only meant that in the opinion of Synod, the book contained nothing which could be considered heretical. Furthermore, the issues raised by Dr. Schaff could not be settled in a single day, nor dismissed by the favorable action of Synod. Far more was at stake than the inaugural address; "Two conceptions of the Church," writes Dr. Richards, "the way of salvation, the relation of Christianity to the Social Order, the function of faith and reason, the meaning of history- two Weltanschauungen and Lebensanschauungen-" were contending against one another.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, while the resolutions passed by the Synod of York temporarily silenced the opponents of Nevin and Schaff, the minority was by no means satisfied. In fact the opposition to the Mercersburg men spread over the whole German Reformed Church, carried on by a small but effective coterie of ministers and laymen within each classis. The Weekly Messenger from October 1st,

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33. Quotations from Berg's report in Minutes of Synod, 1845, op. cit., p. 86. Full text of his report on pp. 81-86 of this document.

34. With the publication of the resolutions of Philadelphia Classis, the Classis of East Pennsylvania held a special session and prepared its own resolutions declaring that the Mercersburg professors had been attacked unjustly. See Minutes of East Pennsylvania Classis, Oct. 1, 1845, pp. 291, 292. Actually Drs. Nevin and Schaff had the support of the large majority of ministers in the Church at the time of the Synod meeting at York.

35. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 255.

to December 1st, 1845 literally groaned under the weight of long, well written theological essays for and against the distinctive views of the professors. <sup>36</sup>

As the year 1845 drew to a close, it was evident that the new theology, emerging from Mercersburg, was destined to alter the course of church thought and life not only within the pale of the German Reformed Church but outside the denomination as well. <sup>37</sup>

Dr. Schaff, however, had received only a temporary reprieve at York. With the publication of his What is Church History?, a second overture was made by Philadelphia Classis requesting the Synod of 1846 to "disapprove certain views" expressed in this work as well as "... the sentiments of the Rev. Dr. Schaff concerning the Intermediate State." <sup>38</sup> The Synod, however, refused to consider either of these items on the constitutional technicality that they were not brought before the governing body of the Church according to proper procedure.

Schaff's What is Church History? was a careful elaboration of the idea of historical development as stated in the Principle. To discuss the contents of this book would have involved raising the same issues debated by the Synod of York, which had vindicated Schaff from all charges of heresy. But the questions raised concerning Dr. Schaff's views on the intermediate state were a little more serious and had a significant influence on the development of the Mercersburg Theology.

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36. The article by S.R. entitled "Protestantism of Mercersburg as contrasted with the Protestantism of the Bible and the German Reformed Church" in W.M., X, Oct. 15, 1845, p. 2096, shows that two schools of thought were developing within the Church even before the Synod meeting at York.

37. Limited discussion of the issues raised by Schaff and Nevin was presented at infrequent intervals in the periodicals and church papers of the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Unitarian, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Churches.

38. "Report of the Board of Visitors," in Minutes of Synod, 1846, pp. 44, 45.

In his tract, Die Sunde wider den Heiligen Geist, Schaff had written: "Für alle Menschen gibt es einen Mittel zustand der mit dem Tode beginnt." <sup>39</sup> Schaff goes on to explain that those who have refused salvation in this life go immediately at death to Hades and are provisionally judged but we have no absolute knowledge as to their ultimate fate. Regarding those who were undecided concerning the Christian faith, and especially those who had no opportunity to hear the Gospel preached (e.g. Turks and heathen) there is at death "... noch ein Gnadenzeit, mithin die Möglichkeit der Sundenvergebung und Verkehrung, aber nur unter derselben Bedingung wie hier, nämlich der des bussfertigen Glaubens an den Weltheiland." <sup>40</sup> Also in this category fall all those in whom faith was begun before death but, through no fault of their own, their faith was not developed into a mature, full communion with Jesus Christ. Such persons must therefore pass through the "middle state" since according to the Bible all salvation is dependent on the complete justifying faith of the believer in the all sufficient and redeeming merit of Christ.

On July 16, 1846, a Rev. Mr. Guldin translated an extract from the Sin Against the Holy Ghost in the Dutch Reformed paper the Christian Intelligencer, where he charged Schaff with teaching a doctrine akin to purgatory. A week later Dr. Schaff replied to Mr. Gulden pointing out: (1) that the tract was written when he was only twenty years old and it should be regarded as a "juvenile performance". Moreover, the tract was written to gain the degree of bachelor of divinity and was approved by Neander, Hengstenberg, Twisten and Marheineke. In German universities much freedom of thought was allowed in regard to matters of this sort. (2) Schaff admitted that since the time of its publication he "had learned much"

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<sup>39</sup>. P.S. op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>40</sup>. Ibid., pp. 145, 146.

and that he could now treat the subject "in a more careful and thorough manner." Furthermore, the German Reformed Church had examined the tract before issuing him a call to America and therefore his views were not concealed. Schaff confessed he personally regarded the work in question as a youthful production and he did not want to be judged by it; consequently the tract had not been translated into English. (3) Finally, Schaff objected to Mr. Guldin's translation because it omitted passages he had quoted from Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin and others which tended to favor the idea of the middle state.<sup>41</sup>

Again it was Dr. Berg who called the matter to the attention of Philadelphia Classis and who took the lead in referring the views in question to the Board of Visitors of the Seminary. Before the Synod meeting in 1846, Dr. Schaff met with the Board and made the following statement:

"That the scriptural and philosophical argumentation is by no means in all respects satisfactory to me at present. ...I now hold hypothetically in regard to the subject in dispute, 1) That in the case of those heathen who have died without the knowledge of the Gospel, either before the coming of Christ or since, and who have been at the same time properly predisposed to embrace the Christian religion, the opportunity of doing so, (and thus completing the work already commenced) will not be withheld from them by an infinitely merciful God in the world to come. 2) That if persons thus described are saved at all, they cannot be saved on the ground of any personal merit, but only through Jesus Christ, as there is absolutely no salvation without him. 3) This involves the idea that Christ previously unknown to them must be exhibited to them in some way as the object of their faith. 4) All this, however, and the whole subject of the Middle State of the heathen and of infants universally is involved in great obscurity, nor can it ever be made properly the subject of doctrinal and symbolic teaching."<sup>42</sup>

On the above statement the Board of Visitors took the following action:

"RESOLVED, That whilst this Board cannot endorse the view of Dr. Schaff, ... they nevertheless do not deem it of sufficient importance to call for any special attention of Synod.

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41. P.S. "Reply to Mr. Guldin" in Christian Intelligencer, XVII, July 23, 1846, p. 6.

42. P.S. "Reply to the Board of Visitors" in Minutes of Synod, 1846, p. 42.

The Board deem it necessary to add that the view has not been taught nor is it contemplated ever to be taught in the theological seminary." <sup>43</sup>

The result of this second controversy involving Dr. Schaff is significant for two reasons: First, although it was assumed Schaff would not teach his views pertaining to the Middle State, they nevertheless were incorporated into the Mercersburg theology. <sup>44</sup> To allow there may be a medius status was a mere speculative question for Schaff, but for Nevin such a possibility implied the necessity of re-examining the traditional Calvinistic doctrine of predestination in which he had been raised. Schaff influenced Nevin at this point by turning his colleague away from his old Calvinistic position. <sup>45</sup> Secondly, by refusing publically to censure Schaff for his teachings, the way was opened for a greater freedom of doctrinal interpretation within the German Reformed Church, and liberty of conscience in theological matters became a precious tradition in the Church, especially after the Mercersburg controversy subsided.

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43. Ibid. The matter came up again at the Synod of 1847 where the Board of Visitors reported that charges of heresy had been brought against the Mercersburg professors by the Rev. Jacob J. Helfenstein. The Board, however, dismissed Helfenstein's charges as too vague and indefinite and presented at too late an hour for consideration. Berg also submitted a document to the Board requesting Nevin and Schaff to clarify certain points of doctrine which seemed at variance with the standards of the Church. The Synod took no action on either of these resolutions of Helfenstein and Berg.

44. During the school year 1859-1860 Dr. Schaff delivered a course of lectures on eschatology at the seminary. One of these lectures dealt with the "status medius" the state of the soul between the time of death and the general resurrection. In examining a notebook of one of Schaff's students, we read: "Protestant theology acknowledges but two states, Heaven and Hell, and denies the purgatory of Catholicism, but in denying this they do not necessarily deny the existence of a middle state. . . . May there not be an intermediate state for those who have never had the advantage of becoming Christian?" The question of the fate of the heathen continuously troubled Dr. Schaff. See E. R. Eschbach, "Lectures on Eschatology by Prof. Philip Schaff 1859-60" in manuscript form, Historical Collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Lancaster, Pa. (pages not numbered).

45. At the funeral of America's fifteenth president, James Buchanan, Nevin preached a sermon suggesting a position very close to that of Schaff's, pertaining to a probationary period after death. See Reformed Church Messenger, XXXIV, Feb. 3, 1869, pp. 2, 3.

After the dispute over the Sin Against the Holy Ghost, the major opposition directed toward Dr. Schaff waned. In 1851 Dr. Berg withdrew from the ministry of the German Reformed Church and entered the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>46</sup> Ten years later he was elected professor in that denomination's theological seminary at New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he served with distinction until his death in 1870. Dr. Schaff held no bitterness against Dr. Berg, although he intimated the pastor might have served his own congregation better if he had spent less time attacking Rome and more time ministering to the spiritual needs of his people.<sup>47</sup> On March 27, 1853 the Rev. Jacob Helfenstein preached a sermon entitled, "The Romanizing Tendency of the Mercersburg Theology." Shortly thereafter together with his congregation at Germantown, Pennsylvania, Dr. Helfenstein left the German Reformed Church and became affiliated with the New School Presbyterians.<sup>48</sup>

### III

The Mercersburg movement passed through three distinct but related phases. The first was preliminary; its emphasis was philosophical, initiated and inspired by Rauch, the speculative idealist of Hegelian persuasion. Rauch prepared the way for the subsequent development of the Mercersburg theology, not only by introducing his students to German theology and philosophy, but by his emphasis on the organic unity of the universe.

The second phase of the Mercersburg movement was theological and extended from 1843 to 1854. Through the year 1846 the main issue was the church question.

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46. See Berg, "Farewell Sermon to the First German Reformed Church," in Weekly Messenger, XVI, April 28, 1851, p. 3662.

47. See P.S. "Dr. Berg's Austritt aus der deutsch reformirten Kirche", Der Kirchenfreund, IV, June, 1852, pp. 233-237.

48. See W.M., XVIII, May 25, 1853, p. 3886.

Beginning in 1847, however, the discussion shifted to the problem of Christology. In fact, as Ernest C. Klein has pointed out, "The Mercersburg Movement made its impact as a Christocentric movement and not because of its conception of the Church. ...The Church question came first and then the Christocentric idea whereas a progressive sequence would reverse the order."<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the real champion of both these emphases was Nevin and not Schaff. Of course, Schaff's inaugural dealt with the church question and gave the Mercersburg movement a fresh impetus. Yet the keynote of the controversy was struck by Nevin in his tract, The Anxious Bench, and in his sermon "Catholic Unity" which Dr. Schaff had heard him preach before the Triennial Convention of the Dutch and German Reformed churches on August 7, 1844.<sup>50</sup> The significance of Schaff's Principle, however, is this: in the special importance it gave to the person of Christ, the doctrine of historical development and a moderately churchly tendency, it embodied the norm for the safe development of the Mercersburg theology.<sup>51</sup> But we hasten to point out, as regards the distinctive doctrines concerning the person of Christ, the nature of the Church, the sacraments, and the ministry, that Nevin goes far beyond anything Schaff says in the inaugural address or in any other of his Mercersburg writings. In later years Schaff declared that the Mercersburg theology was chiefly due to the writings and personal

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49. Ernest C. Klein, "The Mercersburg Movement and its Conception of the Church," unpublished B.D. thesis, Eden Theological Seminary, 1952, p. 42.

50. This sermon, which was appended to the English translation of the Principle, stressed the organic nature of the Church, historical development, and the necessity of Christian union. Dr. Schaff assumed Nevin spoke for the whole of the German Reformed Church in advocating these principles. He envisioned his inaugural address as an attempt to expand these themes. Because he identified Nevin's position with that of the denomination we can see why he did not understand how his own views could have been considered out of harmony with the general thought of the Church.

51. Nevin's biographer grants this point. See Appel, op. cit., p. 250; also David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 121.

influence of Dr. Nevin.<sup>52</sup> The true genius of the Mercersburg theology is to be found in Nevin's The Mystical Presence (1846), Anti-Christ or The Spirit of Sect and Schism (1848), and his articles "Early Christianity" and "Cyprian" published in the Mercersburg Review.<sup>53</sup> It is true that Schaff provided the historical evidence which served as the basis for the Mercersburg theology and that he never deviated from his advocacy of a churchly Protestantism. Yet, the theologies of Nevin and Schaff are not identical. Nevin's thought was essentially speculative rather than historical, his mind analytical and not synthetic, his style of writing polemical rather than conciliatory. In these respects the two professors reciprocally complemented each other but only along certain general lines. To the German spirit, which Dr. Nevin never fully assimilated, Philip Schaff added the historic temperament, strengthened by his own familiar knowledge of Church history. Schaff's contribution to the Mercersburg movement was not the introduction of German thought (Rauch and Nevin were both acquainted with it before Schaff's arrival in America), but rather his dissemination of the mediating spirit of the Conciliatory school of German theologians, the spirit of Melancthon.

Furthermore, Schaff did not possess the gift of a theological disputant; he did not develop the details and phases of theological truth; his theology was comprehensive rather than systematic, irenic and not provincial. Referring to Nevin, Schaff wrote: "His pessimistic view on the divided state of Protestantism

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52. See David S. Schaff, Ibid., p. 217.

53. See Nevin's "Cyprian" in M.R., IV, Sept. 1852, pp. 420-452 and "Early Christianity" in M.R., III, Sept., 1851, p. 486. In these articles Nevin praises the historic episcopate which he regards as the "most real" system for the mediation of the salvation offered by the living Christ. While he does not directly state that the historic episcopate is necessary for Christian union, he implies that it is. Even the W.M., which had generally supported Nevin's theological position expressed some doubt about his views as set forth in the above articles. Schaff never claimed or implied that the historic episcopate was necessary for Christian union.

was one with which I could never quite agree. ..." <sup>54</sup> In regard to the reunion of Christendom Schaff at first lived in what might be described as a continual state of eschatological expectancy; almost naively he anticipated the imminence of organic union. Yet, when it was not forthcoming, he did not despair but continued to work for the day when God would inaugurate the Evangelical Catholic Church.

From the very beginning, however, Philip Schaff formed a very high estimate of John Nevin. "I feared," Schaff wrote in his diary, "I might not find sympathy in him for my views of the Church; but I discover he occupies essentially the same ground as I do and confirms me in my position. He is filled with the ideas of German theology." <sup>55</sup> But it is the scientific expression rather than the content of German theology which primarily intrigued Nevin. "With all the high opinion," he writes, "of the German mind and learning, we belong to no German School and have never pretended to follow strictly any German system of thought. Neither have we been blind to all or insensible to the dangers of a too truthful communication with these foreign forms of thinking." <sup>56</sup> Schaff agreed with Nevin on this point; he had previously made it clear that he did not want a transplantation of German theology into America, but a transfusion of the same, a union of Anglo-Saxon and German thought which would result in a higher synthesis. Yet the ideas of German theology which inspired Schaff came from the New Testament and history from Schmid, Tholuck, Müller, Schleiermacher and Neander, not primarily from Schelling and Hegel. Schaff sought to recover the underlying principles which governed the Reformation concept of the Church; this was

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54. P.S. in The Semi-Centennial of Philip Schaff, New York, 1893, p. 26.

55. P.S. "Diary" in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 103.

56. From Nevin's preface to "Anti-Christ" quoted in Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 259.

Nevin's intention also, but his thoughts on the Church follow the lead of Athanasius, Cyprian, and the Church Fathers. In short, Schaff's concept of the Church is more Lutheran than Nevin's and Nevin's concept of the Church more Anglo-Catholic than Schaff's. We shall have occasion to examine Dr. Schaff's concept of the Church more fully when we turn to discuss his tract, What is Church History? We are concerned now merely to point out that in discussing the Mercersburg theology it is necessary to treat the thought of Nevin and Schaff separately. "Indeed," observes Prof. Theodore Herman, "it is a high tribute to the truly Christian spirit of these two great scholars, so unlike in their native genius, their education, and their major theological aims, that for two decades they should have stood shoulder to shoulder in friendly cooperation."<sup>57</sup> Yet this very relationship more than once put Dr. Schaff in a position where his real views were seriously misconstrued.

The third phase of the Mercersburg movement was liturgical and extended from 1854 to 1866. It grew out of the Mercersburg theology which intrinsically involved the principle of liturgical worship. Dr. Schaff served as chairman of the liturgical committee and was one of the chief advocates of liturgical reform within the Church as well as the editor and part author of the new book of worship. His main interest in liturgies, however, was historical and practical not doctrinal. He was concerned, for example, that the liturgy should first testify to the truth that Christ is present in the Eucharist, while the manner of His Presence should remain a secondary consideration. The subject of Dr. Schaff and the Liturgy will be taken up in the next chapter since it is integrally related to his concept of the Church.

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57. Theo. F. Herman, "The Principle of Protestantism" in Bulletin of the Theol. Sem., XV, op. cit., p. 199. We cannot agree, however, with Dr. Herman's contention that the Principle is not an integral part of the Mercersburg theology. See Ibid., p. 200.

So far we have outlined the leading phases of the Mercersburg movement. After 1846 and up to 1854 Nevin was the leading figure in the controversy. During these years, Dr. Schaff was actively engaged in the publication of his monthly journal, Der Kirchenfreund, and in the writing of his History of the Apostolic Church. The latter book and his tract What is Church History? are both relevant to his concept of the Church and of Church history.

#### IV

In 1846 Schaff published his What is Church History? A Vindication of the Idea of Historical Development. This book grew out of his lectures delivered at the seminary in 1845. Schaff prepared the manuscript in German and submitted it to Nevin for translation. The original German manuscript was never published and consequently the book only appeared in English. What is Church History? may be considered Schaff's defense of his Principle of Protestantism. The tract is divided into three sections. The first deals with a survey of the more important recent publications of German church historians. The second section is concerned with the development of the idea of Church history and a comparison of orthodox, rationalistic and evangelical historiographies. In the third section Schaff discusses the practical importance of a right view of Church history.

Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church appeared in English in 1853. Two years earlier he had published the Geschichte der Apostolischen Kirche which was dedicated to his honored teacher Neander. Schaff resisted the advice of his friends to send this book forth in English; it was his last attempt to found a distinctive school of German-American theology. Although this work received high praise on both sides of the Atlantic, its circulation was very limited. In fact, the German edition was superseded by the publication of his History of the Apostolic Church, which was considerably enlarged and included significant revisions, especially in the "Introduction." The English version was translated by Edward D.

Yeomans, but Schaff took the liberty of revising the translation. As far as we have been able to determine, Schaff's What is Church History? and the "Introduction" to his History of the Apostolic Church are the first histories of Church history to appear in the English language.

Schaff began his What is Church History? with the pertinent declaration "The great theme of the Present, around which all religions and theological movements revolve is the Church Question."<sup>58</sup> Of course, he was addressing himself to the constituency of the German Reformed Church, but there is a sense in which his words have a contemporary relevance. As the Church comes more into view, Schaff thought, so does her history; the Church and history are inseparable since the latter is the "bearer" of the Church. Humanly speaking, history gives the Church her real existence; without the form the Church has received in history, she would be "nothing better than a baseless, fantastic abstraction, which for us who are ourselves the product of history ... would have no meaning or value whatever."<sup>59</sup> Neither the rationalist nor the unchurchly sectarian can be considered a true Churchman since by their contracted subjectivity they look down on everything wrought by earlier times which goes against their purposes. Therefore, a proper understanding of Church history is essential in order to rediscover what the Church is.

Before proceeding to discuss the nature of the Church and Church history, we need to know what Schaff means by the idea of history. In the objective sense history is "the sum of what has happened, or more precisely, of all that pertains to the outward or inward life of humanity," the record of man's social, political,

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58. P.S. What is Church History? A Vindication of the Idea of Historical Development, Philadelphia, 1846, p. 9.

59. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

intellectual, moral and religious development. In the subjective sense, history is "the science of events, or the apprehension, interpretation and representation in language of what has thus taken place in the course of time." The value of history in the latter sense depends altogether upon its faithfulness as a copy of objective history. <sup>60</sup>

Objectively considered, history may be classified as either secular or sacred; the former comprehends the natural life of humanity and the latter has to do with the special revelation of the Triune God for the salvation of men and the fortunes of regenerate humanity. In the narrower sense sacred history is the record of God's revelation deposited in the Old and New Testaments. Church history is the continuation of sacred history in perpetual contact with secular history and more or less disturbed by it. The relation between secular and sacred history (including Church history) Schaff understands as "... substantially the same as that between nature and grace, reason and revelation, time and eternity." <sup>61</sup> Secular history is the natural, preparatory basis for sacred history. All history before Christ prepared the way for His incarnation; all subsequent history must serve ultimately to glorify His name and to extend His everlasting kingdom. In this respect, sacred history exerts a regenerating influence on world history; it is the leaven which must pervade the whole lump. Certainly both secular and sacred history are in continual conflict; as the world hated Christ and His apostles it still persecutes the Church, yet the final outcome of the struggle has already been decided, since, according to God's revelation, the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>62</sup>

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60. P.S. History of the Apostolic Church, New York, 1853, pp. 1, 2.

61. Ibid., p. 2.; What is Church History? op. cit., pp. 39, 40.

62. Ibid.

Schaff does not believe secular or sacred history can be understood apart from one another. History, he claims, is no aggregate of names, dates and places; on the contrary, history is "... a living organism, whose parts have an inward, vital connection, each requiring and completing the rest." <sup>63</sup> In his organic conception of history, Schaff was breaking new ground in the treatment of historical questions in America.

History is the product of two factors: the first and highest is God, who evolves His will in history, not however as in nature through blind laws, but rather through living persons who comprise the secondary and relative factor in history. Moreover, God has endowed men with reason and will and has assigned them "... a certain sphere of conscious free activity for which he holds them responsible." <sup>64</sup> To deny man the gift of freedom, Schaff argues, is to abolish any possibility of human accountability to God.

These two causes, the divine and human, the objective and the subjective, the absolute and the relative, Schaff cautions, "... are to be conceived, not in a mere abstract, mechanical way, as operating collaterally or independently, but as working in and through one another." <sup>65</sup> Admittedly it is impossible to draw the line clearly between the finite and infinite causes operating in history, yet, Schaff stipulates, it is necessary to recognize the existence of both, if one is ever to have a just conception of history. Since the divine and human factors are involved in all history, secular and sacred history are to be distinguished from one another only in this wise: in the first, the human agency is most prominent and in the second, the divine takes the lead continuously making

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63. Ibid., p. 3; What is Church History?. op. cit., p. 3.

64. Ibid., p. 3.

65. Ibid., p. 4.

its presence felt. "Secular history," Schaff writes, "is the theater of Elohim, or God under his general character, as the Father of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Sacred history and its continuation, church history, is the sanctuary of Jehovah, the God of the covenant, the Lord of a chosen people." <sup>66</sup>

Of all the separate disciplines, Schaff regarded religion as the most important, since it alone gives meaning to life and makes sense out of the riddles of history. Of course, he is thinking only of Christianity, "the absolutely true and perfect religion, which is destined to absorb all others." <sup>67</sup> In Jesus Christ, the God-man and Saviour of the world, humanity has been brought to its perfection, reconciled to God and raised to a vital and permanent union with Him. "Take Christ away,-" Schaff exclaims, "and the human race is without a ruling head, without a healing heart, without an animating soul, without a certain end,- an inexplicable enigma." <sup>68</sup> Therefore, Jesus Christ is the key to the proper understanding of all history and His incarnation forever marks the boundary between the old and the new. Pagan and Hebraic history are to be viewed as a preparation for His first advent. Christianity is to be regarded as the pulse of all later history, its "central stream", most clearly visible in the Middle Ages, when all science, art, culture, political and national movements received their impulse and guiding spirit from the Church, despite the errors and abuses of the form (the Church) under which Christianity then existed. As for history since the Reformation, Schaff felt there was not one area of man's life which had not been affected in some way by Protestant Christianity.

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66. Ibid., p. 5. At times we have the feeling Schaff draws the line too precisely in identifying what in history is the specific work of God and what is man's role.

67. Ibid., p. 6. Schaff means that Christianity will transform all other religions so that all people will be brought to the knowledge of Christ as Saviour.

68. Ibid.

But Schaff is not content to define Christianity merely as a "life giving principle." Since it is the absolute religion upon which the salvation of the human race depends, Christianity cannot be understood solely as one philosophy of life or one religion among others, exclusively subjective, present only in the consciousness of single, pious individuals. Christianity also exists as an objective, organized visible society known as the "kingdom of Christ on earth" or the Church. Schaff understands the Church first as "a pedagogic institution to train men for heaven" and secondly, as an "everlasting communion of the redeemed" both in heaven and on earth. In his What is Church History? he makes the distinction between the visible and invisible Church, or, preferring Augustine's terminology, between the mixed Church and the pure Church. In the broad sense as manifested in the world the mixed Church is composed of all "... who have been baptized into Christ, whether they be nominal Christians or real,"...<sup>69</sup> Greek, Roman or Protestant. Within the visible Church there are a number of different confessions which in part stand in hostile relationship to one another. But in the narrow sense, according to her inward and true character, the Church is "the religious, spiritual and real communion of all true believers in Christ."<sup>70</sup> This is the pure Church, or the true Church, which may also be seen and recognized in distinct expressions of life. (Hence Schaff feels the term "invisible Church" is a misnomer.) The true Church is always one, though her members are scattered within the visible Church; she is the "truth," the "pure substance," the "quintessence," so to speak, of all visible organiza-

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69. P.S. What is Church History?, op. cit., p. 30. Those within the visible Church who die without baptism, e.g. the thief on the cross, Schaff considers to prove the exception rather than the rule. The old maxim, "non defectus, sed contemptus sacramenti damnat" is to be applied in such cases. Schaff does not discuss this problem in the "Introduction" to his History of the Apostolic Church.

70. Ibid., p. 30.

tions. Since the true Church will exist as long as she continues in her militant state on earth, necessarily within the visible Church, she will always be associated with unworthy, openly unbelieving and hypocritical members until delivered from this connection at the second coming of Christ. (See Mt. 13: 24-30.) The two communions, however, act together and influence each other continually. This fact the church historian cannot forget. "Only an infallible man," Schaff warns, "would be prepared to write the history of the pure Church; and even such a one must still have respect to the Church in a wider sense, to make his work a true and faithful life representation of its subject."<sup>71</sup> Subjectively considered, then, the true essence of the Church is "the eternal communion of saints [consisting] only of the regenerate and converted, who are united by a living faith with Christ, the head, and through Him with one another."<sup>72</sup> From the objective point of view the Church is composed of all members who have been baptized. There are no members of the pure Church who are not at the same time members of the visible Church, but the converse of this proposition, Schaff does not allow.

Schaff, however, has more to say about the objective characteristics of the Church. Ideally considered, the Church is an "institution established by God through Christ for the glory of his own name and the salvation of men:" as such she is a "supernatural organization."<sup>73</sup> On the other hand the Church is a truly human society but by no means a mere "production of men," i.e. the Church is not called into being by the invention of men as is the case with free-masonry, temperance societies and various literary and political associations. God took the initiative in her establishment on the day of Pentecost; the Church is there-

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71. Ibid., p. 31.

72. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 8.

73. What is Church History?, op. cit., p. 31.

fore "the bearer of God's revelation." the "ark of Christianity, outside of which there is no salvation," yea more- she is the "depository of all the life powers of the Redeemer, the habitation of the Holy Ghost." <sup>74</sup>

For Schaff the heart of his concept of the Church lies in Paul's designation of the Church as the body of Christ and believers as members of this body. <sup>75</sup> As a body in general the Church is an organic union of many members possessing various talents and gifts but united with Christ, their unseen but ever present Lord and Saviour. As the body of Christ, however, the Church is His dwelling place, through which Christ exerts what Schaff calls "all the powers of his theanthropic (God-man) life, and also the organ through which he acts upon the world as Redeemer; as the soul manifests its activity through the body, in which it dwells." <sup>76</sup> The supposition that Christ is present in the Church through the Holy Ghost is essential to Schaff's understanding of the Church and the crucial theological contention of the Mercersburg theologians. Schaff maintains that Christ's presence is guaranteed to His people because Jesus Himself has promised it: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." (Mt. 28:20) Commenting on this passage Schaff declares:

"He [Jesus] says not simply My Spirit, or My consolation, or My truth, is with you alway; but I, that is, my whole person, in which divinity and humanity are inseparably joined together. We must admit then the presence of the Redeemer in the Church-invisible and supernatural of course, but none the less real and efficient. ... [He is present] in his whole undivided and indivisible glorified personality, with all the powers that belong to it, whether as human or divine." <sup>77</sup>

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74. Ibid., pp. 31, 32; History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 8.

75. Rom. 12: 5; I Cor. 6: 15; 10: 17; 12: 20, 27; Eph. 1: 23; 4: 12, 30; 5: 23, 30; Col. 1: 24, etc. Schaff accepted the Pauline authorship of Ephesians.

76. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 8.

77. What is Church History?, op. cit., p. 32.

It was this Christocentric contention pertaining to Christ's presence in the Church, which struck at the heart of the religious presuppositions of Schaff's opponents. When we remember that the dominant American theology of the early nineteenth century was theocentric, stressing the "otherness" and "transcendence" of God, we can appreciate why most of Reformed Protestantism in the United States looked upon Schaff and Nevin as "radicals." Furthermore, within the German Reformed Church there were those who believed Schaff's view was at variance with that of their historic founder, Zwingli. If Christ, since His ascension, was sitting at the "right hand of God from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead" how was it possible, they wondered, for Him to be present at the same time on earth, in His Church and with His people?

Schaff argued that "the right hand of God" is not bound to a particular place and that it was crude exegesis to take the expression literally. The phrase "right hand of God" denotes God's Almighty power which upholds the universe. When we pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven," Schaff explained, we do not deny His presence on earth, nor do we imply His sitting directly above us in a distinct locality. Neither should we conceive of Christ in this manner when we refer to His sitting at the "right hand of God, the Father." With regard to Christ, Schaff thought, we need to distinguish between His "individual" and His "generic" character, psychologically allowable and necessary if the different scriptural passages referring especially to His presence in the Lord's Supper, for example, are to be harmonized. As a particular human individual, the Christ who lived and moved in Palestine is no longer upon earth, not even in His glorified form in which He shall appear only at the final judgment. Therefore, there is no participation in this individual body by the Church in the Eucharist nor any corporeal reception either by consubstantiation or transubstantiation.

But Jesus Christ is not merely a single individual among others! He bears a universal character. As Saviour of the world, He is the representative of the

whole race. "The Word became flesh," according to the Prologue of John's gospel. He assumed humanity or the general nature of humanity. (Jn. 1: 14) Thus, Christ is to be regarded as the "ideal man in whom the conception of the human race as a whole was fully actualized, and from whom as the source of a new creation all regenerated life among men [is] to spring." <sup>78</sup>

Schaff believed this is what St. Paul meant when he drew the parallel between Christ and Adam. Christ bears the same relation to regenerate humanity and the Church that is borne by Adam to humanity in its natural, fallen and dying character. Sin and death came into the world by Adam but righteousness and life by Jesus Christ. <sup>79</sup> We partake of the spiritual and corporeal nature of Adam, truly and properly, although his individual being as a particular body and soul does not pour over into our persons. Yet we are of his race; we share the general qualities of his being, including his sinfulness and mortality. Adam's individual person has been withdrawn from the world, but his generic existence is still present, really and substantially, perpetuating itself from generation to generation, and forming the root of the natural tree of humanity. It is only on the ground of such an organic conception of the relation of Adam to his posterity that Schaff believed the doctrine of original sin and its imputation made any rational sense. Moreover, it is only on the supposition that the incarnate Word dwells in the Church, mystically uniting Christ with believers, that the cardinal doctrines of the atonement, imputation of Christ's merits and justification by faith, could be maintained against Socinian and rationalistic errors. <sup>80</sup>

According to Schaff, the Son of God became man for man's sake, and He con-

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78. Ibid., p. 34.

79. Cf. Rom. 5: 12 ff. and I Cor. 15: 21 ff., especially verses 47-49.

80. What is Church History?, op. cit., pp. 34 ff.

tinues to be man in eternity. His humanity, then, must avail to our advantage, since only by means of it can we be united with the divine nature. "Only through our participation in its imperishable vitality," he writes, "is the power of death within us gradually eradicated, and a new, glorified body, which shall be like his own, prepared for our use."<sup>81</sup> Christianity is the only religion which has wholly effected the full reconciliation of an enduring life union between God and man, centering in the person of Jesus Christ. But the life which Christ offers is neither simply divine nor simply human; it is divine and human, offered to the believer through the different means of grace through the Church, so that as far as his new nature is concerned, the individual does not live, but Christ lives in him. (Gal. 2: 20.) A believer, Schaff notes, cannot be said to live in Moses or in Elias but only as Paul continually stresses, in Christ, i.e. in living union with Him.

To say this is to affirm the uninterrupted presence of Christ with His people. His absence would rob them of their religious existence. If the branches are separated from the vine, the tree withers. (Cf. Jn. 15: 6) "Only as the Church has part in the life of the God-man," Schaff affirms, "does she stand upon a rock against which the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail."<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, the Church is the "extension of the incarnation" (Schaff, however, does not use this expression) the continuation of the life and work of Christ upon earth, though never, so far as men in their present state are concerned, without a mixture of sin and error. In the Church, Christ is perpetually born anew in the hearts of believers. He heals the sick, wakes the dead to a new existence, takes the young into His arms at baptism, gives believers His atoning flesh and blood at the Lord's Supper, speaks by His Word and ministers comfort,

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81. Ibid., p. 36.

82. Ibid., pp. 37, 38. Cf. Mt. 16: 18 and Jn. 14: 19, 20.

peace and blessing to all who seek His grace. In her militant state, however, the Church like her Lord, bears the form of a servant; she is despised, hated and crucified by a hostile world, but still she repeats His glorious resurrection and ascension in the course of human history. The Church is the Lamb's bride, the <sup>community</sup> indwelt~~ing~~ by the Holy Ghost, the temple of God, where Christ ever more continues to visit those whom He died to redeem. <sup>83</sup>

Schaff had already pointed out in his Principle that the Church is not a thing at once finished and perfect. As an historic reality, as a human society, the Church is subject to the law of historical development. Schaff explains this theory in biological language, i.e. he calls the Church a living organism (since the living Christ dwells in her) and therefore she is subject to the process of growth and development. This biological concept of the Church was widely accepted by the Mediating school of German theologians. Schaff argued that only the dead is done and stagnant, but all created life, animal and vegetable, while always remaining the same in substance, nevertheless is involved in a process of constant motion and change from a lower to a higher form. The tree grows from the seed, unfolding first the root and the trunk, then the branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruit; yet nothing is revealed in the full grown tree which was not contained potentially at first in the seed. Likewise, the Christian is

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83. Though perverted by the Roman Church, Schaff claims, the two maxims: "Qui ecclesiam non habet matrem, Deum non habet patrem" and "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" are still valid. Rome applies them to herself as the true Church. However, they can be referred to no denomination but only to the holy Catholic Church, the mystical body of Christ. Since salvation is to be found neither in heathenism nor Judaism, but only in the Church, the proposition, "Out of Christ no salvation" necessarily includes the corollary "No salvation out of the Church." This does not imply that mere external connection with the Church is sufficient for salvation, but only that salvation is not divinely guaranteed outside the Church. Church membership is not the principle of salvation, which is Christ alone, but the necessary condition of it since the Church is the divinely appointed means to bring man into contact with Christ and all His benefits. See History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 9.

first a child baptized as a babe in Christ, and rising only gradually through the exercise of the means of grace into perfect manhood in Christ, which he attains only at the glorious resurrection of the Last Day. Since the Church is the organic whole of individual believers, she too must be subject to the law of development, passing in her historical form through the periods of infancy, childhood, youth and mature age. Even Christ Himself, Schaff noted, in His human nature passed through these stages. <sup>84</sup>

But Schaff, in saying this, is no evolutionist in the Darwinian sense. "The Church," he writes, "in its idea, or viewed objectively in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever; is from the first complete and unchangeable." <sup>85</sup> Any further revelation which goes beyond biblical Christianity, or purports to be an advance of men beyond revelation or beyond Christ is for Schaff essentially rationalistic and unchristian. In fact, such a pretended improvement would not be progress but only a regression into paganism and fleshly Judaism.

Schaff emphasizes, however, that it is necessary to distinguish the idea of the Church in the divine mind and in the Person of Christ from its actual manifestation on earth; to discriminate the objective revelation itself from the subjective apprehension of it in the mind of humanity at a given historical moment. Only the latter is progressive. Humanity can no more possess the fullness of the divine life in Christ than the believer can become a perfect saint in this life. The Church on earth advances only by degrees from one stage of purity, holiness and knowledge to another. The path of her history is not easy; she must struggle with the ungodly world, survive all diseases, overcome all foes, until

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84. Cf. Lk. 2: 52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom ... etc." and Heb. 5: 8 "Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience ... etc."

85. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 10. (emphasis mine)

at last, purged from sin and error at the general resurrection, she passes from her militant to her triumphant state. Yet this whole process Schaff claims "... is but the full actual unfolding of the church which existed potentially at the outset in Christ, a process by which the Redeemer's spirit and life are completely appropriated and impressed on every feature of humanity. Christ is thus the beginning, the middle, and the end of the entire history of the Church." 86

The growth of the Church takes place in a twofold manner: first, by outward extension, or the progressive diffusion of the gospel throughout the world via the missionary enterprise. (Mt. 13: 31, 32) Secondly, after Christianity has gained a footing in a nation, the more difficult task of internal development begins, i.e. the Church strives to inject the principle of Christianity into all facets of the natural life, so that the manners and institutions of the people may be transformed by the Christian faith. Like leaven, the gospel must work itself into the universal mass of life under all its established forms. The Church recognizes the necessity of the state, whose duty is to maintain law and order in society, but she reminds the magistrate that he is himself dependent on the absolute sovereignty of God and responsible to Him. Thus all subjects should be taught obedience "in the Lord." Schaff was confident that the time would come when the reign of God would be unconditionally established in the hearts and lives of men. At that time, (probably not before the second advent of Christ) all nations will be united into one family and all people will obey joyfully the divine will as their only law. In the civilized nations, Schaff continues, the Church also finds the fine arts, with which she has nothing to do as long as they stand in the service of sin. But the Church appropriates their human value to herself, subdues them to herself, to the end that all architecture, music, art, and poetry are

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86. Ibid., p. 11.

spiritualized, i.e. placed at the service of Christ and used to glorify His name in worship. Furthermore, the Church requires a science in order to come to her own self-consciousness. She allows secular science to serve her as a natural basis in exegesis, rhetoric and philology, for example, but theology, the divine science, must purge the profane sciences of their error and egotism until all branches of learning are transformed by Him who is Himself the Truth. In fact, the entire natural social life of nations is to be transformed by the Church. Thus the family is raised from a natural institution to a divine institution; it becomes the seminary of the state and the Church and is consecrated as representing the mystical union between Christ and His Bride. The Church encourages all manner of good works within the social order, flowing from faith of course, to the end that Christ will be Lord of all. <sup>87</sup>

Moreover, this development is organic; it is no mere accumulation of events or aggregation of facts which have no living connection. Admittedly, the Church takes up foreign matter in the process of development, but for Schaff, Christianity has the power to assimilate what is good in the natural order to her own spirit, or to reject what is untrue or impure (as was the case at the Reformation regarding indulgences). Only that which is true and essential, Schaff felt, is preserved and made the living germ of future development. Nevertheless, through all changes and periods of Church history as manifested in the Greek, Roman or Evangelical forms, the Church never ceases to be the Church. Schaff was concerned to stress this point in order to counter-attack those who claimed the true Church was "hidden" in the course of history. "It is only the entire history of the

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87. What is Church History, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-90. Schaff believed that since Christ has redeemed the whole creation, humanity is to bear witness to this fact in every realm of the natural life. This process of transformation Schaff regarded as one of growth and edification in which the Church takes the initiative and provides the necessary impetus. He defended the proposition that the "perfect state" as well as the "perfect man" will come into being only at the eschaton: Cf. Eph. 3: 17-19 and 4: 12-16; Col. 2: 19; I Peter 2: 2, 5; II Peter 3: 18.

church," he wrote, "from her commencement in the congregation at Jerusalem to her consummation in the general judgment, which can fully represent her conception." 88

But the Church on earth is in continual conflict with the unbelieving world and, as the individual believer is still encumbered with sin and error, so is the Church viewed now from the human point of view. Freedom from sin and error may be predicated of the Church triumphant but not of the Church militant. Since both the first Adam and the second Adam live in the Church then there necessarily must be conflict and struggle. The course of Church history flows in a zig-zag way; it moves by dialectical opposites and extremes passing through all sorts of obstructions, diseases, heresies and schisms. Up to the Reformation, the principle of objectivity, authority, obedience, and Jewish legalism, Schaff observed, was dominant in the Church. Then came the revolt; the principle of personal freedom, of evangelical, Christian liberty and Gentile subjectivity gained the ascendancy, at first carrying with it the force of the old church life as derived from the Middle Ages, but at last losing more and more its objective churchly character. By the eighteenth century, evangelical freedom had degenerated into fleshly self will and licentiousness. Private judgment was exalted to the point where the papacy of the subjective understanding (realized in the sect system) had been substituted for the papacy of Rome. Schaff felt that the new evangelical German theology and the renewed concern about the nature of the Church in the German Reformed Church were evidence of correcting tendencies. 89

For Schaff, the apprehension of truth does not lie at the extremes but in the "middle" or "deep." In this view he concurred with his colleagues of the

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88. Ibid., p. 91.

89. Ibid., pp. 92-96. See also Schaff's "German Theology and the Church Question," in M.R., V, Jan. 1853, pp. 124-144.

Mediating school. The nature of the extreme was such that it pushed one side of the truth into prominence at the expense of another, and thereby wronged the very interest which it sought to uphold. Because the nature of truth is organic, no part of it can be represented without a due regard for all parts. Therefore, Schaff contended, true orthodox Christology, for example, holds in the midst of the one sided Nestorian and Eutychian emphases. The best theology is that in which the clearest understanding and deepest feeling are harmoniously united and interfused; the Evangelical Catholic Church of the future, Schaff anticipated, would be one effectually harmonizing the divinely appointed emphases of both Romanism and Protestantism. Schaff claimed his Medium tenere beati was no mere halting between two opinions or a loose eclecticism which threw all heterogeneous elements together and then dignified the undigested "mish-mash" as a system. The middle point of view was "catholic" and "irenic" not "latitudinarian" or "indifferent." It was a position which incorporated, even if it could not reconcile, the best elements of the extreme into a higher synthesis. <sup>90</sup>

As for the diseases of the Church, Schaff diagnosed them as only the negative conditions for the progress of the Church. The consciousness of the disease, he felt, awakens the desire for improvement. When the Church repents, the power of her original life will return. Thus the evils issuing from Cluny precipitated the reforms which carried monasticism forward to its highest and last stage of development in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The avarice and lust of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries called forth the action of Hildebrand who rescued the Church from her slavery and carried the idea of the papacy to its world-historical completion. So also the Reformation was conditioned by the shame-

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90. What is Church History?, op. cit., pp. 97, 98.

less traffic in indulgences, which in turn stimulated the development of Protestantism. Therefore, in the hands of Christ, who rules and over-rules history, the diseases ultimately must serve His purpose.

For Schaff the main stream of history is always forward. Single lateral streams of it may dry up or even large divisions of the Church which once played an important part in her history may become stagnant or congeal into dead formalism. Such was the case, Schaff thought, with the Dunkards, whose religion consisted in their long beards and their opposition to culture and civilization. Even the oriental churches of his day Schaff put into this classification. But the above examples are exceptions to the principle of historical development rather than the rule; in fact, their isolation is only temporary, at last they too must return to the general life of the Church and take their place in the Evangelical Catholic Church. <sup>91</sup>

Schaff did not wish to imply that the personalities of a later stage are "greater" or "more Christian" than those of an earlier stage. It is only the principle, the standpoint of the dispensation of a later time which surpasses that of an earlier period; only a new element comes forward, which has not been apprehended previously with a clear consciousness by the Church (although Schaff grants the idea may have been present in an implicit way.) Regarding those eras of history which seemingly contradicted his view, e.g. the Dark Ages, especially the tenth century, Schaff categorized them as "periods of transition" marked always by a "falling away" but actually, he felt, they were nearer the redemption of a new epoch and in this respect "higher" as understood in connection with subsequent developments. <sup>92</sup>

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91. Ibid., p. 108; History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 12. By the the "main stream of history" Schaff means that which encompasses the Greek, Roman and Protestant traditions.

92. See Nevin's statement in this regard in his "Introduction" to the Principle of Protestantism, op. cit., pp. 21 ff.

Finally Schaff dealt with those biblical predictions pertaining to the moral condition of the world at the second coming of Christ. (Cf. Mt. 24: 37-39, etc.) He does not deny that along with the development of Christianity there is also the development of evil, falsehood and anti-Christianity. Actually, since the wheat and the tares grow together, the more advanced the state of the Church may be, the more dangerous will be found the power of the world with which she has to contend. Certainly the Prince of Darkness, Schaff claims, may be expected to increase the vigor of his assaults in proportion to the vigor with which he is withstood. Consequently, the popish abuses and errors were a worse enemy to the cause of Christianity than pagan Rome with all its persecutions and the Protestant infidelity of German rationalism more dangerous than all the Roman Catholic superstition at the time of the Reformation. The mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity both work at the same time and the two processes are frequently in such close contact that only the keenest eye is able to discriminate rightly between the work of God and that of Satan. In Church history, Schaff admitted, we encounter many mysteries which only will be solved in eternity. Yet God continues to work, hidden and revealed throughout history and He discloses Himself only to those who are of a humble, reverent and pious mind. <sup>93</sup>

According to Schaff, "The right application of the theory of development depends altogether on having beforehand a right view of positive Christianity, and being rooted and grounded in it, not only in thought but also in experience." <sup>94</sup> Furthermore, it is essential for the church historian to have a concept of the Church in his mind before proceeding to write a Church history. In fact, one's

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93. What is Church History?, op. cit., pp. 100-114; History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 12.

94. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 92. Neander, as we have noted, shared this same conviction.

concept of the Church is revealed by the manner in which the historian writes his history of the Bride of Christ. Church history as a science begins when the Church looks inward, reflects upon herself, and passes judgment concerning her history. <sup>95</sup>

Dr. Schaff divided historiography into three distinct classifications: the Orthodox, Rationalistic and Modern, or the standpoint of organic development. We have already referred to the latter which necessarily must be compared with the other two because each historiography rests upon a different concept of the Church.

In general the orthodox standpoint consists in this: the Church, together with her whole system of doctrine and life, is regarded as something complete from the beginning, and stands under a peculiar, visible form in abstract opposition to all opposing sects as the absolute and only legitimate representative of the Christian faith. This is the point of view of Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Protestantism.

Roman Catholic historians admit there has been outward change in the Church, that external, geographic growth has occurred, but at the same time they deny change within the interior state of the Church. Even Stolberg, Ritter and Dollinger, Schaff felt, held in substance to the principle of stability with this difference, that the more liberal among them were forced to yield "more or less" to Protestant criticism, at least on subordinate points, e.g. the untenable fables pertaining to the hierarchy. According to the Roman Catholic view of Church history all doctrines are substantiated by referring their divine origin either to the Scriptures, or tradition which are equal sources of revelation. <sup>96</sup>

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95. What is Church History?, op. cit., p. 42.

96. Dr. Schaff recognized that on the subject of tradition and its relation to Scripture, the celebrated Roman Catholic historian Moehler held views which were not strictly orthodox and evidenced a Protestant tinge. In his Ueber die

Therefore, the full idea of the papacy is contained in the presentation of the keys of the kingdom to Peter by Christ (Mt. 16: 18); the denial of the cup to communicants is justified according to John 6: 51-58 where reference is made only to the bread and in I Corinthians 11: 27 where Paul separates the cup from the bread. The basis for the sacrament of Confirmation is found in Acts 18: 16, 17; the sacrament of marriage in Ephesians 4: 14. Even clerical celibacy supposedly has its divine origin in Christ's remark on voluntary eunuchs (Mt. 19: 12) and Paul's wish that all might remain like himself (I Corinthians 7: 7). When historical testimonies are altogether lacking, Schaff charges, the strict Romanist resorts to the disciplina arcani, whereby certain apostolic doctrines and practices, which are first mentioned and ecclesiastically established at a later period, are supposed nevertheless to have existed in an earlier time, but were kept secret due to fear of profanation by Jews or pagans or because of the weakness of catechumans. Finally, whenever clear testimony speaks against them, as for instance in the second letter of the ninth century Pope Nichols I to the emperor Michael where the pontif teaches the true presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist without transmutation, zealous Roman historians merely call into question the genuineness of the documents.

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Einheit der Kirche, Tübingen, 1825, p. 60, Moehler argues that without the Scriptures we would have no trustworthy or complete image of the Redeemer, no proper beginning for the history of the Church. On the other hand, without a continuous tradition we would have no Scriptures and no conscious connection between the present and the Christ of the New Testament. Schaff agreed with this contention but affirmed that Moehler did not understand tradition in the true Roman sense but rather "... as the regenerated reason, the Christian consciousness of the Church, which stands not beside the scriptures as an independent fountain, but is simply the stream of their contents reaching to us through the life of the Church; embracing always only what is contained in the scriptures themselves; the same view accordingly we freely and cheerfully admit on protestant ground itself. Moehler says indeed explicitly, that without the scriptures we should be left without trustworthy matter, ... and this, of course, applies with fair consequence also to tradition in the Romish sense, so far as it is made to hold contents of its own, not derived from the scriptures." See Principle of Protestantism, op. cit., pp. 91, 92.

What has once been acknowledged by the Roman Church is constituted as obligatory for all times. Any tendency which opposes the principle of Roman authority, including the whole Protestant Reformation, is regarded as heretical and schismatic, not even possessing the virtue of assisting the Church to come to a clearer consciousness of her own vocation. Schaff felt Romanism could not give up this principle of stability without unsettling her own foundations. <sup>97</sup>

The orthodox Protestant school of historiography began in the seventeenth century. <sup>98</sup> Schaff characterized its conception of the Church as "more broad and spiritual" than the Roman, although the Church was no longer identified with the Roman communion. This school was not adverse to admitting that elements of evangelical faith and life did exist even under the dominion of the papacy. But after the Reformation the Roman Church took on the character of heresy; Romanism was an apostasy from the true Church, a sort of hardened Judaism, while Protestantism was now assigned the place previously claimed by Rome. As such the Church continued to be understood as something complete in her nature from

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97. In 1846 the Roman convert, John Henry Newman, published his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, New York, 1846. Schaff believed the very title was contradictory to the Roman principle of stability as asserted by the Council of Trent. Nevertheless, Newman's view of development differed from Schaff's at three points: (1) Newman allows development to hold exclusively in the Roman Catholic direction and Protestantism is regarded only as a progressive falling away from the course of Church history. (2) Assuming the Roman Catholic Church is infallible, Newman considers every development within that communion to be in force for all time while Schaff sees the papacy, for instance, as merely a temporary form of Church government, necessary for the wants of a particular age. (3) In the application of his principle of development to concrete historical situations, Newman still approximates the Roman standpoint by taking the slightest and most indirect hints of Christian antiquity as proof for the existence of doctrines and practices which only could belong to a much later period. In effect, all is at last referred to apostolical or divine authority. See What is Church History?, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-48.

98. Schaff considered the French historians Du Plessis, Morney, Pierre du Moulin, Jean Daille, David Blondel, Saumaise, the two Basnages as belonging to this school. Also, Usher, Pearson, Beveridge, Burnet, Dodwell, Bingham, Bull, Cave and Gable among the English.

the beginning, undergoing no development in the course of Church history. Orthodoxy was stable; only the heretical was subject to perpetual change. Since the whole Protestant system supposedly was founded in the Bible and in the life of the Apostolic Age, the Reformation was not an advance of Church life and doctrine, but only a return to the original truth of the Scriptures and the standpoint of the first five centuries. Any tendencies or views which opposed the established orthodox Protestant Church before or after the Reformation were regarded by this school as purely negative phenomena or without any inward connection with the historical life of the Church. <sup>99</sup>

This Protestant "exclusive ecclesiasticism" Schaff claimed was similar to the Roman position during the first six centuries in so far as both acknowledged the authority of the ecumenical symbols and both condemned the same heresies. But the case changed in the Middle Ages; the Protestant historian sided with the non-Catholic sects while the main course of Church history came more and more under the dominion of the Roman papacy. In fact, some Protestant historians even identified the sects with the Catholic Church.

But this, Schaff asserted, was to raise two difficulties. All the germs of the papacy existed before the Middle Ages. Apparently Protestant orthodoxy apprehended the Church Fathers only on one side. Augustine, for example, was as fully objective and churchly as he was subjective and protestant. Furthermore, a large number of the sects existing before the Reformation were further removed from the positions of Protestant orthodoxy than was the Roman Church. Schaff contended that no unprejudiced historian could deny that a great deal of piety and learning existed in the Church of the Middle Ages.

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99. What is Church History?, op. cit., pp. 47-60.

During the eighteenth century a reaction against the old orthodox Protestantism occurred, giving birth to the supernaturalistic school of historians headed by Mosheim.<sup>100</sup> Like their strict orthodox predecessors, Schaff believed the supernaturalistic historians lacked a conception of development within the Church and looked upon history merely as a course of events favorable or unfavorable to the Christian doctrines and precepts, handed down as a fixed, unalterable system. On the other hand, these historians were much more lenient regarding deviations from doctrine whether of the patristic or protestant period. Heresies were considered errors of "thought" or "imagination," and not the exclusive product of bad intention. While the liberality and impartiality of the supernaturalists was to be admired, they nevertheless assailed their own assumption, namely, that heresy must be regarded as sheer falsehood. The result of their historiography was to promote a spirit of indifference in relation to true and false, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and to open the way for rationalistic latitudinarianism.

The second standpoint of ecclesiastical history Schaff designated the Rationalistic in opposition to the old Orthodoxy. He divided it into two periods: the Pietistic and the Rationalistic, proper. The Pietist school stood in close connection with inward subjectivity and came as a reaction to the scholastic Lutheranism of the seventeenth century while in the main retaining the same system of faith but nevertheless rejecting the idea of doctrinal development or progress. Rationalism, on the contrary, was hostile to the very substance of the orthodox theory, even toward Christianity itself. "Both tendencies," Schaff observes, "come together in the point of unchurchliness, and this sufficiently explains to us the transition of the first into the last as its proper and

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100. Schaff uses the term supernaturalism to represent the last representatives of the old Protestant orthodoxy as opposed to Pietism and still more, Rationalism. He classifies Weismann, J. C. Walch, C. W. F. Walch, Baumgarten, Kramer, Mosheim and Schrockh as belonging to the Supernaturalistic school.

natural theoretic consequence." 101

George Calixtus, Schaff believed, laid the groundwork for Pietistic historiography. He was far more liberal than his orthodox Lutheran contemporaries and he sought to find elements of truth and unity in all confessions instead of dividing light and shade regularly in a particular section of the visible Church. Although ridiculed by his Lutheran brethren, his irenic, practical theology came forward again at the close of the seventeenth century under a somewhat different form, blossoming in the practical pietism of Spener and Franke. It was Gottfried Arnold, however, who best exemplified the pietistic historiography; he had the courage to reverse the orthodox principle of history by which the Church was held always to be right against the sects and to maintain instead that the sects did possess a religious life of their own which was historically legitimate. But Arnold made religious life as it appears in the form of subjective piety, the measure of the true Church, even to the extent of deprecating many of the most pious men of the Church and extravagantly praising sects and heretics.

The effect of Arnold's historical method was to call into question the success if not the existence of any divine plan in history. Furthermore, Arnold's work could not fail to shake the confidence in the reigning Church. As pietism by its comparatively anti-churchly character opened the way for rationalism, so Arnold made room for the rationalistic theory of Church history, whose formulation Schaff credited to Semler. Retaining Arnold's prejudice against the reigning Church and favoring all uncatholic dissenters, Semler added a new twist not present in Arnold whose theology at least was orthodox. Semler understood the material of ecclesiastical history under the view of mobility or endless mutability, i.e. doctrines were always in the course of change; the whole history of

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101. What is Church History?, op. cit., pp. 60 ff.

doctrines appeared to him as a confused chaos of opinions, constantly changing. Doctrines were of no theoretic account; they were significant only as they might have a good effect on the morality of the time. Semler's assumption that whatever has arisen in time could not be properly divine gained an added impetus during the Aufklärung. In the hands of rationalism, the entire history of the Church was turned into a purely subjective play of human passions. The presence of Christ in His Church was not only denied, but God was virtually excluded from history altogether.

Prof. Schaff assumed that in his theory of historical development the better tendencies of both the orthodox and rationalistic theories of Church history were incorporated into a higher synthesis. The orthodox were correct in insisting there was something unchangeable and everlasting in history and that the Church was the bearer of the gospel and heir to all its promises. However, Schaff claimed, it was wrong to deny the sects the right to exist or to say they had no knowledge of Christian truth. The rationalists were correct in apprehending the life and doctrine of the Church as moveable and flowing, but they erred by failing to distinguish any divine purpose in history and by not taking into account the promise of our Lord, "Lo, I am with you always."

Although Schaff's concept of the Church frequently has been compared with that of his beloved teacher, Neander, there are some striking dissimilarities between the two historians.<sup>102</sup> While respecting Neander's complete blending of the scientific element with the Christian faith, Schaff missed its union with the churchly. Furthermore, as was typical of the whole Schleiermacherian school, Schaff did not feel Neander possessed a full and unconditional reverence for the

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102. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., pp. 101-106. See also P.S. "Neander's Jugendjahre" in Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund, IV, Aug. 1851, pp. 283 ff.

Word of God and therefore his histories lack a decidedly orthodox quality. Schaff said Neander was unchurchly because of his comparative disregard for the objective and realistic character of Christianity and the Church; his writings are disposed to resolve the whole Christian mystery into something purely ideal and inward. In this regard Schaff felt Neander was not catholic in the historical sense. True, he readily appreciates the objective forces operating in such men as Tertullian, Augustine and Bernard, and he is well aware of the contradicting tendencies embodying the spirit of an age in particular individuals, but these differences he considers merely psychological, peculiar to the particular constitution of the man. He views the Kingdom of God as forming itself within individuals, in a certain sense from below upwards. Therefore, Schaff argues, his histories have a spiritualistic and idealistic turn. He overstrains his love for all schismatical and heretical movements, which he often blithely assumes were motivated solely by some deep moral and religious interest. His opposition to anything in Christian history which re-introduces the idea of Jewish legalism explains his indifference to fixed ecclesiastical institutions and his aversion to confessionalism. Schaff agreed that to re-pristiniate some particular confession of the past savoured of "bondage to the letter", but for Schaff there was a healthy confessionalism; he charged that Neander's concept of the Church had a latitudinarian tinge. For Schaff true freedom could only thrive in a sphere of authority; the individual was only free in so far as he was subordinate to the general. True catholicity, Schaff wrote, "... is as rigid against error as it is liberal towards various manifestations of truth." 103

Even the title of Neander's General History of the Christian Religion and

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103. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 103.

Church disturbed Schaff, since it implied there was a Christian religion outside of and beside the Church. On this point Schaff never made a positive decision but he felt such a view could hardly be reconciled with Paul's doctrine of the Church. "Where Christ is," Schaff declares, "there also is the church, his body; and where the church is, there also is Christ, her head, and all grace; and what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." 104

Schaff considered Neander primarily an historian of the invisible Church; for the worldly and political aspects of Church history, the interplay of human passions, he had little concern. "If," Schaff wrote, "he sometimes causes us almost to forget that the kingdom of God is in the world; it is only to bring out more forcibly the great truth of that declaration of Christ, ... 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" 105

Despite these criticisms, Schaff's love and respect for Neander never waned; he always regarded his teacher as the greatest historian of the nineteenth century. To Neander's foremost pupil there came the challenge not only to record anew the history of the Christian Church but to play a prominent role in making that history.

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104. Ibid., p. 104. Schaff paraphrases from *Irenaeus, Book III 24:1, (Ante Nicene Christian Library)*.

105. Ibid., p. 105. Schaff also notes Neander's lack of interest in the aesthetic and artistic aspects of Church history which does not stem from a Puritan principle on Neander's part. He merely fails to give a full description of the influence of Christianity upon this sphere of human activity, e.g. the history of church sculpture, painting, architecture, music and poetry.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### I

The concept of the Church held by the Mercersburg professors, was no mere academic abstraction. If in theory they believed the Church to be the body of the indwelling Christ, an organic, catholic entity in historical continuity with Christians of all ages, then there were practical implications of this position which logically would effect the cultus of the Church. Nowhere was the impact of the Mercersburg theology more fully felt than in the liturgical controversy, which centered primarily in the order for Holy Communion, and which disturbed the mind of the German Reformed Church for more than thirty years, at times even threatening her unity.

Professor James I. Good argues that had it not been for the theology of Nevin and Schaff there would have been no liturgical movement. "Historically and logically," he writes, "the liturgy came out of the Mercersburg theology."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Schaff, however, in his authoritative monograph, "The New Liturgy," admitted that the Mercersburg theology gave the liturgical movement a new "impulse and direction," but he nonetheless made it very clear that the quest for a liturgy did not originate with the Mercersburg theologians.

In the above article, published shortly after the appearance of the Provisional Liturgy of 1857, Schaff stated, "The Reformed Church like all the Churches of the Reformation is originally liturgical."<sup>2</sup> He went on to claim that Zwingli, Calvin, Bucer and even John Knox, as well as Luther, Melancthon, Latimer and Ridley, all favored a fixed and settled order of public worship which would guide

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1. Good, History, op. cit., p. 203.

2. P.S., "The New Liturgy" in M.R., X, April, 1858, p. 203.

the minister in conducting the spiritual exercises of the sanctuary with dignity and decency. None of the reformers, he claimed, desired to give up the liturgical principle; their object was to purify, simplify and to adapt the ancient devotional forms which had been handed down from the previous life of the Church. In addition they translated older liturgies into the vernacular and enriched them with new forms, which were intended to embody and perpetuate the peculiar spirit of evangelical Protestantism.

While the Protestants agreed on the liturgical principle, Schaff admitted, they differed from the beginning regarding the extent to which it should be carried out. The Lutherans and Anglicans adhered more closely to the traditional Catholic pattern while the Calvinistic churches allowed a place for free prayer in the services which generally were more simplified. During the seventeenth century, however, a few "extreme branches of Calvinists," e.g. the Presbyterians in Scotland and the Puritans in England, along with their large offshoots in America, even dropped the public use of prayer books. This was due, Schaff felt, to the extreme antagonism of the Puritans to the Church of England, the tyrannical attempt of Archbishop Laud and the Stuarts to force the Anglican service on the Scottish nation and the unsatisfactory character of Knox's liturgy. In the course of time, however, these anti-liturgical prejudices assumed the power of tradition in the English-speaking Calvinistic churches and to reinstate the liturgical principle would not be an easy task.

Schaff stated that the Protestant churches of the continent were without exception liturgical, using prescribed forms in every service, but also permitting extemporaneous prayer. The problem on the continent arose because in both the Lutheran and Reformed constituencies there were too many liturgies and consequently too little unity and harmony in worship. Furthermore, the continental liturgies were intended merely as guides for the minister and not for the use of the people; therefore they did not take root in the hearts of the faithful in

the way that the Book of Common Prayer did, for example, in England.

When the German branch of the Reformed Church came to America, a number of liturgies were brought from Germany and Switzerland, where almost every canton had a liturgy of its own. Schaff believed that many of these liturgies were excellent yet none of them combined the merits of a truly popular church-book nor did any of them receive the exclusive sanction of the Synod. Although the Palatinate Liturgy was used more extensively than any others, it had been superseded in Germany and never was republished in America. As a result, each minister was left on his own to exercise an arbitrary freedom in choosing the form and content of public worship.<sup>3</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century the German Reformed Church became anglicized and puritanized to the extent that the free prayer system was introduced in the regular services for the Lord's Day. Thus, while the Church never prohibited the use of liturgies and always adhered to the liturgical principle on special occasions, the "free service" gained the ascendancy.

Schaff's purpose in the article we are discussing was to underscore three points: (1) the German Reformed Church was historically liturgical (2) ministers and congregations were dissatisfied with the prevailing wide diversity and arbitrary selection of orders used in public worship (3) both the English and German congregations desired a uniform system of public worship, embodied in a liturgy which would breathe the doctrinal spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism and yet be suited to the needs of the denomination.

Schaff's contention that the German Reformed Church in America stood in a liturgical tradition (or several liturgical traditions) seems to be correct in view of the historical evidence. In 1748, John Philip Boehm sent a letter to

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3. Among the liturgies followed by German Reformed pastors were the Swiss liturgies of Berne, Basel, Zürich, and Coire, and Ebrard's Reformirtes Kirchenbuch. Michael Schlatter used the Order of St. Gall, Switzerland.

the Classical Commission in Holland requesting that instructions be given "... to adhere only to all the formulas which are not only in the Palatinate Church Order (of which there are a few copies in this country), but also in almost all our Reformed hymn books." <sup>4</sup> Boehm was concerned about there being too many liturgies and wanted preference to be given the Palatinate Liturgy. Yet, because the number of Palatinate Church Orders was scarce, ministers had no alternative other than to prepare their own forms of worship, which did not mean that they were indifferent to liturgical forms. <sup>5</sup>

Certainly it is true that for generations preceeding the Mercersburg controversy ministers and congregations of the German Reformed Church in America were accustomed to the "free service". However, this was not due to clerical or lay hostility toward the liturgical heritage of the Palatinate, but rather, as Dr. George Richards points out, "because that treasure was temporarily forgotten, ... on account of conditions in the colonial and national periods when the custom of 'free service' was in vogue in most of the Churches of that time, ..." <sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it should be remembered that although "free prayers" were not permitted in the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth centuries in the Reformed churches of the Lower Rhine, the introduction of Pietism (Labadism) in 1677, inaugurated the custom of free prayer which prevailed during the eighteenth

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4. See William J. Hinke, Life and Letters of the Rev. John Philip Boehm, Philadelphia, 1916, p. 452.

5. Of special interest is the liturgical pamphlet, "Liturgies zum Gebrauch der evangelische Gemeinen," 1793, (author and place of publication not given). This pamphlet contains forms for baptism, preparation for Holy Communion, marriage and excommunication taken verbatim from the Palatinate Liturgy. In addition there are services for the restoration of disciplined members, and for ordination of ministers, elders and deacons, derived from the "Northern Rhine Reformed Liturgy". These Mss. are in the archives of the Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.

6. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 334.

century. Thus, when the Reformed pioneers came to America, the practice of using prescribed liturgical prayers had been gradually abandoned. <sup>7</sup>

When we examine the minutes of Synod it is evident that the desire for a liturgy existed before the Mercersburg theology became an issue within the Church. At the Synod of Hagerstown, 1820, a request was made by the Maryland Classis to revise the Church Agenda (Palatinate Liturgy of 1563) with a view toward publishing it in both English and German. Susquehanna Classis also asked for an improvement in the liturgy. In response to these overtures, Synod appointed a committee to undertake this assignment, but due to the difficulties connected with the establishment of the Theological Seminary and its subsequent removal from Carlisle to York and later to Mercersburg, the subject of the liturgy was temporarily forgotten. Moreover, the Synod was preoccupied with the problem of reorganizing the Church, and, as time went on, those men who had wanted a liturgy yielded their place in the councils of the Church to younger men whose liturgical concern was not primary. <sup>8</sup>

At the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1834, however, the question of the liturgy was brought up again with the recommendation that a committee be appointed not simply to publish the Palatinate Liturgy but to prepare an improved liturgy in both English and German. Under the chairmanship of Professor Mayer the committee presented a liturgical manuscript to the Synod in 1837, subject to further revision, if necessary. It was not until 1840 that the "Mayer Liturgy" was adopted by the

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7. See Max Goebel, Geschichte des Christlichen Leben, II, Coblenz, 1852, pp. 121, 122.

8. The committee appointed at the Synod of Hagerstown, 1820, did not submit a report until the Synod of Bedford, 1824, and though the report was referred to a special committee for examination, it was never officially acted upon by the Synod. In 1830, Synod again met at Hagerstown and another request was made by Maryland Classis to have a liturgy printed and placed in a contemplated English hymn book. Although a committee was appointed to attend to this duty, the liturgy never appeared.

Synod with some minor alterations and a committee appointed to undertake its publication in both languages.

The Church, generally, however, was not satisfied with the Mayer Liturgy for two reasons: first, it contained no forms for the Lord's Day service, but only for special occasions like marriage, ordination, baptism, confirmation, communion and Christian burial; and secondly, it was felt that the "improved liturgy" had proceeded too much from Dr. Mayer's own hand, and thus it did not fit the needs of the whole Church. Consequently, the Mayer Liturgy met with little favor, a second edition was never published and its use declined.

Following the appearance of Schaff's Principle of Protestantism in 1844, the church question became the paramount issue within the German Reformed Church, highlighted by Dr. Schaff's heresy trial, to which we have referred previously. But the problem of the liturgy was not forgotten. In 1847 the Classis of East Pennsylvania expressed dissatisfaction with the Mayer Liturgy and requested that "... the old Liturgy [Palatinate] should be reprinted, or a new one prepared more congenial to the spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism."<sup>9</sup> The entire matter was referred to the classes for consideration and with the exception of North Carolina all of the classes expressed their desire for a liturgy which would be adapted to the wants of the whole Church with the intention that its general use would be enforced. However, it is evident that by 1847 there were three parties within the denomination, each holding a different opinion regarding cultus. Dr. Richards lists these groups as follows:

1. "Those who were opposed to all liturgical forms in the regular services of the congregation.
2. Those who used forms for special occasions- semi-liturgical party;
3. Those who favored a new liturgy, which contained forms of worship for all occasions- the liturgical party, who wanted 'an altar liturgy', not merely a 'pulpit liturgy'".<sup>10</sup>

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9. Acts and Proceedings of the Synod at Lancaster, 1847, p. 23.

10. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 335.

Because of confusion regarding the subject of liturgy generally and its place in the German Reformed Church particularly, a committee was appointed in 1848 to prepare an essay on the subject so that the mind of the Church might be enlightened. The committee made its report at the Synod of Norristown a year later. After a lengthy introduction which surveyed the course of Hebraic-Christian worship from the ancient Jewish sanctuary through the Reformation, the committee offered six resolutions for adoption by the Synod. These "Norristown Resolutions" were intended to serve as the principles upon which the new liturgy was to be based. They appear below:

- "1. That the use of Liturgical forms of Church worship, as recognized by our forefathers, has the clear sanction of the practice and peculiar genius of the original Protestant Churches.
2. That there is nothing in the present circumstances of our Church in this country to call for or justify a total departure from this ancient and long-established usage.
3. That the Liturgy now authorized and partially used by the Church, [Mayer Liturgy] is inadequate to our wants, inasmuch as apart from other deficiencies, ... it makes no provision for ordinary occasions of public worship.
4. That whilst the older Liturgies of the Church, and especially of the Palatinate, are of such a character as to commend the greater part of them for adoption, there is still need of various modifications in order to adapt them to our wants and circumstances.
5. That the present would be as favorable a time for making the requisite provision in the case as any which may be anticipated in the future.
6. That Synod, therefore, proceed to make such arrangements as it may in its wisdom think best for the securing of this object." <sup>11</sup>

This report gave rise to a lengthy discussion which continued for several sessions. Although the Minutes of Synod contain no record of the speeches, the fundamental question in 1849 was liturgy or no liturgy. The majority of the Synod approved the resolutions and a new committee was appointed to ex-

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11. Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1849, pp. 81, 82. Full committee report pp. 79-82.

amine thoroughly the liturgies of the German Reformed churches and to prepare an outline of a proposed liturgy, along with some sample specimens which might be included in it. Dr. Nevin was made chairman of the committee, which consisted of four elders and the following ministers: Philip Schaff, Bernard C. Wolff, Elias Heiner, John H. A. Bomberger, Henry Harbaugh and Joseph F. Berg.<sup>12</sup> It was intended that this committee would represent the various liturgical points of view existing at the time.

During the next Synodical year, Wolff translated the "Introduction" to Ebrard's Reformirtes Kirchenbuch on Reformed liturgies of the sixteenth century and Dr. Bomberger prepared an English version of several parts of the Palatinate Liturgy of 1563.<sup>13</sup> But the committee held no meetings. The controversy over the church question still was at its height and the impact of Nevin's great work on the Eucharist, The Mystical Presence, 1847, had not yet lost its momentum, a fact which tended to fan the flames on an already blazing fire. Thus, in his committee report at the Synod of Martinsburg, 1850, Nevin stated: "... that after such attention as they [the committee] have been able to give to the subject, and in view of the general posture of the Church at the present time, they have not considered it expedient as yet to go forward with the work." It was realized that until some agreement could be reached on the doctrine of the Church it would be impossible "... to bestow any full and final care on this question of a

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12. Between 1849 and 1855 membership on the Liturgical Committee was revised owing to the death of committeemen and other circumstances, e.g. the withdrawal of Dr. Berg from the denomination. The committee, as it finally stood, included the following: P. Schaff, J. Nevin, B. C. Wolff, J. H. A. Bomberger, H. Harbaugh, E. Heiner, D. Zacharias, T. C. Porter, E. V. Gerhart, S. R. Fisher and elders: W. Heyser, J. Rodenmeyer, G. Schaefer, G. C. Welker.

13. See Bernard Wolff, "Public Worship" in M.R., II, May 1850, pp. 296-307; July, 1850, pp. 383-393; John H. A. Bomberger, "Old Palatinate Liturgy of 1563" in M.R., II, Jan., May, 1850; III, March 1851.

New Liturgy." 14

Although Dr. Nevin had been one of the first advocates of a new liturgy, he had nevertheless accepted the chairmanship of the committee reluctantly. 15 As a speculative theologian, Nevin very ably presented and defended the Mercersburg doctrines, but he did not possess the creative and artistic talent necessary for the formulation of a liturgy. In September 1850, Nevin had informed the Board of Visitors that he wished to be relieved of his professorship at the seminary since he had not received payment of his back salary and because his duties at Marshall College were such that he needed to give the latter institution his full time service. 16 The Synod of 1850 was extremely embarrassed by its inability to meet the financial obligations to Dr. Nevin and sought to correct the situation as quickly as possible. At the Synod of

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14. Minutes of Synod, 1850, p. 74.

15. See John W. Nevin, "The Liturgical Movement", in M.R., I, Nov. 1849, pp. 603-612.

16. See Klein, History of Eastern Synod, op. cit., p. 217 for the full text of this letter. In addition to his professorship at the seminary, Dr. Nevin also had served as President pro-tem of Marshall College since the death of Dr. Rauch. The merger of Marshall College with Franklin College necessitated the removal of the former institution from Mercersburg to Lancaster. With Nevin's resignation from the seminary, Schaff remained the only theological professor until Bernard Wolff was elected to Nevin's vacant chair in 1854. It is interesting to note that in 1853 Schaff was chosen President of the newly created Franklin and Marshall College, after Nevin had declined the position. There is every reason to believe Schaff would have accepted the presidency had not Synod prohibited him on the grounds that such a move would have necessitated the closing of the seminary. This marked the second time Schaff had submitted to the will of Synod. In 1849 he had been elected pastor of Salem Church in Philadelphia, the largest German speaking congregation in the denomination, but Synod refused to release him from his duties at the seminary. Although Nevin entered semi-retirement after the removal of the College, he was persuaded to become president of Franklin and Marshall in 1866, a position he held until 1876. See Jos. H. Dubbs, History of Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, 1903, pp. 241-244 for a full account of the above events.

Lancaster in 1851 two resolutions were offered, the first requesting Dr. Nevin to withdraw his resignation and the second declaring that if he should refuse to do so, the Synod would yield to his request "with great reluctance", in the hope that he might some day return to the vacant professorship. Although the Synod expressed complete confidence in his orthodoxy, Nevin himself was beginning to feel the strain of the theological battle raging within the Church. He likewise requested that the Synod of 1851 relieve him of the chairmanship of the Liturgical committee, on which he would continue to serve as a member, but that Philip Schaff should be made chairman in his place.<sup>17</sup> With the appointment of Schaff as chairman of the committee, the quest for a liturgy entered a new phase in which emerges the stature of Philip Schaff, the liturgist.

## II

Dr. Schaff was well qualified to undertake his new responsibilities. While he had little sympathy with sacerdotalism, he had always cultivated a churchly spirit. He was familiar with the rich liturgical heritage of the Lutheran Church in which he had been confirmed. Although he identified his theological position with the Mediating School of German theologians he did not share the low church views of his teachers, Neander and Dorner. When a strong liturgical tendency inaugurated by the New Lutherans swept over Germany in the nineteenth century, Schaff was sympathetic toward the movement and supported the principles of liturgical worship within the united Evangelical Church.

Upon his arrival at Mercersburg, Schaff had encouraged the revival of the Church Year and introduced the practice of suspending classes in the College and

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17. Regarding the subject of the proposed liturgy, Nevin wrote the following in a letter to Schaff, dated December 3rd, 1855. "I have no faith, no heart, no proper courage for any such work." See "Nevin Letters," Historical Archives of the Evang. & Ref. Ch., Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College.

seminary on Char Freitag. In their place he substituted appropriate religious ceremonies in which the student choir sang German chorales and a sermon on the Passion was preached. Up to this time Church festivals generally had been neglected in the denomination.

Schaff recognized the educational significance of liturgies and catechisms in nurturing Christian family life. In fact, his concept of the Church is reflected in his understanding of the family as a "miniature church", in which all the interpersonal relationships within the household are seen as a copy of the relation of Christ to His Church. Thus the husband is the head of the home as Christ is the head of the Church. The wife stands in the same relation to her husband as the Church does to her Lord, that is, the wife is subject to the husband and bound to show him reverence. The relation of parents to children corresponds to that of Christ and the Church to individual Christians. The father holds the place of Christ and thereby exercises authority, gentleness, forgiveness, etc.; the mother, on the other hand, represents the Church and her main duty is to take care of the spiritual nurture of the children. Both the father and the mother, however, instruct the youth, by precept and example, and as the faithful owe Christ and His Church "piety and reverential obedience", so are the same required of children in relation to their parents. "Thus," writes Schaff, "are all the natural relations of authority and subordination recognized and confirmed by Christianity, and duly regulated, defined, and sanctified by being referred to the Lord and His Church; and thus is the whole family life consecrated as a nursery of the purest virtues, as a miniature theocracy, rooted indeed in the soil of nature, in the sexual love of individuals, but rising into heaven." 18

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18. P.S. "Influence of Christianity on the Family", in M.R., V, Oct., 1853, p. 478. Also see Schaff's "Das Christliche Familienleben" in Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund, III, Nov., 1850, pp. 285-290.

According to Schaff, the "family altar" is the center of the devotional life of the household. It is the father's responsibility to act as priest by offering morning and evening prayer, a custom which was followed in his own household. To enrich their own devotional life, Dr. Schaff prepared a catechism for use in his family in which the questions were grouped around the Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed and Ten Commandments and so arranged that a different lesson was assigned for each week in the calendar year.<sup>19</sup>

In regard to liturgy, Rauch had said it was a work of art, but Schaff defined it as "... a growth from the inner life of the Church, in which one period or age teaches those who follow it how to pray."<sup>20</sup> Therefore, if a liturgy were to have meaning and relevance, Schaff realized that it was incumbent upon the head of the household to explain and to use it in the course of family devotions. In commending the Provisional Liturgy of 1857 to the German Reformed Church, Schaff uttered the classic statement of the Mercersburg theologians on the subject of liturgy.

"Next to the word of God, which stands in unapproachable majesty far above all human creeds and confessions, fathers and reformers, popes and councils, there are no religious books of greater practical importance and influence than catechisms, hymn books, and liturgies. They shape the moral and religious sentiments in early youth; they feed the devotions of old age; they are the faithful companions of the most solemn hours in the house of God,

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19. Although Schaff did not originally intend to publish his catechism, he yielded to the request of friends and it was published under the title, A Christian Catechism for Sunday Schools and Families, Chambersburg, Pa., 1861. A larger edition followed in 1862 containing proof texts and notes. The original manuscript for the latter is in the library of Franklin and Marshall College. The catechism also was translated into German and entitled Christlicher Katechismus mit Bibelsprüchen für Schule und Haus, Chambersburg, 1861. The German edition served as the basis of a catechism used in German schools and gymnasias called Sittenlehre, Stuttgart, 1874. Both the American Sunday School Union and the Presbyterian Board of Publication published several editions and it was translated into Nestorian, Arabic, Syriac, Chinese, Bulgarian and other languages by American missionaries.

20. P.S. quoted in The Life of John Nevin, op. cit., p. 481.

around the family altar and in the silent closet; they give utterance to the deepest emotions, the purest thought, the highest aspirations; they urge to duty and every good work; they comfort in affliction and point to heaven at the approach of death. ..." 21

Schaff's wide knowledge of the history of Christian worship, his ability to compile and arrange scattered liturgical material and his personal gift for engendering the spirit of cooperation among members of his committee, were other qualities which suited him for the task at hand. He believed that the liturgy should not be written simply for the sake of convenience, decency and propriety, but rather that it should represent a sacred bond of union between Christ and the different ages of His Church. He envisioned the liturgy as "... a guarantee against excesses of arbitrary freedom, as a conservative power in doctrine and discipline, as the organ for the exercise of the general priesthood, and as the artistic form which the very spirit of social worship instinctively assumes." 22

Furthermore, Schaff did not want the liturgy to be either a purely subjective and narrow denominational publication or a mechanical compilation drawn from separate sources. What was needed was a free reproduction and adaptation of the devotional wealth of the past to the particular needs of the contemporary Church. In short, if the committee could devise a liturgy which was truly scriptural, historical, evangelical, catholic and artistic, and at the same time, its use would be employed by both ministers and laymen, the liturgical venture would not be undertaken in vain.

Nevin records how "Dr. Schaff went to work in earnest and set the rest of

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21. P.S. "The New Liturgy", op. cit., p. 199.

22. Ibid., p. 208.

us to work also in preparing new forms." <sup>23</sup> The committee members living in Mercersburg met weekly during the summer of 1852 and composed four forms for the regular Sunday morning service, two baptismal services, a marriage service and a partial lectionary with collects for the ecclesiastical year. <sup>24</sup> At the Synod of Baltimore held in October of the same year, these specimen forms were appended to the "Report of the Liturgical Committee" and subsequently published in the Mercersburg Review for inspection by the Church.

But the most important section of the committee report dealt with an elaboration of the principles on which the new liturgy was to be constructed. These "Baltimore Resolutions" were to serve as the basis of all future work within the committee and if they do not directly contradict the principles agreed upon at Norristown, they certainly enlarge the realm from which liturgical material may be taken. While the entire committee signed the new resolutions, Schaff prepared the final draft which may be interpreted as representing his mature convictions on the subject of liturgy. The resolutions are as follows:

- "1. The liturgical worship of the Primitive Church, as far as it can be ascertained from the Holy Scriptures, the oldest ecclesiastical writers, and the Liturgies of the Greek and Latin Churches of the third and fourth centuries, ought to be made, as much as possible, the general basis of the proposed Liturgy; the more so, as they are in fact also the source from which the best portions of the various Liturgies of the sixteenth century were derived, such as forms of Confession and Absolution, the litanies, the creeds, the Te Deum, the Gloria in Excelsis, the collects, the doxologies, etc. ..

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23. Nevin, Vindication of the Revised Liturgy, Philadelphia, 1867, p. 17.

24. Note especially the "Formula for the Lord's Supper", M.R., VI, October, 1854, pp. 564-572 which was not included in the 1852 Liturgical Committee Report. Although this order is basically a re-writing of the Old Palatinate Liturgy and its tone is oratorical, didactic and prose, there are two significant changes: (1) it is suggested that an epistle and gospel lesson be read every Sunday and (2) more emphasis is placed upon the communicant's union with Christ in the Sacrament. It is doubtful, however, that Schaff prepared this Communion service, but it is obvious that aspects of his concept of the Church are in evidence.

2. Among the later liturgies special reference ought to be had to the old Palatinate and other Reformed liturgies of the sixteenth century.
3. Neither the ancient Catholic nor the Reformed Liturgies, however, ought to be copied slavishly, but reproduced rather in a free evangelical spirit and adapted to the peculiar wants of our age and denomination; ... but in keeping always with the devotional spirit of the Church in her present days.
4. Those portions of the Liturgy which are most frequently used, as the regular service on the Lord's Day, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, should embrace several forms, ...with a view to avoid monotony ... and to meet the needs of various ministers and congregations evidently not prepared for an entire uniformity.
5. The language and style ought to be throughout Scriptural ... that is, simple, sublime and devotional. ... The doctrinal tone, which predominates too much in most of the Calvinistic Liturgies, ought to be used only within certain limits.
6. The addition of a Family Liturgy ... seems very desirable, not only on account of its independent value, but especially also because it would facilitate the introduction of the Liturgy amongst our laity, and thus promote its right use in the Church. ...
7. Finally, a Liturgy ought not to interfere with the proper use of extemporaneous prayer, either in public or in private, but rather to regulate and promote it."

If these principles be conscientiously and wisely carried out, it is hoped that... a Liturgy might be produced at last, which will be a bond of union with the ancient Catholic Church and the Reformation, and yet be the product of the religious life of our denomination in its present state." <sup>25</sup>

These "Baltimore Principles" are clearly in harmony with Schaff's concept of the Church as expounded in his Mercersburg writings. Resolutions 1, 3 and 7, especially, testify to his theory of historical development and his contention that the contemporary Church stands in historic continuity with the one, holy, catholic Church of the ages, subject, of course, to the formal principle of Protestantism, i.e. supremacy of the Holy Scriptures.

Following the Synod's acceptance of the committee's report, Dr. Schaff assigned the composition of the various chapters of the proposed Liturgy to

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25. Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1852, op. cit., pp. 87 ff.

individual members of the Committee with the understanding they would complete their work by the spring of 1853. Nevertheless, due in part to the innate difficulty involved in the undertaking and also to the chairman's extended visit to Europe in 1854, the work proceeded very slowly and the Synodical Minutes for 1853 and 1854 report no further progress. At the Synod of 1855, however, a report was submitted and adopted whereby the Committee was permitted to confine its task simply to the preparation and publication of a provisional liturgy for experimental and optional use. Furthermore, Synod was advised not to adopt the Provisional Liturgy until it could be thoroughly revised after being tested within the congregations of the Church. <sup>26</sup>

Following this Synodical meeting the Committee resumed its activity with renewed vigor and enthusiasm. Exclusive of the sub-committee meetings in Mercersburg and those preceding the Synod of Baltimore, the number of morning, afternoon and night sessions amounted to 104. <sup>27</sup> After consulting, criticizing and examining concordances and liturgies, ancient and modern, and after freely applying the pruning knife to their own manuscripts, the Committee finally completed the Provisional Liturgy on October 21st, 1857. Altogether, beginning with the Synod of 1851, and deducting the year 1854 in which the work of the Committee was entirely suspended, the new liturgy was the result of five year's combined work.

Appearing under the title, A Liturgy or Order of Christian Worship, this book marks a milestone in the history of cultus within the German Reformed Church. Included in its contents are four services for the Lord's Day so constructed as to meet the needs of both the high and low church parties within the denomination. There are both longer and shorter forms for infant baptism,

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26. Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1855, op. cit., pp. 80, 81.

27. P.S. "The New Liturgy", op. cit., p. 222.

but only one order for adult baptism, confirmation, marriage, ordination and installation, excommunication and restoration, burial of the dead, and Holy Communion. In addition there are special services for the reception of immigrants, visitation of the sick, laying of a corner stone, consecration of a church and consecration of a burial ground. The last three chapters contain a collection of family prayers, a guide to private devotion, consisting of scriptural passages and prayers to be said on "waking from sleep", "before and after meals", "when entering the duties of the day", etc. At the close of the book, a number of hymns and doxologies are printed.

While intended to serve the interests of the entire Church there is no question that the Provisional Liturgy exudes the spirit of the Mercersburg theology. The first chapter entitled "Primitive Forms", includes the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Lord's Prayer, Magnificat, Benedictus, Nunc Dimittis, Trisagion, Gloria Patri, Gloria in Excelsis and Te Deum. Then follows a litany, the Ten Commandments and five benedictions. The second chapter preceding the orders for the Lord's Day, lists the appropriate collects and epistle and gospel lessons for each Sunday in the Church year as well as for the chief Christian festivals including St. Stephen's Day, St. John's Day, Holy Innocents Day, et al. <sup>28</sup>

Although it does not fall within the scope of this dissertation to examine in detail the content of the Provisional Liturgy, it is necessary to pay special attention to the Order of Holy Communion, of which Philip Schaff is the compiler and author. Schaff's Communion service, as it appears in the Provisional Liturgy, became the parent rite of all future orders for the observance of the sacrament within the German Reformed Church. It is therefore the basis of the present

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28. Generally these pericopies are the same as those in the Book of Common Prayer.

order in the Evangelical and Reformed Book of Worship.

Philip Schaff wrote no theological essays on the nature of the Eucharist. The chief theological exposition of this subject from the Mercersburg point of view is to be found in Nevin's Mystical Presence, (1847), which precipitated the Sacramental controversy under its theoretic aspects. In this work Nevin sought to show that the Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper as a simple memorial never became an organic part of Reformed doctrine. On the contrary, the genuine Reformed view was that of Calvin who insisted that in the Holy Communion the believer was brought into living union with Jesus Christ. Rejecting both consubstantiation and transubstantiation, Nevin nevertheless contended that the Sacrament carried with it an objective force; it was not merely a sign or a symbol. Furthermore, the bread and wine not only represented the body and blood of Christ, they also authenticated the presence of grace in the sacramental transaction. <sup>29</sup>

Nevin went on to argue that almost all the orthodox Reformed confessions acknowledged Calvin's view of the Holy Communion. The Heidelberg Catechism explicitly affirmed a real communion with Christ's body and blood, which the believer receives by faith but not by mouth. Nevin charged that the Puritan view of the Sacrament was defective in four respects: (1) it did not distinguish the Eucharist from any other service, thus betraying the historic Reformed position that the Lord's Supper was the inmost heart of the Christian worship, (2) it failed to take account of the sense in which the Lord's Supper is a mystery, (3) it was too subjective, and (4) it denied the believer a real participation in Christ's person, holding instead that only a moral or figurative union with Christ's spirit was possible. According to Nevin the true

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29. Nevin, The Mystical Presence, Philadelphia, 1846, pp. 3-62; Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., pp. 95, 96.

Reformed position as formulated by Calvin, was closer to that of the Church in the first three centuries than to contemporary Puritanism since the Fathers, at least, regarded the Sacrament as a mystery having objective force. <sup>30</sup>

In the Mystical Presence, Nevin sought to restate Calvin's view of the Sacrament. For Nevin the nature of the union between Christ and the believer in the Lord's Supper is a mystical union whereby He communicates His own life to the soul upon which He acts. Moreover, it is the whole person of the communicant, who is mystically united with the whole person of Christ, encompassing Him in both His human and divine aspects. We do not, however, need to partake of Christ's body materially in order to share His humanity, since Christ's body is spiritually received. At this point Nevin resorts to the philosophic distinction between Christ as an individual and as a generic type which Schaff previously had made in expounding his doctrine of the Church. As an individual Christ is in heaven until His second coming, but as a generic type, Christ is always present in His Church as a universal being. It is in the latter sense that we are united with Christ in the Eucharist by the power of the Holy Ghost through a supernatural act. The mystical union, however, which is so real and intimate that it cannot be described in terms of human analogy, is effected only if the individual has faith. For Nevin it is not the elements themselves, but the transaction which occurs between the believer and the elements which gives the Sacrament its true meaning. Nevin calls the Lord's Supper an outward sign of an inward grace whose reality lies neither in the outward sign nor in the inward grace but rather in their relation. It was Nevin's contention that Christ communicates Himself only spiritually in the Eucharist and that the mystical union is essential if the faithful are to be truly a

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30. Nevin, Ibid., p. 63-154; Binkley, Ibid., pp. 96-98.

part of the Church and fully ingrafted into Him who is the true vine, the One who alone can nourish the soul. <sup>31</sup>

In regard to Dr. Schaff's evaluation of Nevin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper we quote from a letter he wrote to a friend shortly before the publication of the Mystical Presence: "... A book is about to appear from the pen of my esteemed colleague Dr. Nevin, on the Lord's mystical presence in the church and in the sacrament, and it is very likely to prove a new firebrand in the theological controversy. It assumes the highest sacramental standpoint which can be held within the pale of the Reformed Church without departure to the side paths of heresy, and it bears the stamp of German speculation. For this reason, if for no other, the appearance of the book on American soil is an event." <sup>32</sup>

Like Nevin, Schaff contended that in regard to the Eucharist, the most important symbolic books of the Reformed Church were influenced more by the thought of Calvin than that of Zwingli. In his Creeeds of Christendom, Schaff calls Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, "an ingenious compromise between

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31. Ibid., pp. 164-185. Binkley points out that Nevin did not think he was changing the essentials of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper but rather clarifying certain ambiguities inherent in Calvin's false psychology. For example, by regarding the individual as an organic whole, Nevin believed he had avoided Calvin's dualism which tended to create an artificial distinction between body and soul and to separate Christ's flesh and spirit. See The Mercersburg Theology, p. 99.

32. P.S. quoted in The Life and Work of Philip Schaff, op. cit., p. 140. (emphasis mine) The Mystical Presence was the first work of an American theologian to gain significant recognition in Germany. Ebrard commended Nevin's views in Studien und Kritiken, 1850. In America The Mystical Presence did prove a "firebrand". However, its underlying presuppositions were assailed rather than combatted scientifically. The most thorough American review was made by the Presbyterian Charles Hodge, who maintained that in the Eucharist the believer is only united with Christ's human nature and not His divine nature. Hodge proceeded to accuse Nevin of Romanism, Schleiermacherism, Lutheranism, Mysticism, Rationalism and Germanism. See Charles Hodge, "Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper", in Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, XX, 1848, pp. 227-278.

the realism and mysticism of the Lutheran and the idealism and spiritualism of the Zwinglian." <sup>33</sup> While retaining the figurative interpretation of the Words of Institution, Calvin rejected all materialistic conceptions of the Eucharistic mystery but asserted strongly Christ's spiritual real presence and the believer's participation not only in his merits, but in his flesh and blood as well.

Before the publication of Nevin's Mystical Presence Schaff had pointed out that none of the Reformed confessions suggested a local presence of Christ's body which is in heaven. Calvin, he notes, tried to solve the contradiction by assuming that the believer's soul is so raised by faith to heaven, through the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost, as to come within the life-giving influence of the Saviour's body. But this only transfers the difficulty to another place; indeed it is made worse, since it is easier to assume Christ's body has the power to extend itself to earth than to conceive of our souls being in two places at the same time. Schaff felt the Reformers were not able to reconcile the biblical declaration concerning Christ's presence in the Sacrament ("This is my body") with His ascension into heaven. Thus he concludes, "...it is just here... that the Eucharistic doctrine of the Reformers needs to be carried out." <sup>34</sup>

The contradiction, Schaff believed, could be removed if the same reasoning, which led one to affirm the presence of Christ in the Church, were applied to His presence in the Eucharist, i.e. if we make the distinction between the individual body of Christ, now enthroned in heaven, and the generic virtue of his human nature as actively present by the Holy Ghost in the Church and in the Sacrament.

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33. P.S. Creeds of Christendom, I, New York 6th ed., 1931, pp. 455-457.

34. P.S. What is Church History?, op. cit., pp. 35, 36.

The Mercersburg theologians were said to have advocated the "spiritual real presence" of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>35</sup> The details of this doctrine were worked out by Nevin who gave them a systematic presentation. What Schaff admired about Nevin's theology was not so much his theory of Christ's presence but the fact that Nevin was willing to re-instate, or better, to carry forward Calvin's thought on the subject. This, Schaff felt, was the sacred duty of the theologian and it is in keeping with his understanding of theology as a science, which undergoes development in the course of history.

Moreover, Schaff believed, the core of Calvin's interpretation of the Lord's Supper contained the greatest potential for re-uniting the scattered divisions of the Reformed Church, perhaps even with the liberal Lutherans. "Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist," he wrote, "was substantially approved by Melancthon in his later period, although from fear of Luther and the ultra-Lutherans he never fully committed himself."<sup>36</sup> As an historian Schaff was convinced that the doctrine of the German Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper and the subsequent liturgies which expressed it were not Zwinglian but Calvinic-Melancthonian. Like Melancthon in his later years, Schaff was content to affirm that the idea of a vital union and communion with the Person of Christ was the one and only essential thing in this sacred ordinance, while the manner of His presence remained an important, but secondary consideration.

In his Catechism for Sunday Schools and Families Schaff very succinctly

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35. In defense of his Mystical Presence Nevin wrote an article called "Reformed Doctrine of the Lord's Supper", in M.R., II, Sept. 1850, pp. 421-458. Nevin points out that Calvin was willing to use the term real presence if it meant true presence. The word real, however, commonly was understood to denote a local or corporeal presence and thus, not approved. To guard against this interpretation, Nevin used the term, spiritual real presence which he explains as follows: "a real presence, in opposition to the notion that Christ's flesh and blood are not made present to the communicant in any way. A spiritual real presence, in opposition to the idea that Christ's body is in the elements in a local or corporeal manner. Not real simply, and not spiritual simply, but real and yet spiritual at the same time." See above article p. 429.

36. P.S. Creeds of Christendom, I, op. cit., p. 456.

expressed the essence of his understanding of the Lord's Supper. He regards the bread and wine as the visible signs "by which the body and blood of Christ are set forth and sealed". The invisible grace received in the Sacrament is, "The body of Christ broken for us, and His blood shed for the remission of sins." To the question, "What is the meaning and design of this sacrament?" Schaff answers:

"It is a memorial of the blessed sacrifice of Christ whereby we commemorate his passion and death and appropriate anew the benefits of his atonement.

It is a communion of the body and blood of Christ who died for us and lives forever whereby our souls are nourished unto everlasting life.

It is a communion of believers with each other as members of the same mystical body of Christ."<sup>37</sup>

In the Lord's Supper, then, the believer receives "Jesus Christ, who is the bread of life and the manna from heaven, together with all his benefits." This blessing, however, is not received "... in a natural or carnal manner, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, through faith, which unites us to Christ."<sup>38</sup>

### III

Among the numerous papers and manuscripts of the Liturgical Committee there is a nine page draft written in Schaff's own hand which bears the following title: "Communion Service, partly compiled, partly original, P. Schaff."<sup>39</sup> There are four interesting marginal notes on the draft. The first refers to questions

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37. P.S. Catechism, op. cit., pp. 112-114. See questions 4-10.

38. Ibid., p. 114.

39. Schaff's communion draft together with other papers of the Liturgical Committee and the proof sheets for the Provisional Liturgy are in the archives of the Historical Society of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster.

from the Heidelberg Catechism about the disposition of the communicant before coming to the Lord's Table, which Schaff suggests might be transferred to the Preparatory Service. The others read as follows:

1. "This preface is partly taken from the St. James Liturgy. Perhaps the preface in the Irvingite Liturgy, p. 18-20 with forms suited to the various seasons of the Church year may be found preferable."
2. "If the commemoration of the living and departed is to be introduced here [i.e. following the Eucharistic prayer] I would recommend the shorter one in the Irvingite Liturgy."
3. "A number of Post Communion Prayers for different seasons of the ecclesiastical year, see Irvingite Lit., p. 65. Also a beautiful one in the German Liturgy of Bern in the hands of the Rev. H. Harbaugh, which might be translated." 40

Here we see Schaff's concern to follow the principles outlined at the Synod of Baltimore by patterning the Communion Service upon the Primitive liturgies. While the Provisional Liturgy does contain portions derived from the sixteenth and seventeenth century orders, especially the Palatinate, and while words and phrases are sometimes taken directly from the works of Calvin or from the Heidelberg Catechism, Schaff nevertheless bases his Communion service primarily upon the liturgies of St. James and of the Catholic Apostolic Church, whose members were called Irvingites. Having sailed for Europe in the late fall of 1853, Dr. Schaff took advantage of a year's leave of absence to renew old acquaintances and to visit churches and Church leaders in Scotland, England and on the continent. On one occasion he worshiped in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Gordon Square, London. Recording his impressions of this experience in a letter to his wife, Schaff wrote:

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40. P.S. "Draft of Communion Service", #7, pp. 2,6,8,9.

"...Sunday I spent the greater part of the day with the Irvingites. ... The Lord's Supper was administered with great solemnity, an imposing ceremonial, many hundreds communing. ... The liturgy is very beautiful. I dined with the Angel of the Church, Mr. Heath. ... Then at four I attended the service designed for the congregation and at seven the service of the evangelists for outsiders. The service this morning, I believe, was the most beautiful and perfect liturgical service I have yet attended."<sup>41</sup>

The Rev. Scott F. Brenner recently has written, "So far as we can discover there was no other experience in the life of Schaff, the liturgist, as decisive as that Sunday morning of worship in Gordon Square."<sup>42</sup> Brenner goes on to claim that Schaff entered the Irvingite Church in Gordon Square a "critic", but left a "zealot". He returned to Mercersburg a "changed man", bringing with him copies of the Catholic Apostolic Liturgy and ready to resume his liturgical committee responsibilities with renewed interest.

While Schaff's visit to the Irvingite's Church may have been the first time he had ever witnessed the performance of their liturgy, it was not his first acquaintance with the Irvingites. During his years at Mercersburg Schaff frequently had corresponded with the German Church historian, Dr. Henry J. Thiersch who became a member of the Irvingite community, but whose theological position Schaff described as standing midway between that of the Catholic Apostolic Church and the Protestantism of Germany.<sup>43</sup> Schaff also had written a series of articles entitled, "Der Irvingismus und die Kirchenfrage" which were published prior to his 1853-54 European visit. In these articles Schaff laments the Montanist extravagances of the sect and challenges

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41. Quoted in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 178 (emphasis mine).

42. Scott F. Brenner, "Philip Schaff, the Liturgist", in Bulletin of the Theol. Seminary of the Evang. and Ref. Church, XV, Oct., 1944, No. 4, p. 219.

43. See Schaff's evaluation of Thiersch in History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 121-123.

their theory of the apostolate but he nonetheless concludes that in general the Irvingites are destined to exert a positive influence on Christianity as a whole. <sup>44</sup> "Of all the Protestant Sects," he writes, "this is the most churchly, catholic, hierarchical sacramental and liturgical." <sup>45</sup> By stressing the Incarnation, real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, respect for history and church union, Schaff found ecumenical emphases in Irvingism, which were embodied in his own theological position on the nature of the Church. However, because the principle of historical development involves "adaptation" rather than "transplantation" of the vast material within the heritage of the Church universal, Schaff did not hesitate to revise and amend his sources so that he could create de novo a unique order of Holy Communion for the German Reformed Church in America.

Since the Mercersburg theologians believed in the organic oneness of the Church, it followed that the Eucharist should be considered a single entity in itself and not a brief form to be appended to the regular service for the Lord's Day. For the purpose of analysis, however, we shall divide the service of Holy Communion in the Provisional Liturgy into two parts: "The Liturgy of the Word" and "the Liturgy of the Upper Room". <sup>46</sup> The latter section is

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44. See Der Kirchenfreund, II, 1850 issues for Feb., Mar., May, June.

45. P.S. History of the Apostolic Church, op. cit., p. 122. See also the extended footnote on the Irvingites pp. 516-518 in this work, and a bibliography and brief account of Edward Irving's life by Schaff to which is appended a statement of the history, doctrines, polity, worship, etc., of the Catholic Apostolic Church by the Rev. W. W. Andrews (a New England Congregationalist) in Creeeds of Christendom, I, op. cit., pp. 905-915. See also a brief report on Irvingism in Germany by P.S. in Germany, its Universities, Theology and Religion, op. cit., pp. 141, 142.

46. These divisions are used by William D. Maxwell in his An Outline of Christian Worship, London, 1936.

divided as follows: (1) Exhortation to the Communicant (2) the Eucharistic Prayer (3) The Holy Communion

The Liturgy of the Word

Invocation (said by the minister standing at the altar.) <sup>47</sup>

"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who by the blood of thy dear Son hast consecrated for us a new and living way into the holiest of all; cleanse our minds, we beseech Thee, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we, Thy redeemed people, drawing near unto Thee in these Holy mysteries, with a true heart and undefiled conscience, in full assurance of faith, may offer unto thee an acceptable sacrifice in righteousness, and worthily magnify Thy great and glorious name: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Scriptural Sentences, Gloria in Excelsis, or a Praise Response

Gospel, Epistle, Collect for the day and Festival Prayer for the season.

Sermon or Homily (or a portion may be read from the history of Christ's passion.)

Nicene Creed (or on the last Communion of the Church year, The Athanasian Creed)

Offering

The service begins with the pronouncement of the Solemn Declaration invoking the presence of God whose Triune Being is acknowledged as a fundamental doctrinal assertion of the true Catholic Church in all her divisions. The Invocation proper is a composite blending of the Prayer of Consecration in the Irvingite Liturgy and the Collect for cleansing in the Book of Common Prayer. <sup>48</sup>

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47. The substitution of "altar" for "Lord's Table" shows the Mercersburg influence which emphasized the concept of sacrifice in worship. The sections of the liturgy quoted in the following pages are taken from A Liturgy: or Order of Christian Worship (Provisional Liturgy) Philadelphia, 1859, pp. 190 ff. The "Amens" are said by the congregation.

48. For a thorough study of the sources of the Communion liturgies in the German Reformed Church see: Bard Thompson, "Reformed Liturgies," (unpublished B.D. thesis) Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1949; Wilbur W. Moyer "Sources of the Text of the Liturgy of the Reformed Church," (unpublished B.D. thesis) Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy, Pa., 1936; Robert D. Morrison, "The Influence of the Eucharistic Service in the Liturgy of the Catholic Apostolic Church upon the Communion Service in the 'Order of Worship' of the Reformed

The petition requesting that "Thy redeemed people [may approach God with an] undefiled conscience, in full assurance of faith. ..." is added by Schaff so that the communicant may be enabled to present a more "acceptable sacrifice in righteousness" through the offering of his worship. This prayer does not appear in the original Schaff draft but was composed by him at a later date.

The minister proceeds to read in whole or in part any or all of the following scriptural passages: Isa. 53: 4-7; Jn. 1: 29-34; 3: 14-17; 15: 4,5; 6: 51-58; I Jn. 1: 5-9; 4: 9, 10. These biblical readings (taken mostly from the writings of John, Schaff's favorite New Testament author) stress the significance of Christ's incarnation and atonement and declare the wondrous love of God in sending His Son. Reading from the Scriptures during the distribution of the elements was a common custom in the continental Reformed rites. But Schaff placed the scriptural passages at the beginning of the service as a sort of biblical introduction to the Lord's Supper. Certainly this was in keeping with the Baltimore Resolutions which directed that the liturgy should be biblical. Moreover, the psychological effect of being directly confronted by God's Word early in the service occasions feelings of thanksgiving and praise in the communicant which remain throughout the entire Eucharist.

Although it is suggested that the Gloria in Excelsis be sung after the Scriptural Sentences, the committee left it to the discretion of individual ministers to decide which praise response they would use. The practice of having a brief sermon or homily, or a reading from the history of Christ's passion was a feature retained from the Palatinate Liturgy. However, the inclusion of the Nicene Creed and the suggestion that the Athanasian Creed be said on the last Communion of the Church year, represented innovations in the

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Church," (unpublished B.D. thesis) The Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa., 1945. See also Thompson's typewritten annotations inserted in a copy of the Provisional Liturgy in the library of The Theological Seminary, Lancaster.

German Reformed Church. Dr. Schaff regarded the Nicene Creed as a truly ecumenical confession, since it embodied the faith of the Eastern Church, and, with the addition of the "Filioque" clause, was said in the Western Church, beginning about the sixth century and remained a part of the Roman, Anglican and Lutheran liturgies. For Schaff the Athanasian Creed represented an historical advance beyond the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds in specifically stating the absolute unity of God's essence and the tri-personality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in opposition to both Sabellianism and Tritheism. Furthermore, the Athanasian Creed contains a succinct statement of the nature of Christ's person which, Schaff felt, strengthened and supplemented the orthodox affirmations of earlier creeds. Even so, Schaff had some doubts about the propriety of using the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed in Christian worship. <sup>49</sup>

The Offering technically belongs to the Liturgy of the Upper Room, but it may be regarded as the transitional bridge to the second part of the service. With the placing of the collection on the altar, in token of its proper meaning as an oblation to God, the minister uncovers the vessels containing the bread and the wine and proceeds to deliver the Exhortation to the Communicants.

#### The Liturgy of the Upper Room

##### Exhortation

"DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD: Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, when He was about to finish the work of our redemption by making Himself a sacrifice for our sins upon the cross, solemnly instituted the Holy Sacrament of His own Body and Blood; that it might be the abiding memorial of His precious death; the seal of His perpetual presence in the Church by the Holy Ghost; the mystical exhibition of His one offering of Himself made once, but of force always, to put away sin; the pledge of His undying love to His people; and the bond of His living union and fellowship with them to the end of time. From all this we may understand how great and glorious the Sacrament is, and with what just reason it hath ever

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49. See Creeds of Christendom, I, op. cit., pp. 24-29.

been regarded in the Church as that act of worship, in which men are brought most near to God, and, as it were, into the innermost sanctuary of His presence, the holiest of all where more than in any other service it is fit that their adoration should be joined with sacred reverence and awe. We have to do here, in a mystery, not with the shadows and types of heavenly things but with the very realities themselves of that true spiritual world in which Christ, now risen from the dead, continually lives and reigns. See then, ... that ye be properly clothed for the occasion with the spirit of humility, self recollection, penitence and prayer. Examine yourselves; whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Renew inwardly your baptismal engagements and vows. Renounce all sin both in your lives and in your hearts. Be in perfect charity with all men. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Present yourselves on the altar of the Gospel in union with His glorious merits, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood even the forgiveness of sins. And now that we may be able so to compass God's holy altar with righteousness and joy, let us first ... make humble confession of our sins. ..."

Confession of Sins (all kneeling.)

"Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who dost admit Thy people into such wonderful communion, that partaking by a divine mystery of the Body and Blood of Thy dear Son, they should dwell with Him, and He with them: we unworthy sinners ... do abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes. We have sinned ... against Thee, in thought, in word and in deed, provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us. Our righteousness are as filthy rags; our iniquities, like the wind, have carried us away. The remembrance of our transgressions and shortcomings fills us with sorrow and shame. Yet now, O most merciful Father, have mercy upon us; for the sake of Jesus Christ, forgive us all our sins; purify us, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, from all uncleanness in spirit and in flesh; enable us heartily to forgive others, as we beseech Thee to forgive us; and grant that we may hereafter serve Thee in newness of life; to the glory of Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (minister rising) Ephesians 1: 17-23.

In the Exhortation Schaff's high conception of the nature of the Sacrament is clearly stated. We have already noticed his emphasis on the presence of Christ in the universal Church based on the scriptural text in Matthew 28: 20. However, here he affirms that the Holy Communion itself is "the seal of His perpetual presence in the Church and ... the bond of His living union and fellow-

ship with his people to the end of time." These and several other phrases are derived from Lutheran sources and are contained in the Prussian Agenda of 1823, but Schaff rearranged them to suit his own purposes. <sup>50</sup>

In calling the communicants to Confession, Schaff seems to have been dependent on both the Book of Common Prayer and the Irvingite Liturgy. The phrase, "Be in perfect charity with all men," is found in the Exhortation in the first of these orders, which begins, "Ye who mind to come, etc." There are other allusions to the Invocation in the Anglican rite including the scriptural reference to "Christ, our Passover" but the latter phrase is more predominant in the Irvingite Liturgy.

The Confession of Sin itself is identical with that in the Catholic Apostolic Liturgy except that Schaff has eliminated the words, "We have broken our past vows, we have dishonored Thy Holy Name and profaned Thy Holy sanctuary," and has inserted instead a quotation from Isaiah 64: 6 ("Our righteousness are as filthy rags, etc.") Schaff also has added, "The remembrance of our transgressions and shortcomings fills us with sorrow and shame," which may be based on a sentence in the General Confession of the Book of Common Prayer acknowledging "sorrow for these our misdoings, the remembrance of them is grievous unto us."

The Assurance of Pardon in the Provisional Liturgy reads more like a prayerful ascription of praise than like a formal declaration of forgiveness. The theme of the six verses quoted from Ephesians is not so much concerned with what God has done for man, but rather with what God has done for Christ, i.e. by His death and resurrection, Jesus is not only the supreme head of the Church, but the exalted Lord of the universe as well. Moreover, at hearing the declaration of the good news of salvation, it is not only the individual Christian who

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50. According to Thompson, Schaff follows this same Prussian Agenda in composing the "Preparatory Service" in the Provisional Liturgy of which he is also the author. See Thompson's annotations in the Provisional Liturgy, in the library of the Theological Seminary, Lancaster, p. 193.

rejoices, but the whole Church, the organic composite of believers in all ages. By including this Ephesians passage in the context of an Assurance of Pardon, Schaff evidently intends to direct the thanksgiving and praise of the communicant toward the Person of the Living, Ruling and Glorious Christ, rather than toward the specific act He accomplished on the cross. <sup>51</sup>

The Eucharistic Prayer (minister and congregation rising.)

(Sursum Corda) "The Lord be with you.  
 R. And with thy spirit.  
 Lift up your ears.  
 R. We lift them up unto the Lord.  
 Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.  
 R. It is meet and right so to do."

"It is meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or even Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Thou didst in the beginning create all things for Thyself. ...

Thou also at the first didst make man in Thine own image, and after Thine own likeness. ...

For all Thy mercies and favors, known to us and unknown, we give Thee thanks. But most of all, we praise Thee, the Father everlasting, for the gift of Thine adorable, true, and only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by His appearing hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. We bless Thee for His holy incarnation; for His life on earth; for His precious suffering and death upon the cross; for His resurrection from the dead; and His glorious ascension to Thy right hand. We bless Thee for the giving of the Holy Ghost; for the institution of the Church; for the means of grace; for the hope of everlasting life; and for the glory which shall be brought unto us at the coming, and in the kingdom of Thy dear Son.

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51. The Communion service in the Order of Worship for the Reformed Church, Philadelphia, 1866, uses the form of absolution which appears in the Provisional Liturgy for the Lord's Day service where the minister says: "... I announce and declare by the authority and in the name of Christ, as His minister, that your sins are forgiven. ..." Although the minister is not forgiving the sins of the believer or in any way interceding on his behalf but simply announcing the New Testament promise of forgiveness, the anti-Mercersburg men charged that the language employed sounded suspiciously Roman Catholic. However, the Assurance of Pardon in the Lord's Day service of the Provisional Liturgy was placed in the Communion service of the Order of Worship, 1866, and is presently allowed in the Evangelical and Reformed Book of Worship. See Appendix A.

Thee mighty God, heavenly King, we magnify and praise. With patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs; with the holy Church throughout all the world; with the joyful assembly and congregation of the first-born on high; with the innumerable company of angels round about Thy throne, the heaven of heavens, and all the powers therein; we worship and adore Thy glorious name, joining in the song of the Cherubim and Seraphim, and with united voice saying:

(Here the pastor and congregation join in singing the Seraphic Hymn.)

'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory. Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!'"

(The pastor then proceeds to recite the Words of Institution.)

"OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED [here he shall take some bread into his hands]. TOOK BREAD; AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BRAKE IT [here he shall break the bread], AND SAID, TAKE EAT, THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU; THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. AFTER THE SAME MANNER ALSO [here he shall take the cup into his hands], HE TOOK THE CUP, WHEN HE HAD SUPPED, SAYING, THIS CUP IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MY BLOOD; THIS DO YE AS OFTEN AS YE DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

"Let us pray."

(Epiclesis) "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, send down, we beseech Thee, the powerful benediction of Thy Holy Spirit upon these elements of bread and wine, that being set apart now from a common to a sacred and mystical use, they may exhibit and represent to us with true effect the Body and Blood of Thy Son, Jesus Christ; so that in the use of them we may be made, through the power of the Holy Ghost, to partake really and truly of His blessed life, whereby only we can be saved from death, and raised to immortality at the last day. Amen.

(Oblation) And be pleased now, O most merciful Father, graciously to receive at our hands this memorial of the blessed sacrifice of Thy Son, which we ... thus bring before Thy divine Majesty, ... showing forth His passion and death; rejoicing in His glorious resurrection and ascension; and waiting for the blessed hope of His appearing and coming again. We are not worthy in ourselves to offer unto Thee any worship or service. ... We bring unto Thee, ... the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, ... in whom Thou hast declared Thyself to be well pleased, and through the offering of whose body once for all, full satisfaction has been made for the sins of the world. Have respect unto this glorious sacrifice, ... in union with which we here offer and present unto Thee, ... the reasonable sacrifice of our own persons; consecrating ourselves, on the altar of the gospel, in soul and body, property and life, to Thy most blessed service and praise. Look upon us through the mediation of our great High Priest. Make us accepted in the Beloved; and let His name be as a pure and holy incense, through which all our worship may come up before Thee, as the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. Amen.

The Prayers of Intercession (These are offered for the Church militant, the local church, the nation, favorable weather, the spread of the Gospel, the afflicted, the dying, and the communion of saints. We shall cite only the last prayer which appears below.)

"O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; we rejoice before Thee in the blessed communion of all Thy saints, wherein Thou givest us also to have part. We praise Thee for the holy fellowship of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and the whole glorious company of the redeemed of all ages, who have died in the Lord, and now live with Him for evermore. We give thanks unto Thee for Thy great grace and many gifts bestowed on those who have gone before us in the way of salvation, and by whom we are compassed about, in our Christian course, as a cloud of witnesses looking down upon us from the heavenly world. Enable us to follow their faith, that we may enter at death into their joy; and so abide with them in rest and peace, till both they and we shall reach our common consumation of redemption and bliss in the glorious resurrection of the last day. Amen.

"Our Father, who art in heaven, etc."

At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, the minister pronounces the following Benediction and the Pax.

"Almighty God, the Father everlasting, from whom all blessing and power proceed, shed down upon you abundantly the riches of His heavenly grace.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of His body the Church, ... send forth His light and His truth, and guide you in the way of eternal salvation.

The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, come down upon you in His glory, and take up His habitation in your hearts henceforth and forever. Amen.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Amen.

We have previously referred to the sources Schaff used in the composition of the Eucharistic Prayer, which, in its final form, is distinctly a work of his own creation. In regarding this great prayer as a structural unity, as one prayer of thanksgiving and consecration from the Sursum Corda through the Pax, Schaff believed he had returned to the rationale which prevailed in the primitive, Catholic Church. Moreover, it is the whole Church, militant and triumphant, which celebrates the Eucharist; the "holy Church throughout all the world" is united with the "joyful assembly and congregation of the first born on high" in ascribing thanksgiving and praise to "Him that cometh in the name of the Lord." But it is in his recognition that the whole Eucharistic Prayer is also a prayer of consecration that Schaff makes his original contribution to liturgical recovery within the Reformed Church. At this point, Schaff distinctly broke with the Roman Catholics and Puseyites of his day, as well as with the Lutherans and some of the Reformed churches, who held that the consecration

in the Eucharist took place when the celebrant recited the Words of Institution as a kind of formula. For Schaff the consecration in the Sacrament is effected by the Holy Ghost in response to the corporate petition of the Faithful, requesting that in receiving the bread and wine they "may be made to partake really and truly of His blessed life."<sup>52</sup> Man's part in the consecration is the whole Eucharistic Prayer which he offers to God at the throne of grace.

The epiclesis and oblation in the Provisional Liturgy also merit special attention.<sup>53</sup> Actually Schaff included the epiclesis as part of the oblation and placed it after the Words of Institution. Although the oblation contains phrases derived from the Irvingite and St. James liturgies, there is no significant borrowing, since, at this point, they both are patterned after the Roman rite. The Irvingite Liturgy, for example, commends to God the presentation by the Church of "... this reasonable and unbloody sacrifice which Thou hast instituted."<sup>54</sup> This language was too strong for Schaff, yet he recognized that sacrifice was an essential element of the Christian faith. He therefore was unwilling to skip the oblation merely because its meaning had been perverted by the Roman Church and because Zwingli, Calvin and Luther had been unable to harmonize it with the Evangelical faith. For Schaff the Eucharist in no way involved a repetition of the sacrifice on Calvary, but it did recall that great

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52. Evidently Schaff did not come to his conclusion regarding the structural unity of the Eucharistic Prayer without some real doubts. In the original draft he borrows terminology from the Roman Mass to designate the various parts of the service, e.g. he writes "The Consecration" opposite the Words of Institution and next to the epiclesis he has "oblation." Yet, in the Provisional Liturgy these labels are not used and it is evident the whole Eucharistic Prayer is the prayer of consecration. See Schaff Ms. #7, p. 7.

53. The original epiclesis in the Schaff draft is shorter and perhaps more succinct. It reads: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, send down we beseech Thee, thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these elements which we now offer unto Thee, and so bless and sanctify them that we Thy servants may be nourished by the sacred Body and Blood of Thy Christ unto life everlasting." Ibid.

54. Catholic Apostolic Liturgy, London, 1880, p. 8.

event to our minds. Thus the Church offers her oblation in the petition, asking God "graciously to receive at our hands this memorial of the blessed sacrifice of Thy Son." Commenting on Schaff's understanding of the oblation, Scott F. Brenner writes, "We present to our heavenly Father the memorial of Christ and His Cross, His Resurrection, His Ascension, His coming again in glory, and we add to this memorial oblation the poor sacrifice of our own lives." 55

It should also be noticed that the oblation and the epiclesis assume the presence of Christ throughout the entire sacramental transaction. Therefore, in the oblation we do not offer God the Body and Blood of Christ localized upon the altar; rather we present the memorial of His sacrifice on Calvary to which is added the reasonable sacrifice of our own persons. "Thus," writes Brenner, "in the oblation Schaff enters into the liturgical tradition of the Church in a creative manner. He retains the oblation as an integral element in the Eucharist and brings it into full accord with both the Catholic and Reformation traditions." 56

The prayers of Intercession which follow the oblation conclude the Eucharistic Prayer. They are closely patterned after those in the Catholic Apostolic Liturgy, yet Schaff has freely revised the source material and enriched it. Of special significance is his intercession for "the whole family in heaven and earth," the great prayer for the communion of saints. The eucharistic emphasis still predominates as the Church offers thanksgiving and praise "for the whole glorious company of the redeemed in all ages who have died in the Lord." The grandeur of this prayer is evident when we contrast just one sentence with its prototype in the Irvingite Liturgy where the author writes:

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55. Brenner, "Philip Schaff, the Liturgist," op. cit., p. 225.

56. Ibid., p. 226.

"And we pray Thee, that of Thy mercy Thou wilt keep them in rest and peace until our common perfecting in bliss in the day of the glorious resurrection." Amen. <sup>57</sup>

But Schaff took this same sentence and wove a new composition which is strikingly beautiful:

"Enable us to follow their faith, that we may enter at death into their joy; and so abide with them in rest and peace, till both they and we shall reach our common consummation of redemption and bliss in the glorious resurrection of the last day. Amen."

Again we see evidence of Schaff's historical perspective and his belief in the ultimate triumph of Christ. His choice of language in this prayer is such that the communicant feels the closeness of those "by whom we are compassed about." For Schaff God was truly "a God of the living and not of the dead."

The Benedictions following the Prayers of Intercession are taken almost verbatim from the Irvingite Liturgy except that in the third benediction Schaff has added: "The Holy Ghost come down upon you in His glory and take up His habitation in your hearts henceforth and forever." With the pronouncement of the Pax, the Holy Communion is given to the congregation.

The Holy Communion (The people come to the altar during the singing of a suitable hymn and after the minister has first received the Communion in both kinds, he administers the same to his assistants and then, with their help, to the people who stand in front of the altar. The bread is presented with the words: "The bread which we break is the Communion of the Body of Christ," and the cup with the words: "The cup of blessing which we bless is the Communion of the Blood of Christ." Or the minister may repeat the Words of Institution in full, adding afterwards any other suitable scriptural sentences. It is not necessary, however, for the minister to continue speaking all the time he is distributing the elements; "full silence at times may be better than words." See Provisional Liturgy, p. 201.)

The Dismissal (After each company of communicants has received the elements, the minister shall pronounce a benediction or say:)

"May the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, keep and preserve you, each one, in body, soul and spirit, unto everlasting life." Amen.

"Depart in peace."

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57. Catholic Apostolic Liturgy, op. cit., p. 11.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (When all have communed, the minister may offer a free prayer or the Post Communion Prayer printed in the Provisional Liturgy which is identical with that in the Book of Common Prayer.)

Hymn of Praise (The Te Deum Gloria in Excelsis, if not used previously, or part of Psalm 103 may be said or sung.)

Benediction

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen."

In concluding our discussion of the Communion service in the Provisional Liturgy it should be noted that the words addressed to the communicants when receiving the elements are derived from the Palatinate Liturgy. However, in his original draft, Schaff paraphrases the traditional words taken from the Narrative of Institution, i.e. "Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, broken for you; do this in remembrance of Him," and "Take and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for the remissions of sins, do this in remembrance of Him."<sup>58</sup> The committee apparently felt the Palatinate version would be more acceptable to the low church party within the denomination, although the latter form was allowed as a second choice.

The rubric pertaining to the Post Communion Prayer provided that the minister could offer either the "stated" prayer in the Provisional Liturgy or a "free" prayer of his own composition. It was hoped that this alternative would satisfy both parties in the German Reformed Church who shared different points of view on the subject of prayer. The service is concluded in the same manner as is done in the Catholic Apostolic Liturgy with the saying or singing of the Te Deum and the pronouncement of the same Benediction.<sup>59</sup>

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58. Schaff, Ms. #7, p. 8.

59. The Dismissal, Post Communion Prayer and Benediction also appear in the Book of Common Prayer. The similarity between much of the material in the Provisional Liturgy, the Revised Order of 1866, the present Book of Worship

## IV

From our study of the above order of Holy Communion it is apparent that Schaff's understanding of the Sacrament is organically related to his concept of the Church. He was not afraid to affirm the living presence of Christ either in the Church or in the Lord's Supper which was for him "the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship." Furthermore, though Schaff believed in the principle of historical development, he recognized that the Holy Catholic Church must forever remain true to the faith of her fathers, and thus he sought to re-instate the understanding of the Eucharist which prevailed in the Primitive Church. Perhaps Schaff's greatest gift was that of compilation; he possessed the ability to draw on the resources of other men from previous ages, and to mold their words and thoughts into a new and living composition. Without question, Schaff's Communion service must be regarded as a permanent legacy arising out of the Mercersburg movement and of fundamental importance in shaping the subsequent development of cultus within the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

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of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and that of the Book of Common Prayer was noticed even in Schaff's day, and it was assumed that the German Reformed Church was dependent on the Church of England for her liturgy. The Rev. Henry Harbaugh, the aesthetic leader of the Mercersburg movement and a member of the Liturgical Committee, sought to correct this false impression when he wrote: "The truth is, there is scarcely a responsible liturgy in existence that was less in the preparation of the new liturgy. That some of the forms in both books are similar, results from the fact that both are drawn from the common liturgical sources as they existed in the earlier church, and as they had been to some extent developed under an evangelical form in the Protestant Churches of the continent before the Reformation had its faintest dawn in England. These are facts: and others might here be presented which show that the English liturgy is far more indebted to Reformed liturgies of the continent than the present liturgy is to it. For every page that the new liturgy may be shown to contain matter from the Book of Common Prayer, that is original there, we will show more than one for which the compilers of that book were indebted to the liturgical labors of the Reformers on the continent." Quoted in Moyer, "Sources of the Text of the Liturgy of the Reformed Church," op. cit., p. 28.

As for the fate of the Provisional Liturgy it was destined to undergo further revision. Over against Schaff's conception of the new liturgy as an organic, scriptural, historical and artistic entity, centered in the Eucharist and uniting the best elements of the Catholic and Reformation traditions, there were those who felt that the liturgical committee merely should have re-edited the old Reformation liturgies and that free prayer should have received the exclusive sanction of the Church. At the Synod of 1861, however, two thirds of the classes reported favorably on the new liturgy, but the minority asked for revision. Therefore, the Synod instructed the old committee to resume its task, but difficulties arose since the members were not certain about the exact nature of the proposed revision.<sup>60</sup> As had happened previously in the debate on the church question, it was Nevin rather than Schaff who rose to vindicate the cause of the new liturgy. His pamphlet, The Liturgical Question, published early in 1862, vigorously defended both the liturgical principle and the Provisional Liturgy of 1857, and, as a result, the Synod of 1862 voted to continue its optional use until ten years from the time of publication.<sup>61</sup> However, in 1863, the General Synod of the Reformed Church met in Pittsburgh and decided that the revision should be completed by 1866.<sup>62</sup> The revised liturgy, entitled An Order of Worship for the Reformed Church, was presented on schedule to the Eastern Synod meeting at York. It retained the spirit and general character of

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60. Minutes of Synod, 1861, pp. 34-38; 77, 78; 84.

61. Minutes of Synod, 1862, pp. 58, 59; 62, 64, 96; Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., p. 104.

62. So far in this dissertation we have been referring to the Acts and Proceedings of the Eastern Synod. Those German Reformed churches west of the Allegheny mountains comprised the Synod of Ohio, or Western Synod, and generally were disinclined towards the Mercersburg movement. However, in 1863, the Eastern Synod and the Synod of Ohio united to form the General Synod of the German Reformed Church, which remained the highest governing body in the Church until the merger with the Evangelical Synod in 1934.

the Provisional Liturgy, and the content of the Communion service was scarcely touched, although the order of certain parts was changed. <sup>63</sup>

While Dr. Schaff agreed to the need for revising the Provisional Liturgy, his role in the formulation of the 1866 Order was very limited, in fact, after 1862 he took no further part in the official proceedings of the Liturgical committee but concentrated his efforts on preparing for the celebration of the Tercentenary celebration of the Heidelberg Catechism which was scheduled for January, 1863. <sup>64</sup>

Following a protracted discussion at the General Synod of Dayton, 1866, it was decided that the revised Order of Worship would be recognized as a proper liturgical manual for use in all German Reformed congregations but that the Western Synod would be authorized to continue working on the preparation of a liturgy for that part of the church. <sup>65</sup>

To carry our discussion of the liturgical movement beyond 1866 would over extend the scope of our study since in 1863 Dr. Schaff secured a two year leave of absence from the seminary and in 1865 he officially resigned his professorship. Thus he was not involved in the ensuing liturgical debate within the German Re-

63. The Communion service in the revised Order of 1866 begins with the Solemn Declaration but then the Call to Confession, General Confession, and Declaration of Pardon follow respectively. Schaff's Exhortation is eliminated; the Invocation and Scriptural Sentences which were included in the first part of the Provisional Liturgy follow the Offering in the revised edition. The rest of the service is identical with the 1857 Liturgy except that the Benedictions before the Pax are omitted.

64. Regarding the revision of the Provisional Liturgy Dr. Schaff wrote: "I have no right to speak for the Committee as to what course may be best. For my own part, I feel almost indifferent as to the result, leaving it altogether in the hands of that merciful Providence which has thus far guided the German Reformed Church in this country. I regret no time and labor bestowed upon the work, although I am free to confess, that I would never have consented to act as chairman, could I have foreseen the amount of trouble, anxiety, and vexation which it involved." See "The New Liturgy," op. cit., p. 227.

65. Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod, 1866, pp. 73-76.

formed Church.<sup>66</sup> It was not until 1878, however, that the liturgical question was finally settled when the General Synod appointed a Peace Commission to bring about harmony and unity on the basis of the principle that freedom of worship would be guaranteed to ministers and congregations. Therefore, in 1887, when the Directory of Worship was issued as the official liturgy of the Reformed Church in the United States, no attempt was made to force its use on any one group.<sup>67</sup> Even though the Directory eliminated many of the objectionable elements included in the revised Order of 1866, a large majority of congregations continued to worship according to the forms of the earlier production which preserved the spirit of the Mercersburg theology.

In analyzing the liturgical controversy it is correct to say that the points of difference between the Mercersburg school and the Old Reformed party were not mere incidents in worship, e.g. responses by the congregation, free or prescribed prayers, an altar or communion table, etc. These were of course significant but they were the details of two distinct conceptions of the Church. Indeed, Dr. Nevin went to the heart of the matter when he declared:

"The Liturgy represents one system of religious thought, and the opposition to it represents another; the two are constitutionally different and mentally repellent. Hence the controversy carried with it the spirit and the power of a true altar liturgy; and in this character it was felt to involve not simply a scheme of religious services, but a scheme also of religious thought and belief, materially at variance with the preconceived opinion in certain quarters; the sense of which then became instinctively, where such opinion prevailed, a feeling of antagonism for the whole work."<sup>68</sup>

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66. The "Index" of the Reformed Church Messenger (formerly The Weekly Messenger) reveals the following statistics about the number of articles printed on the liturgical movement: From 1842 to 1855, 14; from 1856 to 1871 (during the height of the controversy), 256, from 1872 to 1891, 6.

67. Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod, 1887, p. 149; Good, History, op. cit., pp. 581-586.

68. Nevin, A Vindication of the Revised Liturgy, op. cit., pp. 24, 25.

Yet, despite the deplorable animosities and suspicions which were awakened in the Church, the outcome was not without beneficent results. Writing in 1952, Dr. Richards, who filled the chair of Church history in the seminary where Philip Schaff once taught, was able to conclude:

"It was a creative rather than a destructive controversy; for on both sides there were men not only of sincere devotion to the cause of Christ but also of profound scholarship. Now that a century has elapsed since its beginning we are able to evaluate without prejudice the character of its leaders and to say that there were giants in those days." 69

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69. Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., p. 340.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### I

Dr. Schaff was essentially a practical churchman. Thus his concept of the Church cannot be appreciated apart from its relation to the various activities in which he was engaged while at Mercersburg. In fact Schaff's role in the Mercersburg movement is but the tangible expression of the essence of his concept of the Church.

If we were to designate the dominant emphasis in Schaff's ecclesiology it would be his insistence that the Church is organically one and catholic. Yet, because the Church is divided de facto, it is incumbent on clergymen and laymen to exercise a ministry of reconciliation by working to remove those obstacles which separate Christian people and churches. Christian union, Schaff felt, involved a surrendering of personal, national and denominational prejudices for the sake of the greater welfare of the Church universal; it necessitated a general confession of sins in which the various churches acknowledged their collective guilt in perpetuating division, and it called for mutual understanding, mediation and conciliation among the several branches of Christendom. On the other hand, Schaff wanted the peculiar genius and distinctive contributions of each denomination to be preserved in the re-united Catholic Church. For Schaff the great evil was not denominations, but denominationalism, i.e. the sectarian tendency of one group to laud its distinctive doctrine, polity or cultus over another so as to create exclusive attitudes which hindered Christian intercourse and the reciprocal exchange of ideas among Christian people.

Schaff, however, did not advocate denominational cooperation merely for the sake of establishing better inter-church relations; rather he hoped that each denomination thereby would learn from the other, that the Church would

undergo a transformation which would result in a higher synthesis, wherein there would be unity in the midst of diversity, oneness but not sameness, harmony and not discord.<sup>1</sup>

We may interpret Dr. Schaff's role in the Mercersburg movement in the light of his ecumenical concern and from the point of view of his understanding of the mission of the German Reformed Church in America, which was to take the lead in preparing the way for the United Evangelical Catholic Church. It should be observed, however, that Schaff envisioned this task as being the combined responsibility of the German churches in America and not solely of the German Reformed Church. Schaff, as we have already noted, believed that German theology had a significant contribution to make to American thought. While he did not wish the German churches to be swallowed up in the Anglican ocean, neither did he wish to impose German culture on Anglo-Saxon America, which he realized would be impossible anyway. Addressing the Schiller Society of Marshall College in 1846, Dr. Schaff said, "The American intellectual and religious culture should not be a mere monotonous repetition or slavish continuation of purely English, nor yet of purely German elements; but should become continually more and more Anglo-German. This is our vocation."<sup>2</sup>

In his Principle of Protestantism, Schaff had called attention to the differences between the English and German national character, the former being more realistic and empirical, the latter more idealistic and speculative; the Englishman more practical, the German more subjective, etc. Before the Schiller Society Schaff reiterated his belief that notwithstanding these and other differences,

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1. See P.S. "Denominationalism and Sectarianism" in The New York Independent, XLX, Nov. 2, 1893, New York, p. 1473.

2. P.S. Anglo-Germanism or the Significance of the German Nationality in the United States, Chambersburg, 1846, pp. 15, 16.

"...they may and should, on account of their common spiritual basis, again unite themselves in a higher form, and enrich each other with the observations and treasures they have severally acquired in their independent spheres of action. ... We must not, however, view the consummation of this union in such a light, that the peculiarities either of the German or English churches shall be destroyed and some one of the existing denominations made to swallow up all the rest. Rather every true branch of the Church of Christ, will furnish its contributions to this glorious result. All denominations ... will lay aside their obliquities and imperfections, and, thus purified, unite themselves into one organic whole."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, in order to attain this desired end, which for Schaff did not involve a surrendering of one's distinctive confessional character, it was necessary that the German churches in the United States (especially the Lutheran Church) come out of their traditional isolation, that they enter freely into relations with Anglo-American Christianity, and, even more important, that they first seek to recover the common spiritual heritage which they all share and then cooperate willingly with each other. Dr. Schaff readily accepted the challenge to spread the spirit of mediation among the German churches; to interpret the needs of the American German Church to the Mother Church in Europe and to lay the groundwork for Christian union in the land of his adoption.

Certainly no one was better qualified to undertake this mission than Prof. Schaff. In addition to his broad knowledge of Church history and symbolics, he possessed a personal acquaintance with the leading divines of the Evangelical, Lutheran and Reformed confessions in Germany. Unlike the Scotch-Irish Nevin, who had been raised in the Puritan tradition and was later "converted", so to speak, to German theology and his organic concept of the Church, Schaff had been nurtured in the bosom of the Conciliatory School of the mediating theologians and had been ordained in the German Evangelical Church. Moreover,

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3. Ibid., pp. 16, 20, 21.

Schaff understood the German mind and temperament better than Nevin; he was by nature more irenic and conciliatory. As the foremost protagonist of the Mercersburg theology, Nevin had to be partial to his own point of view. While both men believed in the organic oneness of the Church, it was Philip Schaff who took the initiative in establishing ecumenical relationships with other churches.

## II

Dr. Schaff always held the Lutheran Church in the highest esteem; he was confirmed in it and admired its intellectual achievements. In his Church History, Schaff referred to the Augsburg Confession (Variation) as "the most churchly, the most catholic, the most conservative creed of Protestantism."<sup>4</sup> Even though he recognized rationalistic tendencies within German Lutheranism and looked disparagingly upon the Formula of Concord, he nevertheless held, that despite real differences between the Reformed and Lutheran denominations, the two ought to be united.<sup>5</sup> "Schaff's ideal after coming to Mercersburg," writes the Lutheran historian Prof. H. E. Jacobs, "was the foundation of a German-American Church uniting the Reformed and Lutheran confessions."<sup>6</sup> He argued for this merger on the basis of a common historical consensus. He did not wish the doctrinal distinctions to be slighted but he trusted in Melancthonian Lutheranism. He also believed that since the two communions had been united in Germany, the same result might be accomplished in America. If German theology was ever to make an impact in the United States, he believed that it could best be done as the German

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4. P.S. Church History, VI, New York, 2nd ed., revised, 1895, p. 708.

5. P.S. Germany, op. cit., p. 168.

6. Henry E. Jacobs, "Dr. Schaff and the Lutheran Church" in Papers of the American Society of Church History, VI, New York, 1894, pp. 13ff.

churches approached the task together.

Schaff was disappointed that organic union was never consummated despite overtures for merger from both denominations. It is somewhat ironic that the chief opposition to organic union came from Schaff's boyhood and close friend, Dr. Wilhelm Mann. While the two men maintained their friendship and kept up a continual correspondence until Schaff's death in 1893, as the years went on their respective theological positions drifted further apart. Mann favored the return to a strict Lutheran confessionalism;<sup>7</sup> he objected to the Mercersburg theology because it seemed "too Romanistic". A foe of Puritanism, Mann was equally opposed to the Evangelical Alliance which he regarded as a form of "religious socialism, the Diana of the times."<sup>8</sup> Writing to Dr. Schaff on January 20, 1852, Mann said:

"...I read reports of the Evangelical Alliance at Geneva. My impression was not as favorable as yours. ... What good will such a learned exposition of the rights of individualism, etc. do us in the question between Church and Sects? And then I feel as if some elements of the "mutual adoration society" were in it. It is speechifying but no field for action. Of course the good intentions I don't doubt."<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, according to Mann, Christianity was doctrine and not life.

Organic merger with the German Reformed Church, he thought, would involve disloyalty to the faith of his Lutheran forefathers. "Ich kann nicht," Mann wrote,

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7. It is ironical that the trend toward Lutheran confessionalism was considerably affected by Schaff's writings. Dr. Mann felt, that as an historian, Schaff, whom he called "the presiding genius of international theology", had no peer, Prof. Jacobs also observes, "In the powerful reaction that came in the Lutheran Church in America, leading back to its historic foundations, his [Schaff's] influence must be regarded as a very important factor. There is not a Lutheran scholar who uses the English language who does not owe to Dr. Schaff an inestimable debt." See *Ibid.*, p. 13.

8. See Adolph D. Späth, *Wilhelm Julius Mann, Erinnerungsbilder*, op. cit., p. 76.

9. Letter from Dr. Mann to P.S. quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 76.

"ein Lutheraner und zugleich auch ein Zwinglianer sein."<sup>10</sup> Shortly before his death Schaff raised the following question in a letter to Mann. "What right had the sixteenth and seventeenth century to prescribe to future generations all theological thinking? We are as near to Christ and the Bible as the framers of the confessions of faith." Dr. Mann replied as follows: "In der Luft, die dieser Brief atmet, kann ich nicht leben. ... What right had the framers of the American Constitution to lay down a basis for the administrative side of the life of this nation?"<sup>11</sup>

Notwithstanding these differences the two friends worked together during the Mercersburg period of Schaff's life and thereby brought the Lutheran and Reformed denominations into closer cooperation than at any previous time. In 1848 Schaff founded and for six years edited a monthly journal entitled Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund; between 1854 and 1859 (the year of its discontinuance) this periodical was edited by Dr. Mann. Der Kirchenfreund was the first theological publication of its kind in America, intended for German Christians of the New World and especially for theologians of all confessions. Schaff, as we have seen, lamented the lack of cultural as well as Church unity among German American Christians. In his first article Schaff expressed the purpose and editorial policy of the Kirchenfreund, namely, to provide a journal worthy of the German spirit, which would concentrate the theological strength of the German-American churches for common action. He stated that questions of current theology and the missionary enterprise would be discussed. Correspondence would be printed from all branches of the Church and news reports from the whole Christian world would appear in each issue. While Schaff indicated that the Kirchenfreund would be impartial toward all denominations, he emphasized that

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10. Ibid., p. 77, letter dated April 7, 1892.

11. Both letters quoted in Ibid., p. 78.

the editor would not hesitate to take a stand on important matters, especially those pertaining to the Church question in the German Reformed Church. <sup>12</sup>

Schaff worked hard on his Kirchenfreund. He not only secured the aid of Lutheran clergymen in the preparation of articles, but also contributions from pastors and teachers of the Evangelical Kirchenverein des Westens about which we have made previous reference. <sup>13</sup> Moreover, essays were submitted by a number of German divines, including Hengstenberg and Ebrard, thereby adding to the international reputation of the journal. Through its pages, Schaff labored to present an accurate picture of conditions in the German Church in the United States. He corrected many false rumors about American Christianity which had been widely circulated in Germany. <sup>14</sup> In addition, there were many columns devoted to historical, liturgical and hymnological questions; a number of German hymns and poems were translated into English. Der Kirchenfreund was a labor of love for Prof. Schaff who, at first, had to import the German print which he set by hand. <sup>15</sup>

The fame of this periodical spread beyond the German American community. In a letter to Schaff from President Leonard Woods of Bowdoin College in Maine we read:

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12. P.S. "Was Wir Wollen" in Der Kirchenfreund, I, Jan. 1848, pp. 1-6.

13. There is an interesting series of articles by the Rev. August Rauschenbush of the Kirchenverein on "Das deutsche Missionsfeld in Missouri" beginning with the Feb. 1848 issue, p. 40ff. August Rauschenbush was the father of the famed German Baptist professor and social reformer, Walter Rauschenbush.

14. The most notable rumor prevalent in Germany was Hengstenberg's report in the April 1849 issue of his Die Zeitschrift für die Unirte Evangelische Kirche that Krummacher had been offered a salary of \$20,000 to come to Mercersburg. Schaff refuted this fantastic exaggeration in "Ein offener Brief an Herrn Professor Dr. W. Hengstenberg zu Berlin" in Kirchenfreund, I, Oct. 1848, pp. 289-294.

15. Dr. Mann referred to this fact when he assumed editorial responsibility for the journal. See Der Kirchenfreund, VII, Jan. 1854, p. 1 ff.

"Allow me to express the pleasure with which I read in the Kirchenfreund your views on the church and the high sense I entertain, in connection with many others, of the salutary influence exerted by them upon a wide circle of thought in this country. I know of nothing which is operating more powerfully to restore the sound view of the church and sacraments than what is so well known as the Mercersburg publications. With reference to the good which might be done in our circle of ministers in this neighborhood, I have regretted that the Kirchenfreund had not been in English." <sup>16</sup>

Although the Kirchenfreund was read within the German Reformed Church, its influence upon the Mercersburg controversy was not as significant as one might have expected for two reasons. First; the German Reformed Church, differing from the Lutheran Church and Evangelische Kirchenverein preferred the use of English to German. As the Mercersburg controversy unfolded, Dr. Nevin found it necessary to urge Schaff to have several of his articles translated lest his writings remain in obscurity. Second: although the Kirchenfreund strove for fairness and understanding, there were some German Reformed leaders who accused Schaff of "Lutheranizing tendencies". The very fact Prof. Schaff was so closely associated with Dr. Mann was taken as evidence to support these accusations.

In 1863 Schaff established a second publication, the Evangelische Zeugnisse aus den Deutschen Kirchen in Amerika, "eine homiletische Monatsschrift" to which clergymen of all denominations were invited to submit sermons and other devotional material. The Zeugnisse was for all intents and purposes a journal of practical theology. Controversial articles pertaining to the Church question were kept to a minimum, but matters concerning church administration, pastoral work and Christian education were fully discussed. Dr. Schaff showed no reluctance to print his own "Meditationen" which reveal his deep Christian piety and ability as a

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16. P.S. in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 162. See also "Schaff Letters" Library of the Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.

preacher.<sup>17</sup> This periodical also abounds in sermon illustrations, religious poetry, book reviews and news reports from the Christian world. Although its circulation was limited and its life short, the Evangelische Zeugnisse is evidence of Dr. Schaff's personal interest in the problems of the parish ministry and his intention that Christian pastors might benefit from the insights of their colleagues in ministering to their congregations.<sup>18</sup>

Both of the periodicals we are discussing successfully contributed to the establishment of better relations among the German churches in America and lessened the sense of isolation which tended to separate them from one another and from the Mother Church in Europe. While originally Schaff had hoped that Mercersburg might become a prominent center of German culture and that his Kirchenfreund would be the voice of a distinctive school of German-American theology, when neither of these developments was forthcoming, Schaff urged the translation of German theological and literary works into English, to which he referred his students, colleagues, fellow ministers and other interested persons. It may be said with confidence that no one of his generation did more than Philip Schaff to acquaint America with German religious thought and literature.<sup>19</sup>

Yet Schaff was equally concerned to make known the needs and conditions of the German-American churches to the Mother Country, which he did through the

17. Schaff also included some "aphorism" e.g. "Wenn man lehrt, erfährt man, was man im Kopfe; und wenn man lebt, was man in Herzen hat." in Evang. Zeugnisse, II, Jan. 1864, p. 25.

18. Publication of the Evang. Zeugnisse ceased in Dec. 1864 and was not resumed for these reasons: (1) the Civil War, (2) lack of interest among German Protestants, (3) financial difficulties, and (4) Schaff's move from Mercersburg to New York City. His only other connection with religious journalism occurred between 1857 and 1861 when he served with E. V. Gerhart as co-editor of the Mercersburg Review.

19. In 1896 Dr. Henry M. Field declared: "No foreigner who has come to our shores, not even Agassiz, has rendered a greater service than he [Schaff] in establishing a sort of literary and intellectual free trade between the educated and religious mind of America, of Great Britain and of Germany." Quoted in Richards, Bul. Theol. Sem. XX, op. cit., p. 170. See also David Schaff, op. cit., pp. 159-164.

medium of letters, articles and lectures. During his 1854 European visit, Schaff addressed a distinguished coterie of clergymen, educators and statesmen in the Prussian capital. In two lectures he presented a miniature portrait of ecclesiastical life in the United States, including a brief history of the major denominations, the substance of which was later incorporated in his America: Die politischen socialen und kirchlichreligiösse Zustände der Vereinigten Staaten.<sup>20</sup> This work enhanced Dr. Schaff's continental reputation as the chief representative of German-American and distinctly American religious thought. If Amerika is compared with Schaff's ordination sermon at Elberfeld and certain sections of his Principle, one observes that, while he still laments the divided state of Protestantism in the United States, he is far less severe on sectarianism and Puritanism than he was in his earlier writings. Without minimizing the defects of American Christianity, Schaff nevertheless contended that in the Providence of God the grandest destiny lay ahead for the people in the United States. Europe, he believed, would continue to stand at the head of Christian civilization, ever producing new ideas and movements, which were bound to make themselves felt in America, but they would be perpetuated there in modified forms and rise again as powers of a new age in the history of the world and the Church. "Therefore," Schaff wrote, "have I called America, even in respect to religion and the church, the Phoenix-grave of Europe."<sup>21</sup>

While at Mercersburg Dr. Schaff corresponded with officials of the Bremen and Basel missionary societies regarding the welfare of emigrants. He urged the Synod to take a genuine interest in those newly arrived in America and in the Provisional Liturgy he included a special service for immigrants. Through

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20. Published in Berlin, 1854, translated into English by Edward D. Yeomans, America, A Sketch of its Political, Social and Religious Character, New York, 1855.

21. Ibid., (English edition) p. 125.

the cooperation of Dr. William Hoffman of the Basel Missionary Institute, Prof. Tholuck and others, Schaff was instrumental in the placement of pastors in German speaking American congregations.

In September 1854 he spoke before the German Church Diet, convening in Frankfurt, where he outlined the duties which he considered the German Evangelical Church owed to her emigrant children. Schaff suggested: (1) that Bibles be distributed to, and a farewell service be held for, emigrants prior to disembarkation; (2) that missionaries be stationed in Basel, Havre and Antwerp to take care of the spiritual needs of those preparing to emigrate; (3) that well qualified, faithful pastors be sent to America to minister to those who have recently emigrated; (4) that special training be provided for gifted young men who wish to serve the German Church in America; (5) that a voluntary collection be taken in all German churches for those emigrants most needful of financial assistance; (6) that the German Church Diet strive for closer relationships between the German Church and her American daughters. <sup>22</sup>

Prompted by these recommendations, Dr. Bethman Hollweg, acting on behalf of the German Evangelical Church Diet, sent a letter to the Synod of 1857 in which he offered the sum of \$2000 for the establishment of a theological tutorship at Mercersburg. A year later the Synod of Frederick accepted this gift and proceeded to outline the nature of the tutorship. According to the proposed plan, two qualified graduates of the literary and theological institutions of the German Reformed Church would be selected for the tutorship; the one would continue his theological education in Europe and the other would teach at the seminary. Upon the return of the first incumbent to America he would replace the second tutor on the faculty who would then commence his study abroad. In

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22. These recommendations are included in the full text of Schaff's address to the German Church Diet which is appended to the English edition of America. See Ibid., pp. 253-291 and especially, pp. 283-288.

order to support both a teaching and traveling tutorship an effort was made to solicit \$500 or more from twenty persons who expressed an interest in the project. In 1860 Dr. Schaff announced to the Synod that \$12,500 had been procured and he moved that the Board of Visitors make the first appointments to the tutorship. <sup>23</sup>

Prof. Schaff's activities on behalf of his denomination are part of the unsung story of his career at Mercersburg. Through his efforts the German Reformed Church was brought into closer contact with the Reformed churches in Europe than at any previous time. <sup>24</sup> Dr. Schaff enriched the libraries of both Franklin and Marshall College and Mercersburg Seminary by the purchase and donation of important books by authors and publishers in England and Germany. <sup>25</sup> The theological tutorship, whose inception came from Schaff's plea for closer relations between the German churches of two continents, served to increase the teaching force of the Mercersburg Seminary and also to raise the academic standards of the same institution. Yet, though he labored in the name of the German Reformed Church, he had the interest and concern of the universal Church at heart; he was, in a sense, a spokesman for the Church-at-large. Thus, for example, while abroad in 1854 he raised \$6,000 for the support of a theological professorship at the seminary of the Evangelical Kirchenverein in Marthasville, Missouri. <sup>26</sup>

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23. The plan of the tutorship was fully presented in the W.M., Nov. 17, 1858 and discussed by P.S. in the M.R. XI, Jan. 1859, pp. 23-28. In 1873 the Tutorship became a professorship of Hebrew and Old Testament. See Good, op. cit., p. 421; Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 319-320; Klein, Hist. of Eastern Synod, op. cit., pp. 241-243.

24. David S. Schaff in The Life and Work of Philip Schaff, op. cit., p. 159.

25. Among Schaff's literary purchases during his 1854 European trip were 200 volumes including the complete works of Augustine, Anselm, Zwingli, and Melancton; a number of German and English exegetical and historical works, and some publications by Wilberforce on the Incarnation, Baptism and the Eucharist. In 1863 Dr. Schaff donated over 700 volumes to the seminary from his own library. See Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 427ff.

26. See Schaff's report on his European visit of 1854 in Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1855, pp. 37-39; 94-97.

Three years later his book Germany, its Universities, Theology and Religion was published, in which he conscientiously sought to interpret German life and thought to the English speaking world in the same way he had reversed the procedure in his earlier work Amerika. In 1854 Dr. Barht said to him in Basel, "You are a bridge builder." To which Dr. Schaff added, "If I understand myself, God has assigned to me the mission of a mediator between German and Anglo-American theology and Christianity. I hope I have contributed something towards the mutual understanding and appreciation of European and American divines and the great cause of Christian union." <sup>27</sup>

### III

One of Prof. Schaff's most significant contributions to German church life in America was the publication of a German hymnbook in 1859. When Schaff arrived at Mercersburg the hymnological state of the German churches was in a sad condition. <sup>28</sup> In the German Reformed Church there was no uniformity in the use of hymnals. The two publications authorized by Synod, Das Neue Verbesserte Gesangbuch, 1797, and Eine Sammlung Evangelischer Lieder, 1842, lacked many of the finest German chorales including "Wachet auf! ruft uns die Stimme" and "Nun Danket Alle Gott", the German Te Deum. In 1856 the Synod instructed the Liturgical committee to prepare in one volume a hymnal which would accompany the Provisional Liturgy and would serve the devotional needs of English as well as German speaking congregations. The task of compiling the hymnbook, however, fell entirely upon Dr. Schaff, who also had to assume the cost of its publication. <sup>29</sup>

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27. P.S. in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 499.

28. The hymnal Evangelische Liedersammlung authorized by the Lutheran Synod of 1853 did not contain one of Luther's hymns, not even "Ein feste Burg".

29. See Klein, History of Eastern Synod, op. cit., p. 232. As previously noted a collection of hymns in English was appended to the Provisional Liturgy, but no English hymnal was published at the time.

Schaff's thoughts on hymnology further reflect the practical implications of his concept of the Church. "The hymn," he wrote, is "one of the most powerful means for promoting the unity of the faith and communion of saints. In the general chorus the voice of the individual is lost, only to be borne heavenward on the wings of common devotion." <sup>30</sup> For Schaff the hymn is to the Church what the Volkslied is to the nation. The best spiritual songs, he claimed, contain nothing dogmatically exclusive; the Evangelical Church forgets her internal strifes when she sings the great hymns of the Church, even the antagonism between Roman Catholics and Protestants is lessened when Christian people unite in the Gloria in Excelsis, Magnificat, etc. Furthermore, the hymn unites the contemporary Church with the communion of saints in all ages. By arming Christians for conflict and victory, Schaff stated, songs are the true benefactors of the faithful from generation to generation. "Hence, next to the Sacred Scriptures, at least for the German nation," Schaff declared, "... no religious aid is more indispensable in church, school and family than a book of hymns, which are not only heard and read, but also prayed and sung [thereby carrying] their awakening, sanctifying and consoling power into the daily affairs of men." <sup>31</sup>

Of all the contributions German Protestantism has made to the devotional life of the Church universal, Schaff regarded its hymnological treasures to be by far the richest. He therefore urged the German Reformed Church to recover the poetic and religious endowments of the German nation which best expressed the inward power of the evangelical faith.

In his Liturgical Committee report which was adopted by the Synod of Allentown in 1857, Dr. Schaff outlined the principles upon which the new German

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30. P.S. "Introduction to the 'Deutsches Gesangbuch'" in M.R., XII, April 1860, pp. 230, 231.

31. Ibid., p. 231.

hymnal was to be constructed. The substance of this report recommended the following: (1) That only classical hymns derived from all ages and divisions of the Church would be included in the hymnal. Of course special consideration would be given the hymnody of the German Evangelical Church (particularly of the Reformed branch, including choice psalms in meter) but successful translations of old Latin and new English hymns also would be incorporated in the book. (2) That by a "classical church hymn" the committee meant one which was "purely biblical", "churchly" and "edifying", reflecting "purity, depth and fervor of feeling." The devotional and poetic quality of a hymn would be a prime factor in determining the matter of its selection. On the other hand, hymns of a "dry, doctrinal tone" or of a "sickly sentimental" nature would be excluded regardless of the authority they claimed, either because of authorship or of long usage. (3) That the original text would be followed as closely as possible. (4) That the hymns would be arranged in such a manner as to blend the order of the Apostles' Creed with the Church year, thereby objectively presenting the course of the Christian revelation and God's plan of salvation, from the creation of the world to the resurrection of the body and eternal life. Within each section the hymns would be placed in a chronological sequence which would witness to the Christian life in song as manifest by its development from the time of ancient Israel (Psalms) through the Old Catholic and Reformation periods to the present.<sup>32</sup> Here again we see Schaff's historical concern and his intention to give a sort of a bird's eye view of the essential unity and

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32. P.S. "Report of the Liturgical Committee on the German Hymnal" in Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of 1857, pp. 77-79. It was common practice in most English hymnbooks of the time to classify hymns according to subject, e.g. "On Religion", "On the Ten Commandments", "Think on the End", "On Contentment with our Condition", etc. Needless to say, Schaff did not approve of such an arrangement.

diversity of the faith and worship of God's people in all ages. <sup>33</sup>

Schaff's Deutsches Gesangbuch, first published in 1859, was a text edition of 500 hymns without tunes. The edition adhered closely to the recommendations agreed upon at the Synod of 1857. Many of his hymn selections were taken from the hymnals of the united Evangelical Church in Germany, especially the Eisenacher Gesangbuch of 1854; K. Rambach's Anthologie Christlicher Gesänge 1817-1822, (4 vols.); and Bunsen's Versuch eines allgem. evangel. Gesang und Gebetsbuch (1853, 934 hymns). In addition to a number of German chorales, Schaff also included modern hymns by Reformed writers in Germany, namely, J. P. Lange, the two Krummachers, Tersteegen, Schweizer, Meta Heuser, et al, whose religious verse heretofore had been unknown to American Germans. <sup>34</sup> Moreover, Schaff's Gesangbuch contained good translations from the English of hymns by Watts, Wesley, Cowper and Newton, among others, whose selection enhanced the catholic character of the collection. For the larger edition of 1860, Schaff prepared a brief accurate account of the origin of the hymns and an excellent hymnological introduction, in which he commended his Gesangbuch to the public in the hope that it might rank on a par with the best hymnals in the English language.

It did. The great German authority, Eduard Emil Koch, regarded Das Deutsches Gesangbuch as one of the best and most acceptable of all German hymnals. <sup>35</sup> Re-

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33. Although Schaff expressed an interest in hymnody, he did not claim to be a musician. In a letter to Dr. Lewis H. Steiner, dated Jan. 20, 1860, Schaff confessed, "I used to play the piano and the flute, but have hardly ever practiced since I left Europe", quoted by Bernard C. Steiner in The College Student, XX, pub. by the Goethean and Diognothian Societies of Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 1900, p. 152.

34. Schaff also prepared three translations of his own: (1) "An dem Tag der Zornesflammen" from the Latin "Dies irae, dies illa."; (2) "Schweige bange Trauerklage" from the Latin "Iam moesta quiesce querela" by Prudentius; (3) "Gebet ist unseres tiefstes Sehnen" from James Montgomery's "Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire".

35. See Armin Haeussler, "The Hymnody of the Evangelical and Reformed Church" in The Story of our Hymns, St. Louis, 1952, p. 27.

views on both sides of the Atlantic praised the Schaff hymnal as a model of its kind, revealing a clear, simple, artistic quality in accord with sound taste and fervid piety.<sup>36</sup> The Rev. Joseph Berg, D.D., who earlier had opposed the Principle of Protestantism wrote concerning the Gesangbuch, "We are persuaded that no one is better prepared than Dr. Schaff to furnish a German Hymn-Book that shall comprise the best productions of sanctified genius in all ages of the Church; and this really excellent volume is a proof of the learning and zeal which he has brought to bear in the compilation."<sup>37</sup> In 1859 the Synod voted to adopt Prof. Schaff's work as the standard hymnbook of the Church and authorized its use in all services of public worship where German was spoken.<sup>38</sup>

The influence of Schaff's hymnbook was not confined to the limits of his denomination. In 1862 the Evangelical Kirchenverein published Das Evangelisches Gesangbuch, a collection of five hundred thirty-five hymns set to melodies and based on the selection, order and revised texts of Schaff's book from which 366 hymns were taken. The dependence of the former on the latter is frankly admitted in the preface to the Kirchenverein hymnal of 1862 which states:

"... Above all we must acknowledge our indebtedness to a work which appeared in our country only three years ago, namely, the German hymnal of Dr. Philip Schaff, Philadelphia, 1859. This excellent work, based on a wide-spread and thorough study

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36. However, an anonymous rationalistic reviewer in Cincinnati wrote, "Das ist wieder der alte orthodoxe Kohl aufgewarmt." See David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 208.

37. Quoted from The Evangelical Quarterly, (Dutch Reformed) I, April, 1860, in Das Deutsches Gesangbuch, (1860 edition), p. 8.

38. Klein, History of Eastern Synod, "Minutes for 1859", op. cit., p. 241. The Synod was at first reluctant to do so because of the expense incurred by the publication of the Provisional Liturgy. Thus Schaff had the hymnal published by Schaefer and Koradi of Philadelphia at his own expense. In 1860, however, the large edition of the Deutsches Gesangbuch was published for the German Reformed Church by Lindsay and Blakiston. In 1876 the book became the property of the General Synod. Haeussler notes that an English translation of the 1859 edition was found in the manuscripts of a Boston physician, Dr. Samuel Reynolds, parts of which were included in the appendix of the English version of Spitta's Harfe. See The Story of Our Hymns, op. cit., p. 27.

of the hymnological problem was indispensable [to our task].  
Our book is greatly indebted to the work of Dr. Philip  
Schaff." 39

"Hymns," Prof. Schaff wrote, "like the Bible, are not sectarian but truly Christian and catholic. They belong to the whole Church." 40 In preparing the way for the eventual merger of the Evangelical Synod with the German Reformed Church, Dr. Schaff's Deutsches Gesangbuch must be regarded as an important work which foreshadowed a day which was yet to come. 41

#### IV

The Tercentenary Celebration of the formulation and adoption of the Heidelberg Catechism, held in Philadelphia, January 17-23, 1863, marked a high spot in the history of the German Reformed Church in America during the nineteenth century. It also marked the last major service Dr. Schaff rendered to his denomination before resigning his professorship at Mercersburg. Although the Rev. Henry Harbaugh is credited with having first intimated in 1857 that the three hundredth anniversary of the Catechism should be honored, 42 it was Philip Schaff who took the initiative in promoting the celebration. At Mercersburg Classis two years later he proposed; (1) That Synod take preparatory steps for the third Centennial celebration of the Heidelberg Catechism; (2) That Synod order the preparation of a new edition of the catechism in the original German and

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39. "Preface to the Kirchenverein Hymnal of 1862" tr. by R.H. Pantermuehl in Schneider's The German Church on the American Frontier, op. cit., p. 501.

40. P.S. Theological Propedeutic, op. cit., p. 511.

41. Dr. Schaff's only other hymnological endeavors included the publication of Das Gesangbuch für Deutsche Sonntagsschulen, Philadelphia and New York, 1864; a collection of Christian lyrics for private devotions entitled "Christ in Song" first published in New York in 1868; and an article on "German Hymnology" in Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology, New York, 1892, pp. 412-418.

42. See Harbaugh's Lives of the Fathers, I, Lancaster, p. 231.

Latin together with a revised English translation and an historical introduction; (3) That a complete digest of the Synodical minutes from 1746 to the present be compiled for the occasion.<sup>43</sup> These resolutions were referred to the Synod of Harrisburg in 1859 and adopted. Special committees were then appointed to act accordingly on the resolutions.<sup>44</sup>

The history of the entire celebration is told in a volume of 517 pages, entitled the Tercentenary Monument, which contains a record of each day's happenings and all the addresses and essays read at the convention.<sup>45</sup> To commemorate the event, Schaff issued his own German edition of the Heidelberg Catechism and edited a German volume of the proceedings which included an elaborate historical introduction to the Catechism.<sup>46</sup> He also corresponded with eminent European divines requesting them to submit critical essays on the Catechism and the German Reformed Church. The following foreign contributions were read at the Centennial:

1. "Melancthon and the Melancthonian Tendency in Germany, and its Relation to the Reformed Church" by Dr. Ebrard.
2. "Sketches from the History of the Heidelberg Catechism in the Land of its Birth" by Dr. C. Ullman.

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43. Minutes of the Mercersburg Classis, 1859, pp. 611, 612.

44. Klein, Hist. of Eastern Synod, op. cit., p. 240. The Tercentenary publication of the Catechism never received the official sanction of the Synod, since it was based on the third edition of the work and with Dr. Schaff's discovery in 1864 of the first edition at Bremen, the value of the Tercentenary edition was somewhat diminished. Likewise, the committee on the digest of the Synodical minutes never completed its work since the earlier minutes were unknown until 1896 when Prof. Good discovered them in Holland. See Good, History, op. cit., pp. 404-406.

45. Tercentenary Monument, Henry Harbaugh, ed., Chambersburg, Pa., 1863.

46. Der Heidelberger Katechismus, Philadelphia, 1863, revised in 1866 according to the first edition of 1563; Gedenkbuch der dreihundertjahrigen Jubelfeier des Heidelberger Katechismus in der Deutsche-Reformirten Kirche der Vereinigten Staaten, Chambersburg, Pa., 1863. This volume differs from the Tercentenary Monument only with respect to the arrangement of the articles and the addition of Schaff's "Allgemeine Historisch-Theologische Einleitung zum Heid. Kate.", which does not appear in the English edition.

3. "The Swiss Reformers" by Dr. Herzog.
4. "The City and University of Heidelberg" (with special reference to the period of the Reformation and the time when the Heidelberg Catechism was written) by Dr. C. B. Hundeshagen.
5. "A Brief History of the Heidelberg Catechism in the Netherlands" by G. D. J. Schotel.

In addition to the above, thirteen historical and theological papers were presented by American clergymen. The general consensus of all the essays pointed to the uniqueness of the Heidelberg Catechism in relation to Calvinism and Lutheranism and stressed the Melancthonian tendency in the German Reformed Church. In his class lectures on "Christian Symbolics", Dr. Schaff said concerning the Catechism:

" [It] is the work of admirable skill and of profound evangelical piety. It is deep, clear, full and simple, and pervaded throughout by fresh religious enthusiasm of the pentecostal days of Protestantism. It is the fairest and ripest product of the Melancthonian and German Reformed school of theology, occupying a medium ground between Lutheranism and Calvinism." <sup>47</sup>

Later, in his Creeds of Christendom, Schaff referred to the Heidelberg Catechism as the "most catholic and popular of all the Reformed symbols," <sup>48</sup> containing a modified Calvinism which incidently proposes the doctrine of election to holiness and salvation in Christ (questions 1, 31, 53, 54) but says nothing about double predestination or of an eternal decree of reprobation. Its major defect, Schaff felt, was caused by the extremely long answers to the questions which tended to hinder children in the process of memorization. Even so, this shortcoming was compensated for by the spirit of the Catechism which Schaff described as presenting Christianity "...not as a commanding law, not

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47. P.S. "An Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences of the Various Christian Denominations" (is handwritten Ms. of a course of lectures delivered at Mercersburg Seminary in 1855, 1857, 1860, 1862) in the Historical Archives of the Evang. and Ref. Church, Fackenthal Library, Lancaster, Pa., pp. 38, 39.

48. P.S. Creeds of Christendom, I, op. cit., p. 540.

as an intellectual system of outward observances, but as the best gift of God to man, as a source of peace and comfort in life and death." <sup>49</sup>

At the fourth session of the Tercentenary, Dr. Schaff made some impromptu remarks on "The Mission of the German Reformed Church in America and the Significance of this Meeting with reference to the Same." He referred to the celebration as a manifestation of Christian unity in which there was no desire to promote the private interest of one party within the denomination. <sup>50</sup> He felt that the essays of the German scholars witnessed to the same catholic spirit; they intended no unkind thrusts at Lutheranism, Calvinism, Methodism or any other form of Christianity but were cast in the Melanchthonian mold. <sup>51</sup>

In the main body of his brief address, Schaff stated the threefold mission of the German Reformed Church in relation to the Catechism. He pointed first to the fact that "The Heidelberg Catechism is peculiarly Christological. And so our theology starts not from any abstract doctrine or precept but from the living person of Christ." <sup>52</sup> Therefore, he continued, it was necessary for

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49. Ibid., p. 541. Schaff felt the major difference between the Heidelberg and Westminster Catechisms was one of nationality. A better catechism could not be made by blending the excellencies of both since they represent two types of piety. The former being more emotional and hearty, the latter more scholastic and intellectual. "The Heidelberg catechism asks: 'What is thy only comfort in life and in death?' the Westminster: 'What is the chief end of man?' The one goes at once to the heart of evangelical piety- the mystical union of the believer with Christ; the other goes back to the creation and the glory of God; but both teach the same God and Christ, and the same way of salvation, whereby God is glorified, and man raised to everlasting felicity in his enjoyment." Ibid., p. 545.

50. Good charges that the Tercentenary was an occasion for the glorification of the Mercersburg theology. "They may have done it unconsciously," he comments, "because they knew no other theology as Reformed, but they did it all the same." See History, op. cit., pp. 412, 413. Good never accepted the argument that the German Reformed Church was Melanchthonian and his History assumes an anti-Mercersburg tone throughout.

51. P.S. "The Mission of the German Reformed Church in America, and the Significance of this Meeting with reference to the Same" in Tercentenary Monument, op. cit., pp. xxxvi-xxxix.

52. Ibid., p. xxvii.

the German Reformed Church to place Christ before doctrines. Secondly, Schaff claimed, the Catechism "... presents Christianity as a system of life acting upon the whole man transforming him into the blessed image of Christ."<sup>53</sup> The German Reformed Church, therefore, is challenged by the Heidelberg Catechism to witness to the distinctive piety inherent in her symbol, which in turn should determine her unique role in the Church universal. Thirdly, Schaff contended, since the Heidelberg Catechism professes to rest on a true historical foundation and to be an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, German Reformed theology must be historical, mindful of the wisdom and piety of the past, yet not hostile toward other denominations. Furthermore, along with the historical element, the churchly, liturgical, mystical and contemplative elements of the German Reformed Church are to be emphasized. Schaff summarized by saying, "I feel as strongly convinced as ever, that the German Reformed Church has a special mission to accomplish, by virtue of the Christological and historical character of her thinking."<sup>54</sup>

This short address is pervaded with great feeling; its purpose is to exhort rather than to inform. In a sense, it is more homiletical than academic, at points it is almost devotional. Though lacking the theological depth and scholarship of his Principle of Protestantism and What is Church History?, Schaff's address nevertheless was in harmony with the concept of the Church he had expounded in his earlier writings, with the exception, perhaps, that in the Tercentenary address the Christological emphasis predominates over the churchly.

Dr. Schaff referred to the Tercentenary Convention as a practical expression of the unity of the Holy Catholic Church which united the Church of the centuries

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53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., p. xxviii.

with the Church of the present and the Mother Church in Germany with her daughter in America. Mindful of the theological dissension which had marred the unity of his own denomination, especially since his arrival at Mercersburg in 1844, Schaff admonished the delegates at the close of the Convention to, "... bury beneath this altar all our past animosities and controversies, and let us go forth as one body, one heart, and one soul, with renewed zeal and vigor, to do the work assigned us as individuals and as a Church in God's holy cause and service." 55

There is no doubt that the Tercentenary Convention brought new life to the German Reformed Church in America. While the theological differences which divided the denomination through the teachings of Nevin and Schaff were not settled, the debate, at least for a time, subsided and the Heidelberg Catechism was honored with one heart and mind. Moreover, the whole Church was deeply moved by the Convention; pastors read reports on the proceedings from their pulpits; large donations for the benevolent institutions of the Church were forthcoming; a free will offering for the Tercentenary was taken in all congregations, May 31, 1863, of which a part was to be applied to the endowment fund of Franklin and Marshall College. In addition it was proposed that a professorship be established at the seminary to honor the Tercentenary jubilee. The spirit of oneness and cooperation engendered by the Convention carried over into the meetings at Pittsburgh in November, 1863 when the Eastern and Western Synods were united to form the General Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States. 56

At the Eastern Synod meeting convened at Lancaster in October 1864, the Rev. Theodore Appel presented a precise summary of the Tercentenary's significance.

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55. P.S. "Closing Tercentenary Address" in Tercentenary Monument, op. cit., p. liv.

56. Good, History, op. cit., pp. 404-423; Richards, Hist. Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 323-329. In 1869 the word German was omitted from the title.

It should be noted that the statements he made reflect a concept of the Church which is in complete agreement with that propounded by Dr. Schaff; in fact, Mr. Appel's affirmation fully reflects the influence of Schaff, who, together with Nevin, labored to uncover the historical and theological treasures of the past for the benefit of the future. Addressing the delegates Mr. Appel said:

- "I. Our Tercentenary Jubilee has served a wholesome purpose in reviving for our ecclesiastical consciousness a proper sense of what is comprehended in our confessional title, Reformed, as related originally to Lutheranism in one direction, and to the Catholic Church of olden times in another.
- "II. It is an argument of sound and right historical feeling in this case that the beginnings of our church-life are referred, not simply to the epoch and crisis of the Reformation, but through that also to the original form of Christianity as it existed in the first ages.
- "III. The true genius and spirit of our Church in this respect is shown by the place which is assigned to the Apostles' Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism; where it is plainly assumed that the Creed, in its proper historical sense, is to be considered of fundamental authority for the Reformed faith.
- "IV. It is a matter for congratulations that our growing sympathy with the Apostles' Creed is attended with a growing power of appreciation among us also for that Christological way of looking at the doctrines of Christianity, which has come to characterize all evangelical theology of Germany in our time, and by which only, it would seem, the objective and subjective (in other words the churchly and experimental) sides of the Gospel can be brought into true harmony with one another." <sup>57</sup>

Prof. Schaff's later years at Mercersburg had not been too pleasant. He was frankly disappointed when the seminary was not moved to Lancaster along with Marshall College. Furthermore, the isolation of the small town tended to discourage him; he lacked accessibility to adequate library facilities which consequently retarded his literary endeavors. In addition, the Civil War had disrupted seminary life; Mercersburg continually was subjected to raids by

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57. "Minutes of Eastern Synod", Lancaster, 1864, p. 145.

Confederate soldiers so that it even became necessary to suspend classes for a while. Thus, during the winter of 1862-1863, Schaff temporarily filled the chair of Church history at Andover Seminary in Massachusetts. He returned to Mercersburg in late spring, but in October of 1863 he requested and was granted a two years leave of absence from the seminary, and, after having refused a teaching position at the Episcopal Divinity School in Philadelphia, Schaff moved to New York City which henceforth became his permanent home. 58

Dr. Schaff's ministry in the German Reformed Church coincided with the rise of the Mercersburg theology. On the occasion of Dr. Harbaugh's inauguration to the chair of Systematic and Practical Theology at Mercersburg Seminary, Prof. Schaff wrote:

"The Mercersburg theology has a principle of vitality. It cannot be traced to any scheme of previous calculation, but came about by historic necessity and divine appointment. It has shaken the German Reformed Church and awakened it to a sense of its theoretical and practical mission and given it a theological character and position among the American churches." 59

In 1863, Dr. Emanuel V. Gerhart declared that three fourths of the ministers and membership of the German Reformed Church adhered (in part, at least) to the basic principles of the Mercersburg theology which he outlined as follows:

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58. In 1864 Schaff informed the Board of Visitors that he intended to resign his professorship, effective with the expiration of his leave of absence, Dec. 31, 1865. A second letter of resignation was sent from Bonn, Prussia, dated Sept. 14, 1865 to the Synod of Lewisburg in which Schaff said: "Could I be persuaded that it was my duty to continue in your service I would gladly sacrifice private interests as I did on former occasions when I had calls to other places of usefulness which I have not now. But I feel convinced that my work in your Seminary can be carried forward by others, and that the time has now arrived for me to retire." Quoted from Schaff's "Letter of Resignation" in the Historical Archives of the Evang. and Ref. Church, Fackenthal Library, Lancaster, Pa. The Rev. Dr. Elnathan E. Higbee was elected by the Synod of 1865 to fill the professorship vacated by P.S.

59. From an entry in Schaff's journal, May 22nd, 1864, quoted in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 218.

"...The church affirms that the divine-human person of Christ is the true principle of Christianity and of sound theology; that Christianity is a new creation, and therefore a new life; that the humanity of Christ is an essential constituent of the new creation; that the church is a divine institution, the mystical body of Christ; that the Bible was written by members of the church under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost; that private judgment is subordinate to the general judgment of the church, particularly as expressed in the ecumenical creeds; that the word of God is the only ultimate rule of faith and practice, and is above all creeds and confessions; that the individual comes to a right apprehension of the contents of the Bible through the teaching of the church; that the election of grace unto life is effectual in and by the established economy of grace; that justification is an act of faith in the person and impartation of Christ and his righteousness; that Holy Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant, and confers grace; that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is both a commemoration of the passion and death of Christ, and a communion of Christ with the believer, whereby his spiritual life is nourished, and he is more closely united by the Holy Ghost to the person of the Saviour; that believers only hold communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper; that extraordinary measures and human expedients are not necessary to advance the kingdom of Christ; that the ordinary, divinely-ordained means are adequate to all the needs of the church and world, and, if faithfully applied, do not fail to promote a steady and vigorous growth of the church; that although the church of Rome [adheres to many erroneous unscriptural dogmas and practices] she is nevertheless a part of the church of Christ; and that Protestantism is an historical continuation of the church catholic, in a new and higher form of faith, organization, and practice." 60

These propositions essentially are in agreement with the substance of Schaff's concept of the Church as set forth in his Mercersburg writings, however, his own works must be regarded as the final interpreter of his views. 61 Schaff was concerned fundamentally with the prerogative and unity of the Church, based

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60. E.V.Gerhart, "The German Reformed Church" in Bibliotheca Sacra, XX, Jan. 1863, pp. 69, 70.

61. For example, while Schaff contended the sacraments are the means of grace, he nowhere states they confer grace, i.e. in the sense of gratia infusa instead of favor dei. Grace, understood as gratia infusa, is a concept introduced by Nevin during the sacramental controversy and is an idea which he admittedly received from Anglican sources rather than from the German theologians or the Continental reformers. See John Nevin, "Our Relations to Germany," in M.R., XIV, Oct. 1867, p. 632.

on the realization that the Person of Christ is the central fact of revelation and the starting point for all theological doctrines. He contended that the Church is an organism and not an aggregation of believers, whose growth proceeds according to the law of historical development. Moreover, since Christ is present in His Church, so also is He present in the Lord's Supper in more than a merely commemorative or symbolic way. Schaff was liturgically minded; he urged the adoption of the Church year, prepared the Communion service, which is the basis of the present order in the Evangelical and Reformed Book of Worship, and advocated the catechetical method of instruction for confirmands.

Theologically, Schaff was a conservative. To a rare degree he combined the merits of a deep mystical piety with an appreciation for sound scholarship, an irenic spirit and a great respect for history. For Schaff the entire church question depended on this concern for history and within the German Reformed Church, more than any other man, he led his denomination back to an historical consciousness of its heritage. Nevin was indebted to Schaff especially for the explanation of the theory of historical development and Dr. George W. Richards admitted that he gained his first acquaintance with this theory, which he used in his own interpretation of Church history, through reading the works of Schaff. <sup>62</sup>

But even more important than his theory of historical development, which in subsequent years was reinterpreted according to the evolutionary pre-suppositions of late nineteenth and early twentieth century liberalism, was Schaff's emphasis on the principles underlying the Continental Reformation concept of the Church. It is at this point that Schaff made one of his most significant contributions to the future life of the German Reformed Church, because he drew attention

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62. Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., p. 137.

not only to the heritage derived from Zwingli and Calvin but also to that from Luther and Melancthon. In effect he said to the German Reformed Church, "All these men are your historic founders, listen to them." The Tercentenary Celebration of the Heidelberg Catechism testified to the growing Reformation consciousness of the German Reformed Church. While Nevin appreciated the insights of the German Reformation, as his thought matured, his views on the nature of the Church, ministry and sacraments were more in accord with those of the Catholic Church in the second, third and fourth centuries, which, when coupled with his admiration for high Anglicanism brought forth anew the charges of Romanism in the later stages of the Mercersburg controversy. Schaff, on the other hand, while respecting both the Church fathers and the "good features" of Puseyism, judged both by the standards of the Continental Reformation.<sup>63</sup> For Nevin, especially after 1850, the temptation to become a Roman Catholic was very real, but for Schaff, even though he was accused of "Romanistic tendencies" after his inaugural, he never considered the possibility of leaving the Protestant Zion. After his heresy trial the accusations of Romanism and Puseyism were dropped against him; he was more frequently charged with "Lutheranizing" for which, at least, there was a more logical basis. Yet Schaff was fundamentally a mediator, an evangelical churchman, who stood in the Melancthonian rather than in the orthodox Lutheran tradition, and it was the Melancthonian emphasis which he introduced into the German Reformed Church which has ever since adhered to a theological position

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63. If Schaff's concept of the Church is compared with that of any Anglican theologian it would bear a closer affinity to the thought of F.D.Maurice rather than that of Pusey. Maurice was influenced by German theology; both he and Schaff stressed the incarnation rather than the atonement of Christ; both shared an organic conception of the Church and lamented the divisions of Christendom which they ascribed to man's sinful pride. Neither Schaff nor Maurice wanted organized Christianity to be substituted for Christ; both affirmed the positive character of culture which is to be transformed by the power of Christ. Cf. Alec R. Vidler, The Theology of F.D.Maurice, London, 1948.

midway between orthodox Lutheranism and right wing Calvinism. In fact, Schaff laid the groundwork for the interpretation of the German Reformed tradition through the eyes of Melanchthon.<sup>64</sup> In the last analysis, it was not the high churchmanship of the Mercersburg theology which prevailed in the denomination but rather the moderate churchly tendency of Schaff, which, while holding to the organic concept of the Church and retaining the confessional status, nevertheless did not make doctrine or cultus primary so as to erect barriers against the possibilities of organic union with other churches.

In comparing Schaff and Melanchthon it should be observed that both men believed in the essential unity of the Catholic Church and were deeply distressed over the divisions of Christendom; both worked hard for reunion. Frederick Galle wrote that Melanchthon was neither the Peter nor the Paul of the Reformation, but the John.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Schaff favored Melanchthon's later views on the Lord's Supper and his synergistic views on the question of God's grace and human freedom as allowed in Articles X and XXIII of the Revised Augsburg Confession of 1540. In addition, both men asserted the importance of tradition in determining the

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64. A very significant interpretation of the German Reformed heritage has been presented recently by Prof. Bard Thompson who argues: (1) that there was a fourth "ism" in sixteenth century Protestantism, i.e. Melanchthonianism, which was more than a tendency; it was a distinct doctrinal type and party; (2) that the German Reformed Church emerged from a Melanchthonianism which was being crushed by orthodox Lutheranism; (3) that the German Reformed Church, therefore, does not represent a transition from Lutheranism to Calvinism, but from Melanchthonianism to something less than Calvinism; (4) that the German Reformed Church organically belongs to both German and Reformed Protestantism; (5) that by chronology Melanchthon was the father of the German Reformed Church. See his "An Historical Reconstruction of Melanchthonianism and the German Reformed Church, based upon Confessional and Liturgical Evidence", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis) Columbia University, 1953. Also see his article, "Melanchthon and the German Reformed Church" in Bulletin of the Theol. Sem., XXIV, Oct. 1953, pp. 162-185.

65. See "Melanchthon and the Present" in M.R., II, July 1850, pp. 335ff.

nature of the Church and despite his deep regard for consuetudo, Melancthon recognized the need for an abiding reformation. Schaff referred to Melancthon's theology as being "in perpetual motion" ever developing in accord with the principles of the Reformation.<sup>66</sup> Schaff spoke as a Melancthonian when he wrote, "Every age must produce its own theology. ... The theology of the future will be a theology of love, broad as God's love and impartial as God's justice. Such a theology will give new life to the church and prepare for the reunion of Christendom."<sup>67</sup>

Philip Schaff was among the first leaders in the German Reformed Church actively to support movements for Church union. In 1846 he called attention to the first meeting of the Evangelical Alliance which he regarded as "... a practical testimony furnished by the conscience of the church against the great evil of sects, which some are so ready to extenuate and excuse theoretically."<sup>68</sup> However, he raised some questions about the purpose of the Alliance which have contemporary significance. He doubted that Christian union ought to be sought merely for the purpose of combating more successfully the power of the Roman Church. Such a motive he felt would reduce Christian unity to the level of a mere instrument. "We should realize it [Christian union]", he said, "because it is involved in the very conception of the Church as the organic communion of saints."<sup>69</sup> He further questioned whether any idea of union was adequate, which did not propose the ultimate inclusion of the Greek and Roman churches. To deny these communions a place in the Evangelical Catholic Church was to assume that the elements of a perfect church organization were already at hand in the

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66. P.S. St. Augustine, Melancthon and Neander, op. cit., p. 126.

67. P.S. "Introduction" to E.V.Gerhart's Institutes of the Christian Religion, I, New York, 1891, pp. xiv, xv.

68. P.S. What is Church History?, op. cit., p. 122.

69. Ibid., p. 123.

Protestant community. Finally Schaff warned against any contemplated union which resulted from indifferentism or an underevaluation of history. Therefore he criticized the suggestion that a so-called "United Apostolic Confession" be written to serve as a creedal basis for the Evangelical Alliance. According to Schaff a creed cannot be "fabricated in the study" by putting together some propositions from various symbolical books which apparently sound alike. A creed, he argued, must grow out of a common faith already at hand, of which the symbol is only the transcript. <sup>70</sup>

For Schaff the doctrinal struggles of the past had to be taken seriously for to disregard them would be to assume that the whole Christian past had labored to no purpose. Schaff urged a thorough study of the different branches of the Church so that each division might learn "...to know and respect and love one another more; and thus come more and more clearly to the consciousness, that no one of them is perfect, but that they are mutually necessary one to the other, and should severally leave their faults behind, and unite their advantages and virtues into a harmonious whole." <sup>71</sup> Schaff's main point here is to stress the fundamental fact that while Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church, the foundation of all ecumenical relations is a realistic grasp of Church history.

Notwithstanding the above criticism Schaff fully supported the Evangelical Alliance and became its foremost American advocate. He urged the German Reformed Church to take a positive interest in the proceedings of the Third General Conference held in Berlin in 1857, for which he prepared a paper on the state of religion in the United States. <sup>72</sup> On the title page of his Kirchenfreund

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70. Ibid., pp. 124-126.

71. Ibid., p. 127.

72. P.S. "The Evangelical Alliance at Berlin" in M.R., IX, Apr. 1857, pp. 318-320.

Schaff printed the phrase of Meldenius which he believed should characterize all movements for Church union, "In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas."

At the conclusion of his famous address on the "Discord and Concord of Christendom"<sup>73</sup> delivered at the Evangelical Alliance meeting in Copenhagen, 1884, Schaff entered the following comments in his journal:

"This was in many respects the proudest day of my life. I never before have received so many thanks and congratulations for an address. Thus, I have been permitted before scholars and princes to bear my testimony against the divisions and distractions of Christendom and for Christian union. ...This is the idea and aim of the Alliance, and I thank God for the humble share I have had in its advocacy and promotion since 1857. I shall never forsake it or cease to promote its grand object."<sup>74</sup>

Although Dr. Schaff did not live to see the merger of the Evangelical Synod and the German Reformed Church, he favored such a union even before his coming to Mercersburg. It should be remembered that he was ordained in the United Evangelical Church of Germany, whose daughter in America, the Evangelische Kirchenverein des Westens, became the Evangelical Synod of North America in 1879. In view of his pioneer efforts in bringing the two denominations closer together, it would not be amiss to call Philip Schaff the father of the Evangelical and Reformed Church which was officially constituted June 26, 1934.

Shortly after his inauguration in 1844, Schaff visited St. Louis and became acquainted with the professors of the Evangelical Seminary at Marthasville, Missouri, for which he later secured funds and books from Germany. He frequently corresponded while at Mercersburg, with pastors of this sister communion, especially in regard to immigrant matters; he solicited their help in the prepara-

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73. See P.S. Christ and Christianity, New York, 1895, pp. 292-310.

74. P.S. in David S. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 351, 352.

tion of articles for the Kirchenfreund. Through Schaff's Deutsches Gesangbuch another contact was established, which bound him closer to the members of the Kirchenverein. In short, the Evangelical Church of the West was introduced to the German Reformed Church through the person of Philip Schaff.

In 1854 Schaff declared that it was the mission of the Kirchenverein to serve as a "connecting link between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, and to reach towards both the hand of love and peace, and thus draw them gradually nearer together." <sup>75</sup> One hundred years later, Dr. Louis W. Goebel, the second president of the Evangelical and Reformed Church remarked:

"My earliest boyhood memories include frequent references to Philip Schaaf (sic) by pastors of the Evangelical Synod who met in the parsonage in which I was reared. It appeared to me that he belonged as much to my church as to the Reformed church, from which he had gone forth to further the ecumenical spirit in America." <sup>76</sup>

In the first section of the constitution of the Evangelical and Reformed Church a short statement appears on the doctrinal position of the denomination. Although composed by men of a later generation, it is in agreement with Schaff's concept of the Church and incorporates his understanding of the relation of tradition to Scripture, as expounded in the Principle of Protestantism. The statement on doctrine reads as follows:

"The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are recognized as the Word of God and the ultimate rule of Christian faith and practice.

- a. The doctrinal standards of the Evangelical and Reformed Church are the Heidelberg Catechism, Luther's Catechism and the Augsburg Confession [Variata]. They are accepted as an authoritative interpretation of the essential truth taught in the Holy Scriptures.
- b. Whenever these doctrinal standards differ, ministers, members and congregations, in accordance with the

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75. P.S. America, op. cit., p. 203.

76. L. W. Goebel, "A union of Heart and Mind" in The Messenger, XIX, June 15, 1954, p. 12.

liberty of conscience inherent in the gospel, are allowed to adhere to the interpretation of one of these confessions. However, in each case the final norm is the Word of God.

"In its relation to other Christian communions the Evangelical and Reformed Church shall constantly endeavor to promote the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." 77

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Philip Schaff's concept of the Church rested on a firm Christological and historical basis. Prof. Richards has pointed out that the real issues which separated the Mercersburg theologians from their opponents sprang from different answers to the questions, "What must I do to be saved?" and "Whom say you that I am?" i.e. Soteriology and Christology. 78 For Schaff, Christ's life was communicated to believers through fellowship with Him within the body of the Church, His Body. He insisted that the new life given by Christ is most comprehensively and properly mediated within the body of the historic Church, where it is nurtured by the Word and Sacraments and directed by the authority and tradition of the Church. 79

If Schaff contended that men could not know Christ apart from the Church, he also insisted that they could not know themselves as a Church apart from Christ. It is this latter emphasis which gained the ascendancy in Schaff's later years and explains his willingness to subordinate doctrinal differences to the general interest of the whole Church. Nowhere, however, does Schaff suggest that creedal differences are unimportant or that creeds are unnecessary.

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77. The Constitution and By Laws of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, adopted June 1946, pp. 5, 6.

78. G. W. Richards, "The Mercersburg Theology" in Church History, XX, Sept. 1951, p. 53.

79. Wm. F. Kosman, "Philip Schaff's Conception of the Church" in Bulletin of the Theol. Sem., op. cit., pp. 188, 189.

Yet their authority is only relative; (except, perhaps, in the case of the Apostles' Creed) they connect but should not chain the Church to the past; they guide but should not shackle her future progress. On the one hand Schaff argued for a healthy confessionalism, but at the same time he made creeds subservient to the greater claims of Christ. This he did, we think, for two reasons: First, he had a profound faith, not in the ability of men to "reason together", but rather in the power of God to work out His purposes in history. Moreover, Schaff was convinced that the initiative for reconciliation, as it had since the Creation, comes from God and that He will provide the dynamic for the realization of His ends, despite the temporary thwarting of His plans by sinful men. Schaff's optimism about the ultimate reunion of Christendom emerged from his assurance that Christ is Lord of history and that the power of His love is greater than the pride of men and capable of defeating it.

But, secondly, Schaff had great confidence in the theory of historical development, which he believed was the divine means, through which God would bring about the organic union of Christendom. To be sure, the contemporary dialectical theologians have dealt the death blow to the interpretation of this theory as understood by the naturalistic humanists of liberal Protestantism, i.e. in terms of a progressive development whereby humanity is "ascending" toward the Kingdom of God. Indeed it is one of the ironies of history that Schaff's theory of development was used to support the liberal Protestant cause in twentieth century America. Schaff certainly would have rebelled at this perversion of his views which we are sure he would have called "rationalistic". The fact is, however, that the liberals took only one part of his theory, namely, the dialectic (which actually came from Hegel) and adapted it to their own humanistic pre-suppositions. But Schaff was not a humanist. Any development which did not proceed in accord with the biblical revelation, or which proposed an advance beyond orthodox Christianity, was for him no development

at all. It is precisely at this point that Schaff's concept of the Church should have served as a corrective to false theories of development. All progress in Church history, he claimed, was to be judged by the biblical revelation as interpreted by the historical consensus of the Church. Thus, to deny the doctrine of the Trinity and boldly announce that such a concept belonged to "a less enlightened age" would have been blasphemy to Schaff, since the Church has defined the proposition that God is Triune and men are not free to reject it. On the other hand, they are free to reinterpret it in terms of contemporary science and philosophy. This Schaff justified on the grounds that the profane sciences are to be transformed by Christ to glorify His name and to serve His cause, but never is humanity to judge God's revelation by its own standards; rather God judges humanity by His standard, Christ Jesus.

When Schaff applied his theory of historical development to the problem of Church union, he maintained that in the course of history the "hay and stubble" of man's making would be removed and Christ will be all in all in His undivided Church. Organic union, he suggested, may not be realized until the millenium, but it is the direction toward which the main stream of history moves. At the end, the Christ men shall see in the Church will not be the one of their own making but rather the Christ of the New Testament. The creeds of the Church only hindered the cause of union by their anathemas, but not by their positive affirmations, since, theoretically, they were based on the biblical revelation. Thus Schaff felt there was nothing in the Apostles' Creed that a Baptist, for example, could not accept. In the controversy over the Lord's Supper, Schaff thought both scripture and tradition testified to Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Yet, as far as historical development is concerned, it is only the theories about the manner of His presence which undergo development and these theological explanations can never become the ground for excluding other Christians

from the fellowship of the Church.

Schaff believed that ultimately all denominational differences would be resolved, not by man's ability, not by a dialectic, not by expedient compromise, but rather through the love of Christ. In surveying the contemporary ecumenical movement, who can deny that notable advances have been made since Schaff's day toward the reunion of Christendom? Even the Greek Orthodox Church is presently a member of the World Council of Churches, an affiliation which would have been considered impossible a century ago by the majority of Christian leaders. In fact, the twentieth century has been called the "Ecumenical Age"; it is doubtful that if in any previous era in Church history, Protestants especially, have cooperated as willingly with one another as they have in recent years. The day of the final reunion of Christendom may be far in the future, but, if we look at the current ecumenical movement through the eyes of Philip Schaff, we might be convinced that its history at least has proceeded in accord with his theory of development.

Luther Binkley in his book The Mercersburg Theology concludes that "as a body of conviction, the Mercersburg theology is dead. All theologies have their day and cease to be. ... [However] the denomination [Evangelical and Reformed] is greatly indebted to the movement for facilitating its adjustment to modern science and biblical criticism."<sup>80</sup> No one will deny that the Mercersburg theology made the transition to higher criticism easier, but we disagree with Binkley's surmise that this was its greatest service. Rather, we hold that the permanent contribution of the Mercersburg movement, especially as related to Schaff, was its reinstatement of the confessional and churchly character of the German Reformed Church, and at the same time its enlarging of the ecumenical

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80. Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., p. 140. The Mercersburg Seminary, removed to Lancaster in 1871, was the first theological school in America to teach the higher criticism of the Old Testament. Ibid., p. 137.

concerns of this denomination which has consistently supported movements for Church union and has sought to provide leadership in that area.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, we challenge Binkley's assertion that the "Mercersburg theology is dead." The Swedish theologian, George Hammer, is closer to the truth when he declares that the Mercersburg theology is a "Reformation theology" which has fallen into undeserved oblivion in America.<sup>82</sup> No theology can be dead as long as the mind of Christendom is still troubled by the same issues which have divided the Church throughout history. "The issues raised by the Mercersburg School," Dr. Richards declared, "and the controversies which followed, are similar, not in form but in substance, to the controversies resulting in sects and schisms from the time of the apostles, in the ancient Catholic Church, in the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Age, and in the Reformation and the centuries that followed."<sup>83</sup> Like our spiritual forefathers, the ecumenical

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81. The Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States were charter members of the former Federal Council of Churches as was the merged denomination of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Presently the Evangelical and Reformed Church is a member of the Alliance of Reformed Churches. In June 1957 the Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ in America. While we are confident that Schaff would have favored this merger, we think he would have preferred a union with the Presbyterian Church, first, which, like the Evangelical and Reformed, is a confessional Church. The difficulties inherent in the task of writing a constitution for the United Church stem in part from two different views of the nature of the Church, the organic and the covenant conceptions. It is hoped that the positive merits of both views will be retained in the United Church.

82. George Hammer, Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology, (a study by Reinhold Niebuhr, W.M.Horton, H.P.Van Dusen preceded by a general introduction and historical survey), Uppsala, Sweden, 1940, p. 8. The Rev. Scott F. Brenner recently wrote, "I would hazard the assertion that no other American theologians with the exception of Jonathan Edwards and possibly Reinhold Niebuhr have wrought so creatively as Nevin and Schaff." See Theology Today, XII, Apr. 1955, p. 51. Donald Yoder in his "Church Efforts of the Reformed Church in the U.S.", op. cit., p. 29, concludes, "The churchly emphasis in the denomination at present is, ... the fruit of the nineteenth century Mercersburg school of theology, led by Philip Schaff and John Williamson Nevin."

83. Richards, "The Mercersburg Theology" in Church History, XX, op. cit., p. 52.

Church today is concerned with the same issues underlying the problems of faith and reason, interpretation of the sacraments, the validity of Church orders, and the nature of the Church, etc., to which this generation also must find its own solutions. Nevertheless, in approaching this task we would follow the lead of Dr. Schaff and let the past speak to us. If we listen carefully, we may even find some answers.

At the close of his Principle of Protestantism, Schaff appended 112 "Theses for the Times". The last two seem especially relevant to our day.

"111. What we most need now is theoretically, a thorough, intellectual theology, scientifically free as well as decidedly believing, together with a genuine sense for history; and practically, a determination to hold fast the patrimony of our fathers, and to go forward joyfully at the same time in the way in which God's Spirit by Providential signs may lead, with a proper humble subordination of all we do for our own denomination to the general interest of the One Universal Church.

"112. The ultimate sure scope of the Church, towards which the inmost wish and most earnest prayer of all her true friends continually tend is that perfect and glorious unity, the desire of which may be said to constitute the burden of our Lord's last, memorable intercessory Prayer." 84

## VI.

Without intending to enlarge the scope of this dissertation, we should like to call attention to the highlights of Dr. Schaff's post-Mercersburg career. We have previously stated that throughout the rest of his life Schaff remained loyal to the concept of the Church, which he first had advocated during his ministry in the German Reformed Church. This is not to say, however, that certain aspects of his thought did not undergo some modification, or as Schaff would have said,

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84. P.S. Principle, op. cit., p. 190.

"development". While he never doubted, for example, that organic union ultimately would embrace all of Christendom, his optimism about its imminence declined. In 1844 he doubted that reunion would occur in his lifetime, and shortly thereafter, he declared that organic union would not be consummated before Christ's second advent. In the interim, however, Christians were never to cease praying and working for Christian union. Thus, Schaff gave his full support to the Evangelical Alliance which he had not done at the time of its inception.

Schaff's criticisms of Puritanism also became less caustic as the years went on; he learned to appreciate its distinctive contributions to American Christianity, especially the Puritan emphasis on discipline and respect for the Lord's Day. In connection with the latter, it should be noted that after leaving Mercersburg, Schaff became Secretary of the New York Sabbath Committee, a position which he held for six years. This organization was designed to uphold the Sabbath as a day of rest. Schaff felt that a fairly strict observance of the Lord's Day was to be preferred to the rather loose manner in which Sunday was kept on the Continent. In his contention that rest on the Sabbath was essential to successful labor during the week and a good moral discipline, Schaff was incorporating into his own thought a key concept of Puritan Christianity.<sup>85</sup>

While in New York Schaff continued to engage in ecumenical activities. In 1864 he became interested in publishing an American edition of Lange's commentaries, which had appeared in Germany between 1857 and 1877. Schaff prepared the Commentary on Matthew himself and, as his biographer points out, Lange's Commentary was the first extensive attempt in America to enlist the cooperation

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85. See Schaff's articles, "Die Christliche Sonntagsfeier" and "The Christian Sabbath" in Christ and Christianity, op. cit., pp. 213-239 for a full discussion of this subject.

of scholars belonging to different denominations in an exegetical enterprise. <sup>86</sup>  
 From 1881 to 1885 Schaff was committee chairman of the American section working on the revision of the King James version of the Bible. It is certainly noteworthy, as Luther Binkley has observed, that one whose mother tongue was not English should have been chosen to head a committee which prepared the Revised Version of the Bible. <sup>87</sup>

In addition to supporting the Evangelical Alliance and making arrangements for its 1874 meeting in the United States, Schaff shared in the organization of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches in 1875. Writing to Prof. Dorner on July 26th, 1875 he said:

"...We have a union of individual believers in the Evangelical Alliance and now this is a confederation of churches of all Presbyterian and Reformed bodies. The last step would be the organic union in one body, which will hardly appear til the millenium. But, in the meantime, the Lutheran churches should have a Lutheran alliance, and the Episcopalians, Methodists and other ecclesiastical families should have their alliances. In this way the problem of union would be simplified." <sup>88</sup>

In his address before the Council of the Reformed Alliance held in Edinburgh in 1877, entitled "The Harmony of the Reformed Confessions as Related to the Present State of Evangelical Theology", Schaff suggested that the various Reformed confessions formulate a doctrinal consensus on points of agreement which might serve as a bond of union among them. He claimed that the doctrine of predestination held a disproportionate place in the Calvinist system and argued that the reunion of Christendom could only be accomplished on the basis of a personal union with Christ. <sup>89</sup> This same conviction is implied in his

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86. David S. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 230-236.

87. Binkley, The Mercersburg Theology, op. cit., p. 124.

88. P.S. in David S. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 318, 319.

89. P.S. The Harmony of the Reformed Confessions as Related to the Present State of Evangelical Theology, New York, 1877, pp. 5-65.

Principle of Protestantism but is stated more explicitly in the "Introduction" to Emanuel Gerhart's Institutes of the Christian Religion where Schaff wrote:

"Christian theology starts from the historical Christ. Out of Christ, God is unknown or only imperfectly known. ...The divine-human person of Christ is the sum and substance of Christianity. This is the article of the standing and falling Church. All other doctrines which have been made fundamental and central, derive their significance from their connection with it. ...Christology furnishes the key for theology and anthropology, the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man. ..." <sup>90</sup>

In 1870 Dr. Schaff became Professor of Theological Encyclopedia and Christian Symbolism at Union Seminary in New York, then under the control of the Presbyterian Church. Consequently Schaff was required to change his denominational affiliation, but in his acceptance of the Westminster Confession he made it clear that this did not mean a renunciation of any of his theological views and he was assured that he would be allowed freedom to dissent from those points in the Confession with which he could not agree. <sup>91</sup>

A controversy ensued in the Presbyterian Church in 1890 over a projected revision of the Westminster Confession. As we would expect Schaff favored the amendment of the symbol on the grounds that such a step would be a mark of historical progress. He especially objected to those articles which suggested that non-elect children might be eternally lost, which defined the doctrine of election too precisely, and which assailed the Pope as anti-Christ. <sup>92</sup> He was disappointed when the movement for creed revision failed. <sup>93</sup>

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90. P.S. "Introduction" to Institutes of the Christian Religion, op. cit., p. xii.

91. David S. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 282-287.

92. See P.S. Creed Revision in the Presbyterian Churches, New York, 1890, pp. 1-51.

93. On the subject of Calvinism and Arminianism, Schaff felt that both "...represent two ideas, the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man, which

At Union Seminary Schaff continued to introduce his students to German theology; he encouraged the establishment of a chair of American Church History, and in 1886 he founded the American Society of Church History which today is one of the foremost learned societies in the United States. In 1877 the first volume of Schaff's Creeds of Christendom was published, followed a year later by volume 1 of his History of the Christian Church which the Berlin faculty pronounced "the most notable monument of universal historical learning produced by the school of Neander."<sup>94</sup> These works represent the crowning achievement of Dr. Schaff's career as a Christian scholar.

In September 1893, against the advice of his physician, Schaff attended the World Parliament of Religions convened in Chicago. It was here that he made his most eloquent plea for Church union; it was also his last. His strength not being equal to the task of reading his paper, the Rev. Dr. Simon J. McPherson read it for him. Published later under the title "The Reunion of Christendom"<sup>95</sup> this address was characterized by Dr. Henry H. Jessup of Beirut as "apostolic,

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are logically irreconcilable, but equally true, [and] are taught in the Scriptures and practically held by all Christians. Every Arminian prays as if all depended on God, and every Calvinist preaches and works as if all depends on man. Both unite in singing Toplady's Calvinistic Rock of Ages and Wesley's Jesus Lover of My Soul, forgetting the theological conflict of the two authors. Thus theological conflicts may be solved in Christian experience. Yet the preponderance given to one or the other of the two ideas gives shape and form to religious character. The Calvinistic type of piety is controlled by the fear of God, the sense of duty. True theology is more divine than Arminianism, more human than Calvinism, and more Christian than either. But it is not as yet formulated and organized and waits for a genius greater than Augustine or Calvin or Arminius or Wesley to give it shape or form." P.S. in David S. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 426, 427.

94. "Letter from the Berlin Faculty" in The Semi-Centennial of Philip Schaff, op. cit., p. 11.

95. Published by the Evangelical Alliance, Document XXXIII, New York, 1893, p. 45.

one of the most Christ-like utterances of all church history." <sup>96</sup> Schaff wrote as one who had successfully transcended the barriers of denominational distinctions; he reiterated those emphases which he had made all his life. He urged the churches to cultivate an irenic and catholic spirit, to seek personal intercourse with all Christian denominations, to cooperate in every worthy Christian and philanthropic endeavor and to pursue the study of Church history without bias, to the end that the intercessory prayer of our Lord might at last be answered.

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96. Quoted in David S. Schaff, op. cit., p. 488.

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- Yoder, Donald H., "Church Union Efforts of the Reformed Church in the United States to 1934," (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1947.

### IV. Manuscripts, Letters and Documents

The following material is in the Historical Collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

- Eschbach, E. R., "Lectures on Eschatology by Prof. Philip Schaff 1859-1860," (a handwritten Ms. of class notes).
- Heilman, U. H., "Lectures on Church History begun Oct. 3, 1860 at Mercersburg by P.S.," (a handwritten Ms. of class notes).
- "Liturgical Discussion at Eastern Synod, 1862," (a typewritten Ms. of the debate concerning the Provisional Liturgy. Compiler not given.)
- "Nevin Letters," (a collection of letters written to and by Dr. Nevin during his professorship at Mercersburg and in the years following up to the time of his death).
- "Proceedings of the Liturgical Committee, 1851-1866," (includes drafts of different services, proof sheets for the Provisional Liturgy, and the Minutes of the Liturgical Committee, by Henry Harbaugh).
- Schaff, Philip, "An Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences of the Various Christian Denominations," (a handwritten Ms. of a course of lectures delivered at the Seminary, which became the basis for Schaff's later work, The Creeds of Christendom).

\_\_\_\_\_, "Lectures at Mercersburg," (a collection of 13 Mss., part in German, part in English, delivered at the Seminary on the various theological disciplines which Schaff taught).

"Schaff Letters," (a collection of letters to and from different members of the German Reformed Church, most of which deal with the subject of the Liturgy and the controversy over the "church question." Also included in this file is Schaff's "Letter of Resignation from the Mercersburg Seminary.").

\_\_\_\_\_, "Studenten Arbeiten, Tubingen, Halle, Berlin, 1837-1841," (includes lecture notes taken under Schaff's professors, disputation for Lic. Theol.; sermons preached as a theological student; ordination sermon at Elberfeld).

The following material is in the Historical Archives of the Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

"A Collection of Letters to Philip Schaff from a number of divines in Europe and America." (Most of these letters contain requests for subscriptions to his Kirchenfreund.)

"Liturgie zum Gebrauch der Evangelische Gemeinen," 1793.

#### V. Minutes of Classes

"Minutes of the Classis of Philadelphia 1846 to 1868," (compiled by Isaiah M. Rapp) in the Historical Collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster.

"Minutes of East Pennsylvania Classis, 1845."

:Minutes of Mercersburg Classis, 1859."

#### VI. Minutes of Eastern Synod

Acts and Proceedings of the Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States (Eastern Synod), Winchester, Virginia, 1843.

\_\_\_\_\_, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1844.

\_\_\_\_\_, York, Pennsylvania, 1845.

\_\_\_\_\_, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1847.

\_\_\_\_\_, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1848.

\_\_\_\_\_, Norristown, Pennsylvania, 1849.

\_\_\_\_\_, (Special Session), Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1850.

- \_\_\_\_\_, Baltimore, Maryland, 1852.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, 1855.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1857.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Frederick City, Maryland, 1858.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Easton, Pennsylvania, 1861.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, 1862.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1864.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, 1865.

#### VII. Minutes of General Synod

Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States, Dayton, Ohio, 1866.

- \_\_\_\_\_, Akron, Ohio, 1887.

APPENDIX ATHE ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION OF THE EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH

The Liturgy which appears below was prepared by the General Synod's Committee on Liturgies, the late George W. Richards, chairman, and officially adopted by the Church in 1946. Although no constitutional provision requires that this Order be followed in every congregation, the General Synod has encouraged its use, in whole or in part, throughout the denomination, with the provision that it may be adapted to suit local customs and practices. In 1957 the Rev. R. S. Brueseke queried 522 Evangelical and Reformed pastors located in different geographical areas of the United States, and found that 53% of the ministers questioned used the Order of Holy Communion in full, while 14% stated that they used the Service in part; 33% reported that they had never used the Communion Order in the Book of Worship.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that the following Service draws on the liturgical heritage of both the former Evangelical Synod and the German Reformed Church in the U.S. with the emphasis of the latter tradition predominating. With the exception of the Agnus Dei, most of the sources may be traced to the Provisional Liturgy of 1857 or the Reformed Order of 1866. The Exhortation is an abbreviated version of the form Schaff composed for the Provisional Liturgy. In the main, the present Communion Service follows the Order of 1866 as revised and amended by Nevin, yet retaining many phrases from Schaff's service in the Provisional Liturgy as well as his Prayers of Intercession and Petition.

SOLEMN DECLARATION "In the Name of the Father, etc."

## EXHORTATION

Dearly Beloved in the Lord; Our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ, instituted the Holy Communion of his Body and Blood, that it might be the abiding memorial of his atoning death; the seal of his perpetual presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit; the mystical representation of the sacrifice of himself on the cross; the pledge of his undying love for his people; and the bond of his living union and fellowship with them to the end of time.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper has ever been regarded by the Church as the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship. We have to do here not with signs merely, but with the realities which these signs represent. The Lord's Table, therefore, can be rightly approached only by those who are of a devout, repentant, and believing mind.

We cordially invite to partake of this Sacrament all who are truly grieved and penitent for their sins, who look to the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation, who abide in the fellowship of his Church, and who desire to possess his Spirit and walk in his ways. To all such the compassionate Redeemer himself says. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

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1. See R.S. Brueseke, "Worship Practices in the Evangelical and Reformed Church," (a summary of a B.D. thesis presented to the faculty of Eden Theological Seminary, 1957, p. 3.)

Ye, then, who have earnestly searched your own hearts and desire to forsake all sin and follow after Christian holiness, approach with me now to the throne of grace, and make your humble confession to Almighty God.

#### CONFESSION OF SIN

(The Minister and Congregation shall say)

##### I

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and confess our manifold sins, Which we from time to time have committed, By thought, word, and deed Against thy Divine Majesty. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us. Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For the sake of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Forgive us all our sins; And grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

or

##### II

Almighty God, Merciful Father; I, a poor sinner, acknowledge and confess my manifold sins, which I from time to time have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy Divine Majesty. I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my misdoings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto me. I have no other comfort or hope, than thy grace which aboundeth above my guilt, and the precious merits of my Lord Jesus Christ. Longing after this grace I say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy child. Grant unto me pardon and peace, and strength to lead a new and righteous life, by the power of thy Holy Spirit; through the same Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

KYRIE (sung or said antiphonally by the pastor and people)

Lord, have mercy upon us.  
 Lord, have mercy upon us.  
 Christ, have mercy upon us.  
 Christ, have mercy upon us.  
 Lord, have mercy upon us.  
 Lord, have mercy upon us.

#### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(The Minister shall say)

Upon this humble confession which you have made, and by the authority of the Word of God, as a Minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, I declare unto you, who do truly repent and heartily believe in Jesus Christ, and are sincerely determined to amend your sinful life, the forgiveness of all your sins; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

or

Hearken now unto the comforting assurance of the grace of God, promised in the Gospel to all that repent and believe: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Amen.

## PRAISE

Minister: O Lord, open thou my lips.

Congregation: And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

INTROIT for the Day

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS or a Hymn of Praise

COLLECT for the Day

EPISTLE, GOSPEL, APOSTLES' or NICENE CREED

(The Hallelujah may be sung after the Epistle Lesson, and The Gloria Tibi sung before the Gospel, followed by the Laus Tibi at the conclusion of the Gospel.)

SERMON HYMN OFFERING

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Minister.	The Lord be with you.
Congregation.	And with thy spirit.
Minister.	Lift up your hearts.
Congregation.	We lift them up unto the Lord.
Minister.	Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.
Congregation.	It is meet and right so to do.

(The Minister, proceeding, shall say)

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God, who didst create the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, who didst make man in thine own image, and whose tender mercies are over all thy works.

For all thy mercies and favors, known to us and unknown, we give thee thanks. But most of all we praise thee, the Father everlasting, for the gift of thine adorable, true, and only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, who by his appearing hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. We bless thee for his holy incarnation; for his life on earth; for his precious sufferings and death upon the cross; for his resurrection from the dead; and for his glorious ascension to thy right hand. We bless thee for the giving of the Holy Spirit; for the institution of the Church; for the means of grace; for the hope of everlasting life; and for the glory which shall be brought unto us at the coming, and in the kingdom, of thy dear Son.

Thee, mighty God, heavenly King, we magnify and praise. With patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs; with the Holy Church throughout all the world; with the heavenly Jerusalem, the joyful assembly and congregation of the first-born on high; with the innumerable company of angels round about thy throne, the heaven of heavens, and all the powers therein; we worship and adore thy glorious Name, joining in the song of the Cherubim and Seraphim.

## THE SERAPHIC HYMN OR SANCTUS

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

(The Minister shall continue)

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; (Here the Minister shall take the bread into his hands) and when he had given thanks, he brake it, (Here the Minister shall break the bread) and said, Take, eat; this is my Body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also, he took the cup (Here the Minister shall take the cup into his hands) when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my Blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Wherefore, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, to send thy Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these elements of bread and wine, that the bread which we break may be to us the Communion of the Body of Christ, and the cup of blessing which we bless, the Communion of the Blood of Christ. And be pleased now, O most merciful Father, graciously to receive this memorial of the blessed sacrifice of thy Son which we here offer unto thee, in union with the sacrifice of our thanksgiving and praise, consecrating ourselves in soul and body, property and life, to thy most blessed service. Lord upon us through the mediation of our great High Priest. Make us accepted in the Beloved; and let his Name be as a pure and holy incense, through which all our worship may come up before thee, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

(Then may be said any or all of the following prayers)

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND PETITION

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, and to grant them life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Remember in mercy thy Church militant throughout the whole earth. Let her ministers be clothed with righteousness, and her priests with salvation. Build up her desolations; restore her disorders; heal her divisions, and grant unto her prosperity, safety, unity, and peace. Amen.

We commend unto thee this particular church and congregation, pastor and people; beseeching thee to accept their piety and faith, and to increase toward them thy heavenly grace, so that they may abound more and more in knowledge and love, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We pray for the rulers in all lands, and for the people committed to their charge. Look with favor upon thy servants, the President of the United States, the Governor of this Commonwealth, and all others in authority; and to so enrich them with wisdom and grace, that under their government we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Send forth thy light and thy truth unto the ends of the earth; cause the glorious gospel of thy grace to be proclaimed among all nations; and powerfully incline the hearts of men everywhere, that they may hear and obey the joyful sound. Amen.

(Here special intercessions may be made)

Regard in tender compassion those among thy people who are called to suffer heavy affliction, or sore temptation and trial of any kind; and be thou graciously nigh unto them with thy divine help, according to all their need. Amen.

Especially do we commend unto thee those departing this life. Let the arms of thy love be round about them in their last hour; enable them joyfully to commit their spirits into thy hands, and so receive them to thy rest. Amen.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; we rejoice before thee in the blessed communion of all thy saints, wherein thou givest us also to have part. We praise thee for the holy fellowship of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and the whole glorious company of the redeemed of all ages, who have died in the Lord, and now live with him forevermore. We give thanks unto thee for thy grace and gifts bestowed on those who have thus gone before us in the way of salvation, and by whom we are now compassed about in our Christian course, as a cloud of witnesses looking down upon us from the heavenly world. Enable us to follow their faith, that we may enter at death into their joy; and so abide with them in rest and peace, till both they and we shall reach our common consummation of redemption and bliss in the glorious resurrection of the last day. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Minister and Congregation)

AGNUS DEI

THE PAX

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.  
Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

THE COMMUNION

(Here the Holy Communion shall take place. The Communicants shall present themselves before the Lord's Table. The officiating Minister shall first receive the Communion in both kinds, and administer the same to his Assistants, and he shall then proceed with their help to administer it to the Communicants. But if the Communicants remain in the pews, the following order shall be observed: The Minister shall first receive the Communion in both kinds, and administer the same to his Assistants. Then he shall give the Bread to his Assistants, who shall administer it to the People. When all have received the Bread, the Assistants shall return to the Table, and the Minister shall in like manner deliver the Cup to them. When all have communicated, the Minister shall pronounce the Blessing, and the Assistants shall return to the Table, after which the Service shall proceed according to the prescribed order.)

(The Minister, giving the Bread, shall say)

Take and eat: This is the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

or

The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?

(The Minister, giving the Cup, shall say)

Take and drink: This Cup is the New Testament in the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of him.

or

The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?

#### THE DISMISSAL

May the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ keep and preserve you, each one, in body, soul, and spirit, unto everlasting life. Amen. Depart in peace.

May the Holy Communion strengthen and preserve you unto everlasting life. Be it unto you according to your faith. Amen. Depart in peace.<sup>2</sup>

(When all have communed, the elements shall be placed upon the Lord's Table, and covered with a fair linen cloth. Then, the Congregation standing, the Minister shall say:)

#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Let us give thanks.

Almighty and everlasting God, we give thee most hearty thanks for the great goodness thou hast shown toward us at this time in vouchsafing to feed us, through these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; assuring us thereby, that we are very members incorporate in the mystical Body of thy Son, and heirs through hope of thine everlasting kingdom. And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as shall please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY, NUNC DIMITTIS or TE DEUM may be sung

#### BENEDICTION

2. The inclusion of the scriptural passage "Be it unto you according to your faith" (Mt. 9:29), has a two-fold significance. First, the word translated "faith" (from the Greek noun pistis and the Latin fides) means trust and confidence in Christ, and in connection with its liturgical usage in the Dismissal stresses the Reformed theological contention that the benefits of the Holy Communion are received only as the believer approaches the altar in faith. (Cf. the Lutheran position which holds that the Sacrament strengthens faith, but does not absolutely require that the communicant come to the Table in faith). But secondly, faith has the meaning of assensus, i.e. intellectual assent to a particular doctrine. When applied specifically to the doctrinal position on the nature of Christ's presence in the

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

or

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

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Eucharist, the intention is to allow the individual freedom of thought in this matter. In effect, the General Synod's Liturgical Committee is saying to those of former "E" and "R" background, "You may hold either the strict Lutheran position or even the left wing Zwinglian view pertaining to the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic mystery. The point is, doctrinal differences on this issue will not prohibit our celebrating the Sacrament together." It was hoped that the inclusion of the passage from Mt. 9:29 would accomplish what was not done at Marburg in 1529.