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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

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ARTICLE I.

THE GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH.

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COLLEGE.

THE present form of theology and state of practical religion in the German Reformed Church of America, stand connected with the internal forces and external circumstances of every period of her history. Each period has exerted a determinative influence on the succeeding one; and, all together are the factors of the final result as it meets us at this time. Hence an isolated statement of prevailing theological opinions, disconnected from the process to which they belong, would be comparatively meagre and unsatisfactory. It could afford, at best, but a narrow conception of the character and condition of the church.

We propose, therefore, to follow the order of time, and furnish a historico-theological monograph, in which the various causes, influences, and associations of the past shall be allowed, as far as possible, to appear in their true relation to the present.

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1

## TWO ORIGINAL TENDENCIES.

The German Reformed church of America is an unbroken historical continuation of the Reformed church of Germany and Switzerland. As the final result of the deep reviving work of Christ going on in the Roman Catholic church during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the great Reformation began simultaneously in Zurich and Wittenberg, and from these centres of light extended its power rapidly over Europe,—the movement meeting a prompt response from the felt moral and spiritual wants of all classes of the people. Zuingli and Luther, the principal organs of the Reformation in its incipient stages, though of one mind in their opposition to the errors and corruptions of Rome, yet differing in temperament, psychological organization, moral character, education, and political as well as social relations,—became the types of two tendencies in theology, worship, church government, and practical life. These tendencies, Reformed and Lutheran, one as to their life-principle, developed their points of difference from the beginning, giving rise to two Protestant confessions which, with various modifications, have been perpetuated down to the present time. The difference is general rather than particular. It lies in the genius, or spirit, pervading the whole character of each confession, rather than in peculiar dogmas, ecclesiastical organization, or forms of worship. The most satisfactory view is obtained, not by reading the theological controversies, or looking at the peculiarities of external manifestation, but by a thorough study of the entire history of Lutheranism and Reform.

Yet the difference, as it appears in the sphere of theology, may serve as an index to the general character of the two confessions.

## REFORMED DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The most prominent question in controversy pertains to the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Both confessions unite in affirming the ordinance to

be twofold: first, a commemoration of the sufferings and death of Christ; and, secondly, the medium of a life-communion of Christ, the head of his mystical body, the church, with believers, the members of his body; by which the new creature is nourished, by the body and blood of Christ, unto eternal life. Both reject the theory of transubstantiation as taught by the Roman Catholic church: namely, that the substance of the bread and wine is transmuted, by the consecrating act of the priest, into the substance of the body and blood of Christ; the form, color, taste, etc. of the symbols remaining the same notwithstanding. Both reject the opinion that communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper is only moral, consisting in pious reflection on the passion of our Lord, accompanied with sincere penitence for sin, and an earnest resolution to lead a holier and more devoted life; and that the communion of the believer is not with the human nature, but only with the divine nature of Christ. They agree in maintaining a communion with the entire divine human Christ, or with him by his body and blood. There is a real participation in the life-giving virtue of the human nature of Christ, supporting a process of invigoration of spirit, soul, and body, which is consummated in the resurrection and final glorification of his people.

But they differ as to the mode. The Lutheran church teaches that, while the symbols, bread and wine, remain bread and wine, the veritable flesh and blood of Christ are locally present, being in, with, and under the consecrated bread and wine; and that communicants, unbelievers as well as believers, partake of the human nature of Christ with the mouth; the one class of persons eating and drinking damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body, and the other class, eating and drinking unto sanctification and everlasting life.<sup>1</sup> The Reformed church, on the contrary, teaches that the divine-human Saviour is present,

<sup>1</sup> "De coena Domini docent, quod corpus et sanguis Christi vere adsint et distribuuntur vescentibus in coena Domini; et improbant secus docentes." — Art. X. Conf. Aug. "De sacramento altaris sentimus panem et vinum in coena esse verum corpus et sanguinem Christi, et non tantum dari et sumi a piis, sed

not locally, or carnally, but spiritually; that is, by the Holy Ghost: not in, with, and under the consecrated elements, but in the entire sacramental transaction, including the formal institution, the administration by the minister, and the actual receiving, in faith, of the consecrated bread and wine by the communicant; and that Christ communicates himself, not to the unbelieving and unconverted, but to believers only, who are partakers of his true body and blood, not by the mouth, but by faith. "To eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ, is to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, although Christ is in heaven, and we on earth, are notwithstanding, 'flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone;' and that we live and are governed, forever, by one spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul."<sup>1</sup> The same view is taught in the Geneva Catechism, composed by Calvin, and first published, in Latin, in 1545.<sup>2</sup> *Solamne eorum, quae dixisti, beneficiorum significationem habemus in coena, an illic reipsa nobis exhibentur? Cum Dominus noster Christus ipsa sit veritas, minime dubium est, quin promissiones, quas dat illic nobis, simul etiam impleat: et figuris suam addat veritatem. Quamobrem non dubito, quin, sicuti verbis ac signis testatur, ita etiam suae nos substantiae participes faciat, quo in unam cum eo vitam coalescamus.*<sup>3</sup> Again: *Ut in summam colli-*

*etiam ab impiis christianis.*" — *Articuli Smalkald., Pars 3, Art. 6, 1. "Quid est itaque sacramentum altaris? Resp. Est verum corpus et sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, in et sub pane et vino per verbum Christi nobis Christianis ad manducandum et bibendum institutum et mandatum."* — *Luther's Larger Catechism, V. 8. "Decimus articulus approbatus est, in quo confitemur nos sentire, quod in coena Domini vere et substantialiter adsint corpus et sanguis Christi et vere exhibeantur cum illis rebus, quae videntur, pane et vino, his qui sacramentum accipiant."* — *Apol. Conf. Art. X. Vid. also the seventh article of the Form of Concord. Quoted from "Die Symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche," edited by J. T. Mueller. Stuttgart, 1848. Acknowledged to be the best edition of the symbolical books of the Lutheran church.*

<sup>1</sup> Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 76.

<sup>2</sup> The Latin is a translation by the author from the original French which appeared in 1541. Vid. Koescher's *Katechetische Geschichte der Reformirten Kirche.*

<sup>3</sup> *Cat. Gen. V. De Sacramentis. Vid. Niemeyer's Collection of Reformed Confessions.*

gamus quae dixisti : duas in Coena res esse asseris : nempe, panem et vinum, quae oculis cernuntur, attrahuntur manibus, percipiuntur gustu : deinde Christum, quo interius animae nostrae, tanquam proprio suo alimento, pascuntur. Verum, et eo quidem usque, ut corporum etiam resurrectio illic nobis, quasi dato pignore, confirmetur : quum et ipsa vitae symbolo communicent. Similar quotations could be made from other Reformed confessions ; but as the Geneva and Heidelberg catechisms acquired more authority than any others, it is not necessary or important.

The Reformed church, in all her catechisms and confessions, has always *affirmed* that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper consists of two inseparable parts, each equally essential to its integrity : the visible signs, the bread and wine, and the invisible grace, the body and blood of Christ ; the one being the external, sensible form, and the other the internal, supersensible substance or matter of the ordinance ; that it represents and commemorates the sufferings and death of Christ for the sins of the world ; that in the sacramental transaction of eating the broken bread and drinking the cup, there is a real communion of the believer with the body and blood of Christ, communion with the human nature, being the condition of communion with the divine nature ; that, while the body of Christ is in heaven and we are on the earth, the communion is effected by a mysterious and wonderful power of his Spirit : " cui difficile non est sociare, quae locorum intervallo alioqui sunt disjuncta ;" <sup>1</sup> that, while the communicant receives the external signs, bread and wine, by the mouth, he sees and partakes of Christ only by faith, the organ of the spirit, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost ; that the communion nourishes the new, spiritual life of the believer, — the life of the entire man, soul and body, — the full benefit of which will appear in the final resurrection from the dead, in the perfected image of Christ ; and that the energy or power by which these spiritual benefits are conferred, although faith is the condition of actual participation, is, nevertheless, not in the believer, but in the

<sup>1</sup> Cat. Gen. V.

external sacrament itself, an objective institution, ordained by Christ as the principal means of promoting growth in grace. With equal clearness and emphasis, the Reformed confessions *deny* that the sacrament is only a memorial<sup>1</sup> of the atoning death of Christ; that the consecrated bread and wine become, substantially, the true body and blood of Christ, or that, consubstantially, the true body and blood are locally present in and under the bread and wine; that there is any communion with Christ merely by the external act of eating and drinking; that the observance of the sacrament confers any spiritual benefit on the unbelieving and unconverted; that the believer communes directly with God, without the medium of Christ's humanity; that the objective efficacy of the sacrament depends on the faith, or any frame of mind, of the communicant; or that the spiritual benefit which the believer derives from communicating, consists only in the pious feelings, reflections, and purposes excited by the time, place, and other circumstances attending the solemn celebration.

Whatever fluctuations of doctrine the German Reformed church has experienced in the course of her past history, and they have been great, yet these are the views of the Lord's Supper which, for substance at least, obtain at the present time. There are variations, however, at certain points, of which we will speak in another place.

<sup>1</sup> With this statement the earlier theory of Zuingli is in apparent conflict. See his Seventy-seven Articles, announced in 1523. He says: "Ex quo colligitur missam non esse sacrificium, sed sacrificii in cruce semel oblatis commemorationem et quasi sigillum redemptionis per Christum exhibitae." The conflict, however, is *apparent* rather than real. As Zuingli's Articles originated in his controversy with the errors of the Romish church, he naturally laid stress on that aspect of the Eucharist which was ignored and set aside by the mass. According to Ebrard his positive views were homogeneous with those of Calvin, though not so fully developed. It must be borne in mind that Reformed theology passed through a formative process, in which two periods may be distinguished. In the first, Zuingli and his coadjutors were the most influential men, and the side of the truth directly opposite to Romish errors was prominent. In the second, the towering genius of Calvin possessed commanding power, and the positive contents of the sacrament were discussed. Rightly understood, Zuingli does not contradict the established doctrine of the Reformed Church.

## REFORMED DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

As the Lord's Supper possesses central significance in the economy of salvation, a difference of opinion, broad and clearly defined, concerning it, involved divergent views on all, or nearly all, other points, theoretical and practical. The person of Christ, the sacrament of baptism, the law, sin, grace, faith, good works, and other points in theology, stand differently in the two systems.<sup>1</sup> Were it consistent with our design, it would be interesting and profitable to compare the doctrines of Lutheranism and Reform on all the facts belonging to the Christian religion. But we shall confine ourselves to a brief notice of the person of Christ; merely remarking, that no error of church history is more fatal to a true appreciation of the important question at issue, than the assumption that, deplorable as were the evils of the great Protestant schism, the rupture was brought about by the stubbornness and arbitrary will of Luther, Zuingli, and Calvin, and their prominent coadjutors respectively, and was not the result of different tendencies of religious life, deeper, broader, and more potent than the influence of any single man.

Both churches, Lutheran and Reformed, maintained that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, in one person, in the sense of the ancient ecumenical creeds. Special stress was laid by the Reformers, belonging to both confessions, alike on the proper divinity and the proper humanity of our Lord, rejecting with equal decision and firmness, on the one side, ebionitic, and on the other, docetic or gnostic errors. But the sacramentarian controversy lead to different views concerning the *relation* of the human to the divine natures; not so much, however, as regards the place and action of the human, in the incarnation by the Holy Ghost and the life of Christ on earth, but rather as regards the place and action of the human in the ascension and glorified state of Christ, in the mystical union, and in the holy communion; the Lutheran view being in the line of the ancient Eutychian, and the

<sup>1</sup> For a complete scientific delineation of these differences, see Schneckenburger's *Unterscheidungslehre*.



Reformed in the line of the ancient Nestorian method of thought; though it would be unjust to charge either confession with holding the corresponding ancient heresy. The Reformed predicated the essential attributes of humanity of the human nature only, and the essential attributes of divinity of the divine nature only, thus emphasizing especially the difference of the two natures, though affirming them to be inseparably and eternally united in one person. Before the ascension, the human was located on earth, and after the ascension it was located at the right hand of God, and nowhere else, being excluded from the earth and limited to the place of exaltation in heaven.<sup>1</sup> The Heidelberg catechism inquires, in the forty-seventh question: "Is not, then, Christ with us, as he has promised, unto the end of the world? Answer: Christ is true man and true God. According to his human nature, he is now not upon earth; but according to his Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he at no time departs from us." Q. 48. "But if his human nature is not present wherever his Godhead is, are not the two natures in Christ separated from one another? By no means; for, since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that the same is both beyond the limits of the human nature he assumed, and yet none the less in it, and remains personally united to it." The same view appears in a clause of the answer to the seventy-sixth question: "so that we, although Christ is in heaven, and we on earth, are notwithstanding flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone"; and in the answer to the eightieth question: "who, according to his human nature, is now not on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of his Father, and will there be worshipped by us." One passage more, from Calvin: "*Ita Christum corpore absentem doceo nihilominus non tantum divina sua virtute, quae ubique diffusa est, nobis adesse, sed etiam facere, ut nobis vivifica sit sua caro.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Quod autem nobiscum habitat, idne de corporis praesentia intelligendum? Non. Alia enim ratio est corporis, quod in coelum receptum est (Luc. xxiv. 51, Actor. i. 11); alia virtutis, quae ubique est diffusa. — Cat. Gen. I. et al.*

<sup>2</sup> Defence against Westphal, p. 68 (*Hagenbach's Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. II. p. 341. Leipzig).

The question arises logically : since the humanity of Christ is limited to the right hand of God, and believers on earth commune, in the Lord's Supper, with the flesh and blood of Christ no less than with his spirit,<sup>1</sup> how is this communion established and maintained ? In opposition to the ubiquitarian theory of the Lutherans, the Reformed theologians replied : By the mysterious agency of the Holy Spirit, elevating the hearts of believers to Christ in heaven, who feeds and nourishes them with the life-giving power of his flesh and blood. In his Defence against Westphal, from which we have just quoted, Calvin says : “ Neque enim simpliciter *spiritu suo* Christum in nobis habitare trado, sed ita *nos ad se attollere*, ut vivificum carnis suae vigorem in nos transfundat.” And in his *Conf. Fidei de Eucharistia*, he says : “ nullo tamen finibus limitata est ejus spiritus efficacia, quin vere copulare et in unum colligere possit, quae locorum spatiis sunt disjuncta.” The doctrine did not originate with Calvin ; he only gave definite expression to a view which can be traced in the writings of Zuingli and other early Reformers, both of Switzerland and France, but had before not taken so clearly defined a shape, in the consciousness of the church, as his acute and logical mind gave to it.

The Lutheran antithesis was developed from the Lutheran theory of the sacrament ; and involved the communication of divine attributes to the human nature of Christ (*communicatio idiomatum*) ;<sup>2</sup> in virtue of which his human nature was not limited to heaven, nor to any one place at a time, but, like the divine nature, was present in all places at the same time where the sacrament of the altar was instituted and administered, as the true aliment of the believing communicant. Luther says :<sup>3</sup> “ Wherever you put God (or

<sup>1</sup> “ Itaque cum de communione, quam cum Christo fideles habent, loquimur, non minus carni et sanguini ejus communicare ipsos intelligimus quam spiritui, ut ita totum Christum possideant etc.” — Calvin *Conf. fidei de Euch.* 1537. (*Henry's Life of Calvin*, Appendix, Vol. I. p. 516.)

<sup>2</sup> See Herzog's *Encyclopaedia* by Dr. Bomberger, Vol. I. p. 746.

<sup>3</sup> We give a free translation. The original runs thus : “ Wo du mir Gott hinsetzest, da musst du mir die Menschheit mit hinsetzen : sie lassen sich nicht sondern und von einander trennen ; es ist eine Person worden und scheidet die

affirm him to be), there I require you to put the humanity also; they cannot be divided nor sundered. There is *one* Person, and he does not lay aside the humanity, as a man takes off his coat and lays it by, when he wishes to go to sleep. . . . The humanity is more closely united to God than skin and flesh, nay, more closely than body and soul." In the course of time, the ubiquitarian theory acquired symbolical authority. We find it stated in its antithetical relation to the Reformed doctrine, limiting the glorified body of Christ to heaven, in the Form of Concord (Formula Concordiae), published as an authoritative confession of faith in 1580: "Postquam Christus non communi ratione, ut alius quispiam sanctus, in coelos ascendit, sed ut Apostolus (Eph. iv. 10.) testatur, super omnes coelos ascendit, et revera omnia implet, et ubique non tantum ut Deus, verum etiam ut homo praesens dominatur et regnat, a mari ad mare, et usque ad terminos terrae." The right hand of God is not a position in heaven, but it is everywhere: "non est certus aliquis et circumscriptus in coelo locus, sed nihil aliud est nisi omnipotens Dei virtus, quae coelum et terram implet." The Lutherans, intensifying the *union* of the two natures to such a degree as to invest the human with the attributes of the divine, seemed, in the judgment of the Reformed, to destroy the integrity of Christ's humanity, and thus bring in the ancient Eutychian heresy; while the Reformed, intensifying the *difference* of the two natures to such a degree as to circumscribe definitely the human, seemed, in the judgment of the Lutherans, to destroy the reality of the hypostatical union, and thus bring in the ancient Nestorian heresy; each at the same time regarding the theory of the other as incompatible with the idea of real communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It must be observed that the question of later times, whether the worthy communicant does, or does not, eat and drink of the body and blood of

Menschheit nicht so von sich, wie Meister Hans seinen Rock auszeucht und von sich legt, wenn er schlafen gehet . . . . Die Menschheit ist nacher vereinigt mitt Gott, denn unsere Haut mit unserem Fleische, ja nacher denn Leib und seel." — Hagenbach's Dogmengeschichte, II. p. 362.

Christ, was not at issue in the sixteenth century. On this point, Reformed and Lutherans were agreed. The controversy assumed both the fact and the necessity of being fed and nourished by real communion with the humanity of our Lord.

#### THE GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH.

These wide and clearly defined differences of opinion on fundamental questions in theology, extending by necessary logical consequence to all the more important doctrines of Christianity, developed two distinct confessions, separated in theory and practice, in feeling and modes of thought, separated also, for the most part, by difference of location ; and indicate two really different or specific tendencies of the general Protestant religious life of the world. Allied indeed they are, and really one generically, yet opposite and even antagonistic. They are two majestic streams, rising in the same fountain, and flowing in the same direction, through the fields of time, both fructifying and beautifying the ages ; but they run in different channels, now approaching each other, then driven far apart, and again moving on in parallel lines ; yet they do not touch and mingle their waters in one broad, peaceful current.

A correct view of the relative position of the Reformed and Lutheran confessions, on the continent of Europe, is necessary in order to account for their relative position in America. Free from the dictation or interference of the civil government, and left to the spontaneous impulses of religious life, it was natural, considering the vital antagonism of their previous history, running through more than two hundred years, when, in the first half of the last century, they emigrated in large numbers to the new world, to organize Reformed and Lutheran churches, side by side, and perpetuate from year to year each its own genius, faith, form of ecclesiastical government, and mode of worship. Anything less would have argued a cold indifference to the truth, or a wilful surrender of it ; for the extremes of rationalism and fanaticism, which characterize the last century, do not allow

us to think of a true reconciliation of fundamental differences on the basis of a principle that would incorporate organically the truths, and eliminate the errors, belonging to both confessions.

The Reformed church takes its name, not originally by way of distinction from Lutheranism, but from its relation to the church of Rome. It is the Roman Catholic church *reformed* of its errors and corruptions. The name originated in France, and at first designated the true church of Jesus Christ, including both branches of Protestantism. When the *Lutheran* church assumed this distinctive title, it divided itself openly from the other confession, which was thus left in exclusive possession of the original general appellation — the *Reformed church*.<sup>1</sup>

The Reformed church appearing in various parts of the Christian world at the same time, it was convenient to distinguish its different sections by the addition of the national appellative. Thus we get the Reformed church of Switzerland, or the Swiss Reformed church, the Reformed church of France, of Germany, of Holland, of the Netherlands, of Hungary, of England and Scotland; all being distinguished by the same general characteristics from the Lutheran church, yet each branch modified by language, nationality, civil government, and other circumstances peculiar to the character and history of the nation. Each section, too, formed its own confession or confessions of faith; for several had more than one, occasioned by the course of the controversy with Roman Catholicism and the progress of knowledge in the bosom of the Protestant church. Yet they were all pervaded by the same spirit; and affirmed the same belief on all the leading questions which divided Protestants from Roman Catholics, and Reformed from Lutherans.

#### THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

The *German* Reformed church arose in the Palatinate<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism, by J W. Nevin, D.D., p. 13.

<sup>1</sup> "The title Palatinate, in German *Pfultz*, belonged formerly to two adjoin-

on the Rhine, which, under the direction of the Elector, Frederic the 'Third, surnamed the Pious, passed over from the Lutheran to the Reformed confession. The transition became complete by the formation and adoption of the Heidelberg Catechism<sup>1</sup> — the ripest fruit of the mature theology and vigorous spirit of the Reformed church of the sixteenth century. It was first published in the year 1563; and in the

ing provinces of Germany, which were distinguished as *Upper* and *Lower*. The first, *Oberpfaltz*, bordered on Bohemia and Bavaria; the other, *Unterpfaltz*, was situated on both sides of the Rhine, touching on different sides Mayence, Württemberg, Baden, Alsace, and Lorraine. It is frequently styled the *Palatinate of the Rhine*; and, in spite of the horrible devastations to which it has been subjected in different ages from the ruthless hand of war, is known as one of the most fertile and productive sections of Germany. Down to the year 1620, the two provinces belonged together; but when the Elector, Frederic V., was put under the ban of the empire, after the battle of Prague, the Upper Palatinate was made over to Bavaria. In consequence of the great changes that took place in Europe after the French Revolution, the country which formerly constituted the Palatinate on the Rhine is now possessed by Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, etc. It is not easy, of course, to identify it on a modern map." — Nevin on the Heid. Cat. p. 19. Compare also two learned articles on the Palatinate by Prof. A. L. Koeppen, *Mercersburg Review*, Vol. XI. 1859, pp. 140 and 271. The largest and best work on the Palatinate with which we are acquainted is Dr. Lewis Häuser's *Geschichte der Rheinischen Pfaltz*. 2 vols Heidelberg. 1856.

<sup>1</sup> At the instance of the Elector Frederic III., who succeeded Otto Henry, 1559, and espoused the Reformed faith in 1560, the catechism was prepared in the German language, by Caspar Olevianus, born at Treves, August 10, 1536, and Zacharias Ursinus, born at Breslau, July 18, 1534, the former being accordingly but twenty-six, and the latter, who is reputed to be the principal author, twenty-eight years of age. The principal sources were a smaller and larger catechism, previously prepared by Ursinus, the *Divine Covenant of Grace* by Olevianus, the *Emden Catechism* by John de Lasky (or Lasco), and the *Genevan Catechism* by Calvin. First published in January, 1563, three editions followed each other in rapid succession before the close of the year, each one varying from its predecessor. The third edition, issued in November (1563), became the fixed and standard text by which all subsequent editions have been regulated. The catechism was translated into Latin by Joshua Lagus, a minister in Heidelberg, and Lambertus Pithopoeus, a skilful school teacher, and published in the same year. The work "has Lutheran inwardness, Melancthonian clearness, Zuinglian simplicity, and Calvinistic fire, all fused together." See an Article on Heid. Cat. by Dr. Harbaugh, *Mercersburg Review*, Vol. XI. 1859, p. 47. Perhaps the most valuable source of historical information, from which later writers have chiefly drawn, is J. C. Koecher's *Catechetische Geschichte der Reformirten Kirche*.

course of a short time acquired greater and more general authority in the Reformed church than any catechism or confession that had previously been adopted. To understand fully the nature of the transition of the Palatinate, it would be necessary to consider the religious posture of Protestant Germany and the condition of the Palatinate itself, divided on the sacramental question by three religious parties, ranged under the names of Luther, Zuingli, and Calvin or Melancthon; but the design and limits of our Article forbid us to enter this field of inquiry.

The religious history of the Palatinate and the genius of the Heidelberg Catechism, give character to the faith and worship of the German Reformed church in America. The one is the key to the knowledge of the other. Of all branches of the Reformed confession which the course of history has transferred to the new world, and perpetuated, the German is the only one which has continued, and still adheres to, the Heidelberg Catechism as its formulary of faith, to the exclusion of all others. And at the present time, more than at any other period in the last hundred years, does the ministry study diligently the history of its formation and the peculiar type of its theology; inculcate faithfully its doctrines upon the children and youth in the Sunday school and catechetical class, and upon the adult membership from the pulpit; and seek to appropriate, and diffuse among the people, the deep spirit of earnest devotion to Jesus Christ and his kingdom, which breathes in its simple and beautiful language.

#### THE GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

The present theological status, however, of the church, its mode of worship, its customs and practical life, have been modified by the religious life of America; on the one side, by the doctrinal thinking of Puritanism, and on the other, by the enthusiastic zeal of Methodism; by the later philosophy and theology developed on the continent of Europe; by the teaching and moulding influence of its own colleges and seminaries; and by the controversies of the last twenty years,

with Lutheran, Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches, on measures for the promotion of true practical religion, on the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the person of Christ, the mystical union, the rule of faith, and other correlative questions. To understand and appreciate this status, theological and practical, a brief review of these events is necessary.

The history of the German Reformed church in America divides itself naturally into *three* periods: the first, is the period of formation, of immediate connection with and dependence upon the church of Holland, and extends to the year 1792; the second extends to the year 1825, and may be characterized as the period of confusion and retrogression; the third commences with the establishment of a theological seminary, and may be called the period of revival, consolidation, and of internal and external progress.

#### I. *The First Period* — 1710 — 1792.

The church owes its origin in America to the large immigration of Germans, mostly from the Palatinate, Switzerland, and certain provinces of France, which began as early as 1682, and continued, in increasing numbers, through the whole of the last century.<sup>1</sup> They settled in Maine, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia; but the liberal policy of William Penn, granting equal protection to all sects, made Pennsylvania the central point of emigration. Many even who had first settled in New York, removed, on account of bad treatment by the civil authorities, from that state and settled in Pennsylvania. In 1730 the Reformed population numbered about *fifteen* thousand; and in 1746 they had increased to *thirty* thousand.

The first church was a log building erected in Skippack, Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, in 1726; and the first minister, the Rev. George M. Weiss, who landed in com-

<sup>1</sup> For valuable statistical and historical facts respecting the emigration of Germans to America during the last century, see the General Introduction to a Collection of Thirty thousand Names, edited by I. Daniel Rupp.



pany with four hundred Palatines, at Philadelphia, Sept. 21, 1727, and settled in Skippack, where he organized the first German Reformed church, near the close of the same year.<sup>1</sup> The most prominent man of this period is the Rev. Michael Schlatter, of St. Gall, Switzerland, who was commissioned, by the North and South synods of Holland, to take charge of the whole German Reformed interest in America. He arrived at Boston in August, 1746; settled in Philadelphia; visited all the settlements and congregations in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia; organized new congregations and charges; superintended the settlement of pastors; induced a number of Reformed ministers of Germany and Switzerland to follow him to the new world; called for and received large contributions, in Bibles and money, from England and the continent,—the Bibles for distribution among the people, and the money for the support of pastors and school teachers; and by these means bringing order out of confusion, he effected a somewhat uniform organization of all the churches. As the result of his explorations, he reported forty-six congregations.<sup>2</sup>

On his arrival, Schlatter took immediate steps towards the organization of a synod. A preliminary meeting having been held the year before, the first synod,<sup>3</sup> or coetus as it was called,

<sup>1</sup> Harbaugh's *Life of Rev. Michael Schlatter*, pp. 36, 39, et al. This work contains the fullest and most satisfactory history of the German Reformed Church of America during the eighteenth century, in the English language. Weiss was sent as a missionary to the German Reformed in America by the upper consistory, or classis, of the Palatinate, and assisted on his way by the classis of Amsterdam. Vid. also Harbaugh's *Lives of the Fathers of the Ger. Ref. Church in Europe and America*, Vol. I. p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Of these, *thirty-eight* were in Pennsylvania, *four* in Virginia, *two* in Maryland, and *two* in New Jersey. Vid. *Min. of Synod Ger. Ref. Ch., 1817*, containing a report on the origin and progress of the synod, drawn up by a committee, consisting of Rev. Messrs. William Hendel, D.D., Henry Hoffmeier, and Caspar Wack.

<sup>3</sup> The synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church was organized in New York, with the consent and approval of the classis of Amsterdam, on the 14th of September, 1747, just fifteen days previous to the organization of the German Reformed synod.—Harbaugh's *Schlatter*, p. 56. The synod of the Lutheran Church was organized in Philadelphia nearly a year later, August 14th, 1748. See Hazelius's *Hist. of American Luth. Ch.* p. 66.

was held in Philadelphia, Sept. 29, 1747, subject to the authority and supervision of the synod of Holland. There were present five ministers and twenty-six elders. This subordinate relation to the Reformed church of Holland continued until 1792, a period of forty-five years. The proceedings were annually transmitted to the mother synod, and approved or disapproved. New cases pertaining to order and discipline arising, they were in like manner referred, and process suspended until instructions were received. It was the court of ultimate appeal on all judicial questions. In return, the synod of Holland provided the German churches of America with well-educated ministers and teachers, and supported them by regular annual appropriations; sent to them Bibles, catechisms, and hymn-books; and fostered them, from year to year, in the spirit of a kind and tender parent. They constituted, in fact, the American mission of the Reformed church of Europe, and the synods of Holland were an efficient missionary society,—the thing without the name,—sustaining a relation to the American churches somewhat like that of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the churches established by its missionaries.

The natural result of such a dependent condition was the continuation of a purely *German* church on American soil, in the midst of different nationalities. Separated by ecclesiastical and social customs, and especially by difference of language, the laity, who were generally poor and devoted to agriculture, and the clergy, the large majority of whom served from four to eight and sometimes a dozen congregations, which were scattered over a whole county, or over several counties, remained in an isolated state, reflecting the scholarship, culture, theology, worship, piety, and social life of the Reformed church in the mother country.

## II. *The Second Period.* — 1792 — 1825.

The *second* period in the history of the church in America begins with the dissolution of the connection and regular correspondence with the synods of Holland, 1792. The

church of Holland ceased to have direct supervision and control over the German Reformed synod; it was now left to its own limited resources and to the deteriorating influences of isolation and great spiritual destitution. Educated ministers, duly accredited by ecclesiastical officers, were no longer sent over, from year to year, to supply vacant congregations, which were annually increasing in number by the natural increase of population and the continued influx of German emigrants. Missionary support was withdrawn. The necessity of industrious toil, of frugality and economy, added to the natural desire of acquiring property, was not favorable to the cultivation of liberality among the people. The salary of ministers, in many cases, was not increased in proportion to the loss of foreign appropriations; and they were constrained, not only by the prevailing spiritual destitutions, but also by pecuniary considerations, to extend their labors over a large scope of territory. In some instances, the growing family of the pastor rendered manual labor necessary. He had to till the ground or pursue some other calling. The tendency was to secularize the mind of the ministry. The greater part of their time on horseback, travelling from church to church, situated from ten to fifty, or more, miles apart, in the conscientious performance of ministerial duty, preaching, catechizing the young, and officiating at funerals, and when at home required to superintend the cultivation of a small farm, — there was evidently but little time for reading and systematic study. Those laborious and self-sacrificing servants of Jesus Christ deserve high commendation and profound gratitude from those succeeding them, who reap the fruits of their toil; yet we cannot overlook the tendency and effect of the circumstances of their position. Gradually they lost somewhat of their interest in theological science and general literature, and even, in some cases, in the general prosperity of the church, and with it also a lively sense of their value and importance.

Other causes operated to the injury of the church. Some excellent men, orthodox, learned, and pious, coming from the fatherland, were added to the ministry. But the number was

comparatively small — by no means adequate to the growing wants of the church. There was also a door open for the ingress of another class of foreigners. Some possessed learning without piety; some, piety without learning; and others possessed neither learning nor piety. Yet many of them found access to vacant congregations; some with, and others without, the sanction of synod.

Another class of ministers came from the bosom of the American church. Of these a few, since there was no German Reformed theological seminary in existence, acquired a theological education in the seminaries of sister denominations, and of course were moulded by a system of thought differing from, or more or less foreign to, that of the Heidelberg catechism. Some prosecuted a course of study privately, under the direction of synod or of individual ministers. Among the more prominent of the latter class, who may be regarded as pastoral professors of theology, appointed by common consent, were the Rev. Christian L. Becker, D. D.,<sup>1</sup> of Baltimore, Rev. Frederick L. Herman, D. D.,<sup>2</sup> of New Hanover, Pa., and Rev. Samuel Helffenstein,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Born in Anhalt-Coeten, Germany, November 17, 1756. At eighteen entered the University of Halle, and remained four years. Spent fourteen years in Bremen as *Candidatus Theologicae*, when he embarked for America, 1793. Pastor successively in Northampton county and Lancaster, Pa. Accepted a call to Baltimore, 1806, and continued to the time of his death, 1818. Possessed a strong mind brought under strict scientific discipline. An acute, logical thinker. A preacher of impassioned eloquence. He prepared from twelve to fourteen young men for the ministry. (Harbaugh's *Guardian*, Vol. IX. p. 305.)

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Herman was a regularly educated man, having received his classical and theological training in the University of Halle. He instructed his students, of whom there were from two to six at a time, in Latin, Greek, History, Moral Philosophy, Theology, etc. He gave them his own carefully-written lectures to transcribe, and afterwards examined them on the different subjects; but these examinations were not regular. No formal lectures were delivered. From sixteen to eighteen young men are known to have been prepared by him for the ministry. (Letter from Dr. B. S. Schneck, a pupil.)

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Helffenstein still survives, in the eighty-eight year of his age, and is blessed with a considerable degree of mental and bodily vigor. He is the oldest minister, in office and in years, of the German Reformed church. He was educated by the direction of synod, which placed him, from 1792 to 1796, under the instruction of Mr. Melsheimer, Rev. Mr. Stock, and Dr. Hendel. While pastor of the Ger. Ref. Ch., Race Street, Philadelphia, he prepared more young men for the ministry than any other clergyman.

D. D. of Philadelphia, who had, each, from two to four, and sometimes six, young men at a time under their tuition. They studied from two to four years. Living in the house of their preceptor, he heard their recitations at his convenience, or as inclination prompted. In turn the young men, during the last year of their studies, assisted the pastor in the discharge of his parochial duties.<sup>1</sup>

Two evils followed, unavoidably, from this method of training ministers of the gospel. One was, the lowering of the standard of ministerial qualification. The first ministers were, for the most part, graduates of the gymnasiums and universities of Europe, and therefore well qualified to impart instruction to others. But with the duties of a large pastoral charge resting upon them, it was possible to give but little time and attention to their pupils. The advantages of students being so limited, and the course of study short, the discipline of mind and the knowledge of theology which they obtained, compared with that of the earlier ministers, could not but be defective. In the course of time some of these, in turn, became pastoral professors; and being less qualified than their predecessors, their pupils possessed still fewer advantages than they had enjoyed. Synod made strenuous efforts to maintain a high standard of ministerial qualification; yet from the operation of these causes, the tendency was necessarily downward.

The other evil was the introduction into the church of discordant elements. As instructors the pastors were not subject to the control or supervision of synod. Though receiving the Heidelberg Catechism as an authoritative exponent of the sacred scriptures, yet they were at liberty to put upon it each one his own interpretation, which in one case was Calvinistic, in another Arminian; in a third, it

<sup>1</sup> After the establishment of a theological seminary (1825), this system of training ministers had, in a great measure, to give way. Yet it was continued for many years, particularly among the original opponents of the seminary enterprise. The system is still in vogue; not, however, so much from opposition to the seminary, as from motives of convenience and economy, and sometimes from defective views of theological education.

might be rationalistic, and in a fourth fanatical. Each instructor impressed the type of his own theology upon his pupils, and his peculiar views concerning measures for the promotion of practical religion. The consequence may easily be imagined. The whole number of ministers was small, in 1817 not more than forty-two;<sup>1</sup> yet there were divergent tendencies actively at work, which hindered the prosperity of the church, and even rendered its existence problematical.

The church was drifting. Nominally the Heidelberg Catechism was the confession of faith and the book of instruction in the catechetical class for the entire synod; but not in fact. Some did not swerve. They adhered firmly to the catechism. They loved the old. Others desired something else. By the authority of synod, an abstract, prepared in Europe, was sanctioned and introduced. But it was really another catechism. Constructed on a different theory of Christianity, it retained indeed very much of the matter of the old; but its parts were transposed, and a spirit was infused that was new and foreign to the original genius of the church. It bore the name of the Heidelberg Catechism, but was not the thing. The evil, however, did not end here. Some prominent men prepared catechisms *de novo*. One was good; another not. Yet neither breathed the spirit of the Reformation symbol of faith. Entire charges, each composed of several congregations, thus sundered their connection with the true life of the church, and were perpetuated in ignorance of the faith of their fathers. So deep did this evil strike its roots into the soil, that it has not been wholly eradicated to the present day. There are still some ministers who persist in their refusal to teach the Heidelberg Catechism.

The operation of these various causes enfeebled the general life. The people suffered intellectually as well as spiritually. Very few congregations had public worship once a week, or even regularly once every two weeks. The rule was once in four weeks. All, however, were not so highly favored.

<sup>1</sup> And ten licentiates.

Some had to be satisfied with the services of a minister once in eight weeks ; others, even, once in twelve weeks.<sup>1</sup> What else could be done? Having charge of from six to ten, twelve, and fifteen churches, and some of them situated many miles apart, a faithful shepherd could do no more. The alternative was, to divide his time among all, and preach to the people as often on Sunday and during the week as was possible ; or, to limit himself to two or three flocks, and permit the rest to be destroyed by prowling wolves. Ministers generally elected the former alternative ; and the subsequent prosperity of the church has demonstrated the wisdom of their choice.

Catechetical instruction, instead of occupying six months in the year, had, in these circumstances, to be reduced to seven weeks in two or three years ; and young persons were admitted to the holy communion by the rite of confirmation, who were wanting both in knowledge of the gospel and genuine Christian experience. The schools retrograded, because good teachers were not generally accessible, and the people, no longer appreciating properly the importance of an elementary education, lowered the wages of teachers and sent their children to school only two or three months in twelve. Few German books were in circulation. The Bible and catechism, the hymn-book, Starck's Gebetbuch and Arndt's Wahres Christenthum, which were to be found in the majority of families, nourished the lambent flame of Christian devotion ; but, the language and literature of the country being English, a language which they neither spoke nor understood, nor, with few exceptions, desired to learn,

<sup>1</sup> Many settlements and scores of congregations could not be supplied at all. During the first quarter of the present century there were a number of congregations in New York, New Jersey, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, which were visited by a missionary sent by synod, only at long intervals, who would preach several times, administer the sacraments, and then return. In 1820, according to the records, there were twenty-eight in North Carolina, eight in South Carolina, and eight in Tennessee, how many in the other states named we are unable to state, as the records are silent. But for want of ministers all these have long since been broken up, those in North Carolina and several in Western New York only excepted.

the people as a body were not in the main current of American progress, but pursuing their peaceful avocations in the rural districts, were content to circulate in the eddies of life under the banks.

In consequence of all these disadvantages, the language of the people deteriorated. Speaking a German dialect, comparatively pure at first, it became more and more corrupt. Many good and necessary words became obsolete. Nameless articulations, and English words and phrases, took their place. An unmusical, nondescript jargon came thus into vogue, that was neither adapted to the pulpit nor to the catechetical class, and could only serve as a poor medium of ordinary intercourse in the common affairs of life. The minister employed the *German* language in the pulpit, nor did public opinion allow him to condescend to the use of a dialect less sacred and dignified. But the language he employed the people never spoke, and the youth and less intelligent could but imperfectly understand it. Only the older and more earnest portion of the membership, who read their Bibles and devotional books regularly, were qualified by language properly to appreciate a sermon.

Taking a general view of the church, there has been vast improvement and progress during the last thirty years; yet the evil as to language has, in one respect, become greater instead of less. German schools have nearly all become extinct; and English schools have everywhere taken their place, not only in German communities speaking English, but also in populous districts where the Pennsylvania dialect is the only living language. Children and youth learn to read and write the English language, but cannot speak it. They read a language which they do not understand, and speak a language which they cannot read. Not unfrequently is it the case in some sections, mostly of Pennsylvania, but also, to some extent, of Maryland and Ohio, that the school teacher, in order to be understood, must converse in German with the children to whom he teaches English; and the pastor, in order to impart religious instruction in the catechetical class, is required to expound the *English* cate-



chism in the *German* language, — a great practical evil, for which, though diminishing slowly, there seems at the present time to be no remedy. No one born and bred outside of the American German population, can form a just conception of the character and seemingly tardy onward movement of the German Reformed<sup>1</sup> church, who is ignorant of, or chooses not to consider, this complication of downward forces, which, strictly speaking, the church is not responsible for, but which have been superinduced by the spirit and course of the age. Those portions of the church which have successfully accomplished the transition from German to English, are indeed relieved of the great disadvantages arising from the poverty of the Pennsylvania dialect and the difference of language; but they have been exposed to the action of a foreign element, no less dangerous in its nature and influence upon its original genius and order; of which, however, we shall speak hereafter.

What with the small number of able ministers, a defective education of the rising ministry, the introduction of unworthy men, the partial removal of the ancient formulary of faith, the composition and use of new catechisms, the large pastoral charges and unfrequent preaching of the gospel, the unavoidable loss, in a great degree, of regular catechetical instruction, the deterioration of the Pennsylvania dialect, the want of good teachers and good schools, the scarcity of German books, and the bringing in of the English language, neither spoken nor understood by thousands of the people; — the masses unconsciously sunk into religious ignorance and spiritual lethargy; the church as a whole, while the number of ministers and members was gradually increasing, retrograded intellectually, theologically, and morally; and many abuses pertaining to order, discipline, and customs, came to prevail, notwithstanding all the efforts of devoted and godly men to prevent them.

In 1792 the church had *nineteen* ministers. We have no

<sup>1</sup> The same evil prevails also in large sections of the Lutheran church. The two confessions are established side by side, and in numerous instances worship alternately in the same building.

means of determining the number of members or congregations. In 1825, *thirty-three* years later, and *eighty-seven* years after the meeting of the first synod, the ministry had increased to *eighty*. On the basis of the statistical table annexed to the Minutes of Synod for 1824, which, however, is very defective, the number of communicants may, we think, be safely estimated at *eighteen thousand*.

### III. *Third Period, from 1825. — The Theological Seminary.*

The need of institutions of learning had been deeply felt by leading men among the ministry and laity for many years. To this feeling "Franklin College,"<sup>1</sup> chartered by the Legislature of Pennsylvania in March, 1787, and located at Lancaster, owes its existence. It never, however, rose to the position of a regularly organized college, and rendered but little service to the church in the way of promoting classical and theological education. Another institution was required. Initiatory steps were taken to found a theological seminary as early as 1817, and each succeeding year the question occupied the attention of synod; but what with the indifference of some ministers, the opposition of others, the

<sup>1</sup> The occasion and design of the institution appears from the preamble to the act of incorporation, which endowed it with ten thousand acres of public lands: "Whereas the citizens of this state of German birth or extraction have eminently contributed by their industry, economy, and public virtues to raise the state to its present happiness and prosperity: And whereas a number of citizens of the above description, in conjunction with others, from a desire to increase and perpetuate the blessings derived to them from the possession of prosperity and a free government, have applied to this house for a charter of incorporation, and a donation of lands for the purpose of establishing a college and charity school in the borough of Lancaster: And whereas the preservation of the principles of the Christian religion and of our republican form of government in their purity, depend, under God, in a great measure, on the establishment and support of suitable places of education for the purpose of training up a succession of youth, who, by being able to understand the grounds of both, may be led the more zealously to practise the one, and the more strenuously to defend the other. Therefore," etc. The board of trustees was composed one third of Reformed, one third of Lutherans, and the remainder of persons from other denominations.

<sup>2</sup> A sermon preached before the Alumni Association of the theological seminary of the German Reformed church, 1853, by Rev. Amos H. Kremer, gives a succinct and full history of the origin and progress of the institution. The only history extant.

prejudices of the people, the want of a suitable person to fill the professorship of theology, and the want of funds, seven years elapsed before the project became a reality. Finally, the synod of Bedford,<sup>1</sup> 1824, located the seminary at Carlisle, and elected the Rev. Lewis Mayer, D. D. professor of theology, who opened the school in March, 1825. This event marks the most important epoch in the history of the German Reformed church in America. It introduced a new element of power, which has revived its energies, developed its resources, restored its theology, established its character, extended its influence, and supplied its destitutions with able and efficient ministers.

In 1829 the seminary was removed to York. A classical department soon became necessary. It was established in the fall of 1831. At the meeting of synod at Frederick, 1832, Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Rauch<sup>2</sup> was chosen principal of the classical school and professor of biblical literature in the seminary. In November, 1835, the classical school was removed to Mercersburg, a village in Franklin county, the theological students remaining at York to complete their course of study under professor Mayer. He resigned in 1837. The seminary then followed the classical school to Mercersburg, and for the time being the theological students were placed under the direction and tuition of the professor of biblical literature, Dr. Rauch.

The classical school was erected into *Marshall College* by the legislature of Pennsylvania, in March, 1836. Dr. Rauch was chosen President.

In 1838, synod re-elected Dr. Mayer professor of theology.

<sup>1</sup>As illustrating the internal condition of the church, it is worthy of note that when the vote was taken on the resolution to establish a seminary in connection with Dickinson College, the best and most practicable proposition that had been made, the result was a tie. The president, Rev. Wm. Hendel, D. D., a most earnest supporter, amid much persecution, of the project, then gave the casting vote in its favor. To one man belongs the responsibility and the honor of inaugurating the institution that for seven years had been struggling to come into existence.

<sup>2</sup>Son of a minister of the Reformed church, Kirchbracht, Hesse Darmstadt, where he was born, July 27, 1806.

He removed to Mercersburg and taught one year, when, being in very feeble health, he again tendered his resignation.

Dr. Mayer had not received a regular classical education, nor had he pursued a course of study in a theological seminary, but was, in a great measure, what is called a self-made man; yet he attained to eminence as a preacher, scholar, theologian, and author. His principal teacher was Rev. Daniel Wagner, then pastor in Frederick, Md. By close application he mastered the classic languages and Hebrew. "His acquaintance with various systems of philosophy and theology, both in this country and Europe,—in Germany especially,—was very extensive. His mind was peculiarly adapted to the study of biblical antiquities, hermeneutics, exegesis, and didactic, polemic and pastoral theology. In these studies he excelled."<sup>1</sup> To his labors and influence as pastor, and his industry, perseverance, zeal, and ability as professor, the church is perhaps more indebted than to any other man for the origination and permanent establishment of its theological seminary. The title of doctor of divinity was conferred on him by Rutgers College, New Brunswick, in 1829.

The vacant professorship was filled by the unanimous election of Rev. John W. Nevin, D. D.,<sup>2</sup> then professor of oriental and biblical literature in the theological seminary of the Presbyterian church, Alleghany, Pa., in January, 1840, at a meeting of a special general synod convened in Chambersburg. He accepted the call, and was inaugurated as professor of theology on the 20th of May ensuing.

Dr. Rauch died in March, 1841. Two offices were vacated by his untimely death: the presidency of Marshall College, and the professorship of biblical literature in the seminary. The first office Dr. Nevin was chosen to fill, in the same

<sup>1</sup> Life of Rev. Dr. Mayer, by Rev. E. Heiner, prefixed to Mayer's History of the German Reformed Church, Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Nevin is a graduate of Union College, Schenectady, and of the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J. On closing his theological course, 1826, he acted for two years as Dr. Hodge's substitute, while he was in Europe, in the department of Oriental and Biblical Literature. To this same department he was called in the Western Seminary at Alleghany, in 1829. Before he left there, the department of Ecclesiastical History fell also to his charge by the withdrawal of Dr. Halsey.

year, and from this time on he labored in the twofold capacity of president of the college and professor of theology until 1853, when Marshall College was removed to Lancaster, and, in virtue of a new act of incorporation, passed in April, 1850, united to Franklin College. He resigned the professorship of theology and the presidency of the college in 1852.

The professorship of biblical literature continued vacant for more than three years. In January, 1843, synod elected Rev. Frederick William Krummacher, D. D., then pastor of the Reformed church of Elberfeld, Prussia, and transmitted the call to him by two commissioners, Rev. Drs. T. S. Hofeditz and B. S. Schneck, who were instructed, in case the professor elect should decline the call, to make inquiry after a man qualified, by character and scholarship, to fill the professorship. The commissioners failing to secure the services of Dr. Krummacher, Dr. Philip Schaff,<sup>1</sup> lecturer in the university of Berlin, was elected unanimously, on the recommendation of Dr. Neander and Dr. Hengstenberg of Berlin, Dr. Tholuck and Dr. Julius Mueller of Halle, Dr. Krummacher of Elberfeld, and many other eminent professors and divines of Germany. Dr. Schaff accepted the call and was inaugurated in the city of Reading, Oct. 25, 1844.

We have grouped these historical facts together, because they are closely inwoven with the religious and theological development of the church during the last thirty years; and it is difficult, if not impossible, properly to appreciate the present status without some knowledge of the process which has determined it.

#### *Dr. Rauch.*

The views of Christianity prevailing in the German Reformed church are intimately connected with the philosophy taught in her institutions. Nor is the fact singular. The science of revealed truth can never be sundered from science

<sup>1</sup> From the Reformed Church of Switzerland, Canton of Grisons, educated in the Universities of Tübingen, Halle, and Berlin, and the author of works on the "Sin against the Holy Ghost" and "St. James." He has since written various works on Church History, on Germany, America, the Principle of Protestantism, Hymnology, etc. Vid. Appleton's New American Cyclopaedia.

in general. A generic method of thought must underlie and determine the formal character of particular branches or departments of science. •

The labors of Dr. Mayer waked up the attention of the church to the necessity of a higher standard of intellectual and theological culture. But Dr. Rauch gave the first impulse to the prevailing system of thought. Possessing a mind of the finest mould, a graduate of the university of Marburg, a student of philosophy and theology in Giessen and Heidelberg, and subsequently professor of philosophy successively in these two celebrated universities, he came to this country a finished classical scholar, an erudite theologian, and a philosopher at once acute, profound, and Christian. Philosophy was his favorite sphere of study. "He was at home in the philosophy of Great Britain, as well as in that of Germany, and knew accurately the points of contact and divergency by which the relations of the two systems of thought to one another, generally considered, are characterized."<sup>1</sup> Becoming acquainted with American life and American modes of thought, he aimed, as president of the college, at the development of an Anglo-German philosophy, — not the simple transfer of German thoughts into the English language, but the living reproduction of the manifold truths of German systems in an English form, on the basis of a valid principle organically unfolded, and in the light of supernatural revelation.<sup>2</sup> To this end he devoted his untiring energies as a student, a teacher, and an author;

<sup>1</sup> Eulogy on Dr. Rauch by Dr. Nevin, *Mer. Rev.* Vol. XI. 1859, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> His work on *Psychology*, published the summer before his death, was the beginning of what he had it in contemplation to attempt for the interests of literature in this way. This was to be followed by a work on *Christian Ethics*, and another on *Aesthetics*; all taken together were designed to form a complete whole. To his *Christian Ethics* he had given a great deal of time and study. "The plan of the work," he says, in a letter from Saratoga to Dr. Nevin, written several months before his death, "lies now before me, the whole with all its connections and parts clear and distinct, like a transparent crystal." For his views of the Person of Christ, and the doctrines of Christianity in general, see *Rauch's Inner Life of the Christian*, a memorial volume, consisting of seventeen discourses, selected from his manuscript sermons. Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston. 1856.

and succeeded in moulding the institution to a method of thinking, which, modified and perfected by his successors, it has retained to the present time, and developed in its legitimate bearings upon psychology, theology, and the entire circle of the sciences.

*Anglo-German Philosophy.*

In general, we may say that the philosophy taught in the institutions of the church is neither rationalism nor pantheism, neither sensationalism nor transcendentalism in any false sense, but really Christian. The spirit it instils into mind, and the character it gives to all metaphysical reflection, is subservient and favorable to orthodox scientific theology and true practical religion.

A full statement of the system we cannot, of course, attempt. We must content ourselves with a specification of its leading characteristics.

The method of thinking may be characterized, first and foremost, as *objective*. Mind and matter, in all their forms and relations, exist and continue to be, as to their constitution, in no relation of dependence upon human consciousness and human will, but in virtue of God, the Creator, who has not unfolded himself in the universe, but has spoken it into being by an act of his will informing the word of power, he continuing to be the absolute personality, after as before the creation. Law is not the conception of a uniform order of antecedence and consequence, not the formal utterance of authority, nor in any sense the result of a series of experiments, of comparison or intuitive knowledge; but it is the form of the divine will in a person or thing, determining its nature and various relations to be what they are, and receives different names according to the different classes of objects respectively which it informs. A principle is not invented nor originated by profound thinking, — not a true proposition, nor a notional idea. It is in a single object, or class, and may be discovered and predicated of it by thought. Relations are not made; they are not because affirmed, nor do they cease to be because denied; they are the necessities

according to which part demands and answers to part in the constitution of an object, or class, or division, or the universal whole of being. Scientific knowledge originates neither in thought, nor in objects as such, but is a totality—a resultant in which both thought and its objects are complementary factors. Determined, as to form, by the categories and laws of the reason active spontaneously, not by volition, inclination, or caprice; and, as to contents, not by *a priori* ideas, but by the in-being of the object; science, if valid and legitimate, is the pure reproduction, by thinking, and the ideal existence, of its object. Philosophy has its own laws and conditions, which determine its spirit and order, and may not be violated by the reason, which is but its organ.

The activity of a person or thing is normal when governed by its own law. The human will is free when determined by *its* law, which is not in itself only, but also in its proper object, which is God. God utters himself in his will. His will is the objective truth for the human will, and answers to it as light does to the eye, or as a pure atmosphere to the lungs. Moral action, like knowledge, has two elements, formal and material; the one is given by the human will; it may resolve for or against an object; the other, the substance or truth of a moral action, is given by the moral law. The internal union of both is human freedom. The human will is not free when the substance or contents of its action is given by any object other than God; for it then comes under the power of an object which is foreign to its inherent demands.

The opposite method is *subjective*. The essence of objects cannot be known: only its phenomena. On the assumption that the phenomena of an object differ from its intrinsic nature, the determinative force of that nature is not allowed a place in science. Science becomes a collection and classification of phenomena, the classification being an arrangement formed by thought and will. Experience and consciousness are the measure of entities, laws, relations, forces. The human will is determined by itself; not by the objective law of right. Freedom is choice. The form of freedom



is substituted for its substance, the controlling power of the objective truth being ignored.

The tendencies of the age are regarded as subjective. The general mind failing to distinguish clearly between being and the idea or conception of it, is predisposed to resolve things into notions. The English language no longer has a name for that which is not in any sense subjective; the proper one, *object*, being employed commonly as equivalent to *end*, *design*, or *purpose*, namely, a conception which the mind sets before itself and seeks to reach or actualize.

The method of thought may also be characterized as *organic*, its opposite as *mechanical*; as *concrete*, its opposite as *abstract*; and as *necessary* and *internal*, and its opposite as *arbitrary* and *external*.

For want of space, we must, contrary to our design, omit a further delineation of these general characteristics.

#### *The Transition of Dr. Nevin.*

Dr. Nevin was associated with Dr. Rauch at Mercersburg only for one year, the last year of his life. But this was sufficient to establish a bond of living fellowship between the first and second president of Marshall college, and perpetuate Anglo-German philosophy with undiminished power. A sense of dissatisfaction with Scotch philosophy and Calvinistic theology, as taught in the seminaries of the Presbyterian church, joined with great respect for the German mind, German science and literature, and the German character, predisposed Dr. Nevin to regard favorably, and sympathize cordially with, the theology of the Reformed church and the philosophy taught in Marshall college. His thorough scholarship, earnest character, and ability as a strong, comprehensive and profound thinker, soon won the confidence, regard, and affection of Dr. Rauch. In turn, Dr. Nevin found himself attracted to his colleague from the start; and further acquaintance only served to strengthen and confirm the first impression. In a short time he learned to regard him, to use his own words, as "one of the very first minds

in Germany.”<sup>1</sup> A close and intimate connection was at once formed, not only of friendship, but especially of thought and life. Prepared as Nevin already was for the change, this connection aided and facilitated a real, inward transition to the very bosom of the new element of theological thinking and moral sentiment in which he was now placed. And when he was chosen president, he became the successor not only in name, but in spirit also, to Dr. Rauch.

In his new sphere of labor, Dr. Nevin became a close student of the genius and history of the Heidelberg Catechism ; of the theology in general of the Reformation ; of German systems of philosophy ; and of modern German theology as related to the faith of the primitive church and to the status of American Protestantism, considered theoretically and practically. As a result of his studies and his own observation, he was convinced that the churches of the Reformation, transplanted to American soil, had, in great measure, given up their original faith, had come under the power of a spirit foreign to the Reformation symbols, and were really, unwelcome as was the charge, drifting on the broad current of rationalism. The German Reformed church, with others, influenced by the circumstances already described, had also, in a great degree, forsaken its own original denominational character, and subjected, in the absence of a counteracting force sufficiently strong, to the power of Puritan and Methodist modes of thought, was rapidly undergoing a transformation into the image of a foreign system. Regarding such a surrender as a great moral wrong and a spiritual loss, he felt constrained to speak and write freely on the general issue and various particular points of difference. The old life, theology, and doctrines of the Reformation period he reproduced, in bold contrast with the reigning unsacramental theology and subjective practical religion, condemning these in unsparing terms as contrary to the sacred scriptures and the faith of our fathers, as exhibited in all the Reformed confessions, and as prejudicial to the progress of the church and the spiritual interests of men.

<sup>1</sup> Nevin's Eulogy, *Mer. Rev.*, Vol. XI p. 456.

*The Theological Controversies.*

As was to be expected, the utterance of such views excited opposition in and out of the church. It inaugurated a succession of controversies on new measures, the sacraments, — first, the Lord's Supper, then Baptism, — the person of Christ, the mystical union, modern Protestantism, the rule of faith, and liturgical worship. The question of Protestantism was discussed as underlying all the other issues, yet it came prominently into view at one time more than at another. With but short intermissions, these earnest controversies have agitated the church, and sometimes convulsed it, down to the present time. It was, and still is, not a conflict of single disconnected ideas, but a conflict of systems of thought and systems of faith; and involves the fundamental questions in metaphysics, and the entire range of Christian doctrine. The theology of the church incorporates its philosophy; and the philosophy depends upon its theology. The theology asserting itself and seeking to obtain a firm footing, is the application of an objective and organic mode of thinking to the facts of divine revelation; and the philosophy moulding the mind of the church is governed by, and dependent upon, the principle of faith, a principle which is both natural and revealed, a primary element of our being, and an obligation imposed by authority of Jesus Christ. The questions in controversy, accordingly, are not many, but one. They are bound together internally by the force of one central truth, and touch the general thinking of the age no less than particular doctrines.

These controversies have carried the mind of the church through a process of intense thought, the final result of which is the revival of the old theology in a new form; a process, however, that was not forced upon the church mechanically, or, as it were, by external pressure. No violence was done to the general mind. It was a life process, free and natural; excited indeed by external occasions, and conducted chiefly by a few individuals, but sustained and animated by the warm pulsations of the German Reformed heart.

A portion of the ministry had, all along, been deeply

imbued with the genuine spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism. Their theology was cast in its mould. They had been silently protesting against the unsacramental and unchurchly tendencies at work around them. Others, possessing less earnestness, nevertheless studied and taught the catechism. Though not animated consciously by its theological life, they were yet controlled more by it than by any other system. The seminary had been in operation for eighteen years, and the greater number of the younger portion of the ministry had gone forth from its halls. These had enjoyed educational advantages superior to those of many of the older ministry. The pupils of Dr. Mayer adhered to the customs of the church, and, as a body, faithfully defended her order and doctrines against opposing theories. The pupils of Dr. Rauch had received a thorough training in Anglo-German philosophy, which arrayed them in conflict with subjective and abstract views of Christianity. Though some of them were for a while borne along by the tide of religious enthusiasm, it was with deep inward dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, and painful apprehension of the consequences. The same thing is true of others who were betrayed into unchurchly measures. Those portions of the church which had quietly laid aside the Heidelberg Catechism and adopted another in its stead, had nevertheless maintained a firm opposition to the theory of a twofold decree, election and reprobation, and to Methodistic revival measures; and continued to hold elevated views of the spiritual value and necessity of the sacraments. Divergent tendencies indeed there were of a threatening character; and a great deal of lifeless formalism in some portions of the church, while the fires of fanaticism were burning in others; yet there was an undertone of thinking and feeling which was in full harmony with the genius of the catechism. Its vigorous spirit was alive in many hearts; in others, it slumbered; but it was nowhere utterly extinct.

Still the theology of the catechism had not asserted its peculiar character in opposition to the contrary tendencies of the age. The points of contact and divergence had not been

defined. Nor was the church, to any extent, properly conscious of the real issues. Conservative and radical elements were working confusedly. The destiny of the old faith and order was trembling in the balance. At this solemn juncture the controversies began; and the bold negations and affirmations concerning educational religion, the sacraments, and the mystical union, evoked at once a heartfelt response. Fears and hopes, doubt and confidence, hesitation from a sense of danger, and a ready yielding from anticipation of good, combined to agitate the general mind to its very depths, indicating a state of preparedness to consider, earnestly and intelligently, the vital questions at issue, and a readiness to adopt principles of faith and practice that were grounded in the Reformation period. The exponent and defender of the old theology and customs, Dr. Nevin became also, in a sense unknown to himself, the organ of a slumbering vitality which awoke at the sound of his deep-toned voice, and of latent possibilities which were developed into conscious faith and manly action. This state of the general mind of the church accounts for the freedom and facility with which the clergy and laity accepted and defended his theological views as their own.

#### *The New Measure System.*

Following the order of time, we will first consider the issue taken in the anxious-bench controversy, which opened in 1843; the anxious-bench being regarded as the representative and type of the American revival system.<sup>1</sup> This system has well-defined and distinctive views of conversion and personal piety. Personal religion is a certain spiritual frame of mind and state of heart. The understanding is enlightened by the Holy Ghost, the will is governed by the law of God, and the affections are fixed on Christ. The condition is true faith in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ for sin. With-

<sup>1</sup> Represented in Finney's *Lectures on Revivals*, Sprague on *Revivals*, Davis's *Plea for New Measures*, Denig's *Strictures*, and the *Lutheran Observer*, 1842, 1843, 1844, edited by Rev. Benjamin Kurtz, D. D. The entire system of New Measures is reviewed in a small work, entitled, *A Tract for the Times: The Anxious Bench*, by John W. Nevin, D. D. 2d ed. Chambersburg, Pa. 1844.

out such a spiritual state of the person, Baptism is an empty rite and bestows no grace, and the Lord's Supper has no efficacy. Conversion is the change from the natural to the spiritual state. To bring it about, means are necessary to excite in the sinner a sense of guilt and danger, to beget a sincere purpose to forsake sin, to submit to Christ and follow him. These means are various : the word of God, the preaching of the gospel, a word fitly spoken, a startling event, an incident, death, etc., — but all are made effectual only by the Holy Ghost. A most important means is the anxious-bench, a front seat, in presence of the assembled congregation, where the awakened sinner is to sit to receive instruction, or kneel for prayer ; or some measure which is its equivalent. The sacrament of Baptism is no such means of grace. Practically all turns on a change of purpose, an act of will choosing the service of God, instead of sin and the world. The sinner can will to come or not to come to Christ. If he could not will thus, there would be no obligation to repent and believe. Ability is the measure of obligation : *non posse, non obligare*. Hence appliances are to be used to effect a right act of will. Faith is such an act of the will, surrendering to God, and reposing sincere trust in the atonement of Christ for salvation. There are special seasons when the Holy Ghost descends in great power, and many are made willing and converted. They come and pass away at irregular intervals, according to the good pleasure of God. They come also in answer to prayer, and would be much more frequent, if not continuous, if Christians were sufficiently prayerful. They are the hope of the church. The church is an assembly or society of converted persons ; and derives all its power for good from the spirituality, the devout and consistent lives of its members. Christ has established the church by revealing the principles on which such a spiritual society is to be organized and conducted ; and he perpetuates the society by the agency of his Spirit, who converts sinners that they may be qualified to become members.

Against this theory of practical religion, which we have

endeavored to state correctly, in as few words as possible, Dr. Nevin set his face. The theory is, at bottom, Pelagian. The fallen will has no power to determine itself against sin and for Christ. Religion does not consist in doing our duty with the help of the Holy Ghost. Nor is it a frame of mind, nor a state of the heart. Conversion is not, in one shape or another, the product of the sinner's own will. Personal religion is, strictly speaking, a new creation in Christ Jesus, — a new life, of which Christ is the principle and the sustaining power, lodged not in the will and affections, but in the core of his being, and manifesting itself in right views, purposes, feelings, and actions. This involves an inward vital union with Christ as real as the bond by which he is joined, in the first instance, to Adam. All turns on the action of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, in the church, by whom the sinner is thus apprehended and made a member of himself. Hence comes salvation. Salvation flows from Christ, who is the "true vine," into the members of his body, who are the branches. The subject of grace lives not, properly speaking, in the acts of his own will separately considered; but in the power of a vast generic life that lies wholly beyond his will, and manifests itself through him, as the law and type of his will itself, as well as of his whole being. "As born of the Spirit, in contradistinction from the flesh, he is himself spiritual, and capable of true righteousness. Thus his salvation begins, and thus it is carried forward, till it becomes complete in the resurrection of the great day. From first to last it is a power which he does not so much apprehend, as he is apprehended by it, and comprehended in it, and carried along with it, as something infinitely more deep and vast than himself."<sup>1</sup> Faith is the organ of the new creature, as the eye is of the body. As in the order of the first creation, the natural birth of the child into the world precedes the act of seeing and communing with the parent, so in the order of the second creation, the spiritual birth into the kingdom of heaven precedes the act of believing in Christ, and all conscious and voluntary communion with him.

<sup>1</sup> Nevin's *Anxious Bench*, p. 125.

Personal salvation begins in baptism, according to the ordinary method. Baptism is the act of Christ introducing the subject into the covenant of grace. Spiritual growth is maintained by parental instruction and prayer, by the spirit breathing in the daily life of a Christian family, by catechetical instruction, public worship, the preaching of the gospel, but mainly by the holy communion. In these means of grace the Holy Ghost abides (John xiv. 16). He does not abide and operate, savingly, in nature, in providence, in the pursuits of the world, and social life outside of the church. Being always present with equal power, the faithful use of the means of grace effects the conversion of the children of the covenant, and produces a regular, normal growth of all the Christian virtues. The true progress of the church is organic. It proceeds from and is supported by an internal principle, active according to the law of life in Christ Jesus. Want of faith in the ordinary means, calls for the use of extraordinary measures. These spring from Pelagian and unchurchly theology, and produce spasmodic excitements, which, by the law of reaction, must always be succeeded by seasons of listlessness and spiritual stupor, that will be baneful in the degree that the enthusiasm was intense and extended. The system of American revivals is hurtful in its influence upon personal piety and the interests of the church.

The unreserved utterance of such views fell upon the community like a flaming brand into a magazine. The excitement was intense and general, the larger portion of the church arising immediately to the decided support of them, whilst another portion as decidedly cast them out as evil. The most vehement and persevering opposition came from the part of the Lutheran church represented by the *Lutheran Observer*. Rev. Dr. Kurtz and Rev. Reuben Weiser<sup>1</sup> may be named as among the more prominent defenders of the new-measure system. In the course of a few years,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kurtz, as editor of the *Lutheran Observer*. Mr. Weiser is the author of a tract on the subject, entitled: "The Mourner's Bench, or an humble Attempt to vindicate New Measures."



however, it came to be generally seen and felt, in the German Reformed church, that the principle for which Dr. Nevin was contending, was the principle of the Heidelberg Catechism. He was the defender of the old faith and practice of the church.

We do not affirm that all the opinions which Dr. Nevin advanced during the controversy are held by a majority of ministers and laymen; but the central truth which he vindicated has become the principle of practice, with perhaps single exceptions, throughout the eastern synod of the German Reformed church; and, to a very great extent, also, in the western synod. The bench, inquiry meetings, protracted meetings, and periodical excitements,<sup>1</sup> are not in vogue. They are deprecated. A series of services is held, preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper, for several days. The principal festivals are generally observed,—Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension-day, and Whitsunday. Many churches hold daily services during passion-week. All the pastors gather the baptized youth of the church, and as many others as can be brought in, into the catechetical class,<sup>2</sup> which meets once or twice a week for three, four, or six months, and in

<sup>1</sup> "A firm faith in Christ, as the head and life of his church, renewing and sanctifying men by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, begets satisfaction with the ordinary operations of the Spirit, that is, with his operation according to the established order of the Church. Our ministers labor in more cheerful obedience to the economy of the kingdom of Heaven. There are comparatively but few lamentations in the reports of the classes over the want of, what are called, unusual manifestations or extraordinary outpourings of the Holy Ghost. This ought to be regarded as an indication of real progress in vital godliness, and a source of great encouragement; for it is the common operation of the Holy Spirit which is deep, resistless, abiding, and productive of the most abundant spiritual harvest."—Report on the State of Religion, Synod of Ger. Ref. Ch. 1856.

<sup>2</sup> "We may sum up the reports of the classes as highly favorable under the following points. . . . A disposition to indoctrinate the membership in the great fundamental truths of the scriptures and of our catechism. It is felt that this is the only way to preserve them from the tide of lax opinion, infidelity, new theories, and isms disseminated by an un sanctified desire to bring down all subjects to the most superficial judgment. . . . There has been, consequently, a disposition to sanctify the intellect by proper religious instruction from the Word of God, as is made evident by the attention given to confirmation and the necessary previous catechetical instruction. Nor has this been done at the sacrifice of personal piety in the least, as it is felt that no experience can be solid which is not based upon truth, and that both head and heart must be

some cases for nine months in succession. The members of the class commit and recite the creed, the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer, and as much of the catechism besides as is possible. The pastor expounds its truths, illustrates and enforces them upon the heart and conscience; the whole exercise being designed to promote repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In due time, as many as have sufficient knowledge of Christ, and give evidence of true faith in him, and of an earnest purpose to walk in newness of life, are, upon careful examination in presence of the elders, received into the full communion of the church by the rite of confirmation. This consists in the public *profession* of the Christian faith before the congregation, and in the solemn *introduction* of the catechumens into full membership of the church, on the ground

sanctified by a current of religious life which is deeper than either."—Rep. on State of Religion, Synod Ger. Ref. Ch. 1858.

"In proportion as the true nature of baptism is appreciated, will catechetical instruction be valued. All the classes testify that interest in this duty and privilege of the church is decidedly on the increase. Not only are pastors and parents awake to it, but there is on the part of the young a growing willingness and desire to accept its advantage; and the consequence is, that, in the language of one of the reports, 'The number of those who are received into the church by the solemn rite of confirmation is not only larger, but, what is better, they are being better fitted for church membership.' Another classis—and one most isolated in its geographical position from the traditional spirit and customs of the church, and most surrounded by the pressure of other views and feelings than those peculiar to our church—says: 'The catechization of the young, and their instruction in the truths of the catechism and the scriptures, have received a large share of the attention and constituted an important part of the work of the brethren during the past year; and it is an encouraging fact, that catechetical instruction is growing more and more with the membership, and especially with their children.'—Report, 1859.

"The spiritual training of the young, as also of the old, has apparently kept steady pace with the outward enlargement of the church. Many of the reports [of the classes] speak with great assurance of the good that has been accomplished in this way. If the statements there given are to be relied on, the brethren have learned the meaning and import of the great commission, as requiring them to go forth and make disciples of all nations, 'baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' and then completing this discipleship by teaching the baptized ones to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them. These two things must always go together. Both word and sacrament are necessary to realize the idea of God's kingdom."—Report, 1861.

of their Christian profession and experience, by the *laying on of hands* and *prayer* of the minister.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Rule of Faith.*

The different questions at issue in these controversies sustain a logical relation to each other, and to the idea of the church, considered as the mystical body of Christ, who is the head. This idea is fundamental in its determinative influence, giving unity and specific character to the whole theological movement. But at present we are following the historical order as nearly as it is practicable, and therefore proceed to consider the rule of faith which was brought prominently into view by the discussion arising (1844) on the publication of the *Principle of Protestantism*,<sup>2</sup> by Dr. Schaff.

After showing the catholic union of the Reformation with the previous history of the church, he unfolds the positive principle of Protestantism as *material* and *formal*; the one being the *justification of the sinner before God, by the merit of Christ alone, through faith*, and the other, the *word of God*, as handed down to us in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, *the pure and proper source, as well as the only certain measure, of saving faith*.<sup>3</sup> The formal principle bears a relation to *tradition* which is three-fold, *ritual, historical, and dogmatic*. As regards all these forms, protestantism affirms their *historical necessity*, while at the same time it places them neither *parallel* with the scriptures nor *over* them, but *under* them only, and measures their value by the extent of their agreement with this standard.<sup>4</sup> *Ritual* tradition is equivalent to what Bellarmine styles ecclesiastical traditions. It obtains in the Romish church, and is unwarranted. *Historical* tradition, the testimonies of the Fathers to the genuineness and integrity of the sacred books, is of

<sup>1</sup> Schaff's Catechism for Schools and Families, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Originally his Inaugural Address, delivered in the German language, at Reading, October, 1844. Subsequently enlarged, and published in both languages. The English edition is a translation, with an Introduction of twenty-five pages, and a sermon on Catholic Unity appended; all by Dr. Nevin. Chambersburg, Pa.: Kieffer & Co. pp. 215.

<sup>3</sup> Principle of Protestantism, pp. 54 and 70.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

great value, but not infallible nor binding. *Dogmatic* tradition<sup>1</sup> is two-fold. *material*, doctrines referred to Christ or his apostles, but not found in the scriptures, and *formal*, the contents of scripture itself as apprehended and settled by the church against heresies. The former must be rejected, while the latter is absolutely indispensable.<sup>2</sup>

Here Dr. J. F. Berg,<sup>3</sup> and others, joined issue. The scriptures reveal truth immediately to the individual, who is the final judge; he is bound by the ecumenical creeds, and the confessions of the church, only in as far as they are supported by his private interpretation of the Bible. Put into the hands of any person who will study it prayerfully, the

<sup>1</sup> Principle of Protestantism, pp. 84 and 86.

<sup>2</sup> The offensive passage occurs in the following paragraph. We quote the whole, as it is a comprehensive statement, in a few words, of the author's opinion on the disputed point: "Quite different, however, in the second place, is the case of the *formal* dogmatic tradition. This is such as has not for its contents something different from what is contained in the Bible, but forms the channel by which these contents are conducted forward in history; the onward development thus of church doctrine and church life, as comprehended first dogmatically, in the so-called rules of faith, above all, in the Apostles' Creed, and then in the ecumenical creeds, that of Nice and the Athanasian; and, still farther, as orally carried forward, apart from all written statement, through the entire course of church history, so that every one, before he wakes even to self-consciousness, is made involuntarily to feel its power. Tradition, in this sense, is absolutely indispensable. By its means we come first to the contents of the Bible; and from it these draw their life for us, perpetually fresh and new, in such way that Christ and his apostles are made present, and speak to us directly, in the spirit which breathes in the Bible, and flows through the church as her life's blood. *This tradition, therefore, is not a part of the divine word separately from that which is written, but the contents of scripture itself, as apprehended and settled by the church against heresies past and always new appearing; not an independent source of revelation, but the one fountain of the written word, only rolling itself forward in the stream of church consciousness.*"—Principle of Protestantism, p. 87. Exception was taken also to the whole tone and scope of the work by zealous representatives of modern Protestantism, on the score of its supposed Romanizing tendency, simply because the author spoke of some of the merits of Romanism and some of the demerits of Protestantism. Yet it is, in truth, a vigorous plea, and a triumphant vindication of the Reformation. Compare a review of it by Dr. Nevin, *Mer. Rev.* Vol. I. 1849, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Then pastor of the German Reformed church, Race Street, Philadelphia, and editor, first of the "Protestant Banner," a weekly periodical, and afterwards of the "Protestant Quarterly"; at present Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Protestant Dutch church, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Bible itself is sufficient to give him just views of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and lead him to the exercise of saving faith in Christ. The authority of the church is subordinate to private judgment.

Dr. Schaff, sustained by Dr. Nevin, held the reverse. The Christian church was established and organized before the books of the New Testament were written. These were addressed to the churches already existing, and not to the world. They were adapted to the instruction and consolation of believers, not of the unconverted and unbelieving. To the world they are adapted, relatively and indirectly. Those who receive the truth which she teaches, and submit, in baptism, by a true faith, to the authority of Christ, who is the head and life of the church, possess the word of God as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path; but not the world as such, in its state of unbelief and sin. The baptized child comes to an intelligent apprehension of Christ only by the teaching of parents, of the pastor, and other Christians. Before reflection and the exercise of judgment are possible, the substance of faith is already determined. The unconverted sinner is utterly disqualified, by his posture of unbelief, to understand or interpret the Bible; as much so as the man who would study differential calculus or Kepler's laws, and yet reject the idea of quantity and the axiomatic truths of mathematics. Real submission to Christ is the absolute condition of a true knowledge of him. Living faith and a true knowledge of him are the absolute condition of a safe and profitable reading of the Bible. While the exercise of private judgment by the Christian is both a privilege and a duty, yet as a historical fact, necessitated by a principle of sound theology, it is subordinate to the authoritative teachings of the Christian church. As for the unconverted sinner refusing to comply with the terms of the gospel, there is no room whatever to speak of any exercise of private judgment on matters of Christian revelation (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15). The attempt involves presumption, delusion, and folly.

The principle announced in the *Principle of Protestantism*, and illustrated more fully, afterwards, in the progress of the

controversy, underlies the relation of the apostles' creed to the universal church and to the Heidelberg Catechism, and the relation of the Heidelberg Catechism as the confession of faith of the German Reformed church, to all her individual members. The acknowledgment of the catechism as an authoritative exponent of the scriptures, which every member is bound to receive in good faith, is incompatible with the contrary theory of private judgment. This was soon understood and felt. Dr. Schaff was sustained by the almost unanimous voice of the church; and there has been no division of sentiment since.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*

The theory of practical religion to which the anxious-bench system belongs, undervalues the sacraments as means of grace. The subjective state of the individual is the pivot on which acceptable worship and the favor of God turns. It gives efficiency to the observance of divine ordinances. The catechetical system, on the contrary, proceeds on a totally different theory. The sacraments are divinely-ordained means by which Christ imparts grace in a real way to those who observe them properly. Hence the progress of the controversy led, naturally, to a discussion of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; the Lord's Supper being the more prominent from the beginning, and Baptism at a somewhat later period.

The Reformed view of the Lord's Supper is immediately connected with the doctrine of the mystical union of the believer with Christ. They include each other. The Lord's Supper presupposes such a union, and is the chief means by which it is confirmed and invigorated. Yet it may be well to consider the topics in succession.

Dr. Nevin felt constrained to take ground against what he regarded as the prevailing rationalistic view of the eucharist, first in a number of papers published in 1845, in the *German Reformed Messenger*; the year following, in a work entitled "The Mystical Presence: a Vindication of the Reformed or

<sup>1</sup> See Minn. of Synod, 1845.

Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist;”<sup>1</sup> and afterwards in the numbers of the *Mercersburg Review*, first issued in 1849. In opposition to Dr. Hodge,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Berg, and Dr. Kurtz, who were the most prominent in the controversy, he denied that the eucharist was merely commemorative, representational or suggestive; that the presence of Christ was only spiritual or real spiritual; that the communion of the believer was only one of faith, thought, and feeling, or with the divine nature of Christ’s person by the Holy Ghost; and that the sacrament derives any efficacy or power, as the principal means of grace, from the penitence and faith, the prayers and holy frame of mind of the worthy communicant. On the other hand he denied, with equal clearness and emphasis, the Romish figment of *transubstantiation*, and the Lutheran hypothesis of the sacrament, technically distinguished by the title *consubstantiation*. The sacrament is indeed an affecting commemoration of the bitter passion and death of Christ; but it is also a real communion of the believer with the whole person of Christ, who is truly present by the Holy Ghost. The sacrament communicates grace; and the invisible grace communicated is the substantial life of the Saviour himself, particularly in his human nature.<sup>3</sup>

The primary design of Dr. Nevin was to exhibit the Reformed doctrine (which we have given in the first part of this monograph) as taught by Calvin, by all the Reformed reformers in France, Germany, England, and Scotland, and by all the confessions of the different branches of the Reformed church, in its distinction from the Romish, the Lutheran, and the modern Puritan theory of the Lord’s Supper; and arrest earnest attention to the fact that the American church, particularly the Presbyterian, Congregational, Low church Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Reformed churches, have fallen away

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Mer. Rev.* Vol. II. 1850, p. 421, A historical reply to Dr. Hodge, designed to answer the question: What is the faith of the Reformed church, as distinguished from Romanism and Lutheranism on the one side, and Rationalism and false Spiritualism on the other?

<sup>2</sup> Vide a review of Dr. Nevin’s “Mystical Presence” in the *Biblical Repertory* for April, 1848, attributed to Dr. Hodge.

<sup>3</sup> *Mystical Presence*, p. 62. *Comp.* pp. 178–185.

from the faith of the Reformation concerning the sacraments, the person of Christ, the vital relation of Christ to his people, the idea of the church, and in truth the nature of Christianity itself. His own mind repudiated the modern theory as in principle rationalistic, and embraced the old Reformed doctrine for substance as the truth, because supported by the faith of the primitive church and a legitimate interpretation of the scriptures. Calvin, however, fails to distinguish between the idea of the *organic law* which constitutes the proper identity of a human body, and the material volume it embraces as exhibited to the senses; he does not insist, with proper freedom and emphasis, on the absolute *unity* of what we denominate *person*, both in the case of Christ and in the case of his people; and he makes no clear distinction between the individual, personal life of Christ, and the same life in a *generic* view.<sup>1</sup> Hence while Calvin emphasizes the *absence* of the humanity of Christ from the earth, the *elevation* of the soul to him by the power of the Holy Ghost, and a real participation of his *flesh*, by which the believer is mysteriously nourished to eternal life, Dr. Nevin emphasizes the *presence*<sup>2</sup> of the humanity of Christ in his church on earth, — that is, of the vivific virtue of the human, hypostatically one with the divine nature — the *self-communication*

<sup>1</sup> *Mystical Presence*, pp. 156–163.

<sup>2</sup> “The word *real*, however, was understood ordinarily to denote a local, corporal presence, and on this account was not approved [by the Reformers]. To guard against this it may be qualified by the word *spiritual*, and the expression will then be quite suitable to the nature of the doctrine, as it has been now explained. 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 corporal manner. Not real simply, and not spiritual simply; but real, and yet spiritual at the same time. The body of Christ is in heaven, the believer on earth; but by the power of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless, the obstacle of such vast local distance is fully overcome, so that in the sacramental act, while the outward symbols are received in an outward way, the very body and blood of Christ are at the same time inwardly and supernaturally communicated to the worthy receiver, for the real nourishment of his new life. Not that the material particles of Christ’s body are supposed to be carried over by this supernatural process into the believers person. The communion is spiritual, not material. It is a participation of the Saviour’s life; of his life, however, as human, sub-



of his life in the sacramental transaction, and the participation of the believer in the *entire humanity* of Christ, the soul no less than the flesh and blood; the truth held in common being, first, a *real* communion with the person of Christ, by the Holy Ghost—that is, a communion with the humanity of Christ, the proper spiritual food of man, not with the divine only, but with the divine and the human, and with the divine by the human; and secondly, the *objective* grace of the sacrament, a power not derived from, nor dependent upon, the moral and spiritual character of the communicant, but present in the ordinance itself, to nourish the believing communicant spiritually, just as the nutritive element is present in bread to nourish a man naturally.

The vindication of these truths, so clearly taught in the Heidelberg Catechism, and latent in the mind of the German Reformed church, though not living in its general consciousness, touched a deep responsive chord. The old Reformed doctrine was in a great measure restored; and is now, perhaps in a modified form, the prevailing view throughout the church. No stress is laid on the *limitation* of the humanity of Christ to the right hand of God, nor on the *elevation* of the soul, by faith, to Christ, in order to hold communion with him, nor on communion with the *humanity* of Christ in the sacramental transaction; although these views live in the actual faith of the church. Stress is laid rather, generally, on the *presence* of the person of Christ by the Holy Ghost, and on communion, by faith, with the *divine-human* Saviour as the proper food of the soul, leaving the manner of communion indefinite. Yet, on the one hand, some ministers go further, and affirm, unequivocally, a participation in the humanity of Christ as the condition and medium of communion with his divine nature; and others, on the contrary, affirm only the fact of real communion with Christ, and hold

sisting in a true bodily form. The living energy, the vivific virtue, as Calvin styles it, of Christ's flesh is made to flow over into the communicant, making him more and more one with Christ himself, and thus more and more an heir of the same immortality that is brought to light in his person."—Mystical Presence, p. 60.

the humanity in abeyance. There are no tendencies towards either the Romish or Lutheran theory of the sacrament, nor have there been at any time in the progress of the controversy. Dr. Schaff has taken no prominent part in the sacramental controversy, but is known to be of one mind on this subject with Dr. Nevin, believing neither more nor less.

### *The Mystical Union.*

As real communion with Christ in the eucharist supposes a vital union of the believer with him, the question of the mystical union possesses central significance. A large part of the *mystical presence*<sup>1</sup> is, accordingly, devoted to the discussion of the subject. According to Dr. Nevin, who reproduces the doctrine of Calvin, the union of believers with Christ, is not simply that of a common humanity, as derived from Adam. The union is not simply *moral*, or *legal*, but *vital*. By the incarnation, our fallen humanity is exalted again to a new and imperishable divine life. The Christian salvation, as comprehended in Christ, is a *new life*, in the deepest sense of the word. The new life, of which Christ is the source and principle, is in all respects a true human life. The life of Christ passes over to his people, thus constituting the church. Joined to Christ, we are *one* with him in his *life*, including necessarily a participation in the entire *humanity* of Christ. The life of Christ in us, extends to the totality of our nature, to the body no less than the soul, which in their ground are but one, and governed by the self-same organic law. But there is no material, actual approach of Christ's body to the persons of his people. Nor does the mystical union involve the ubiquity or idealistic dissipation of his body; and it requires no *fusion* of his personality with the persons of his people. This life-union is more intimate and real than any union known in the world besides. It is wrought by the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. I. Sect. 1; Chap. III. Sect. 2; and Chap. IV. Comp. also the Sermon on Catholic Unity, appended to the "Principle of Protestantism"; Art. on Incarnation, *Mer. Rev.*, Vol. II. 1850, p. 164; and Art. on New Creation, *Mer. Rev.*, Vol. II. p. 1, et al. Also an Article by Dr. Schaff, *Bib. Sacra* for August, 1848.

power of the Holy Ghost. The life of Christ is apprehended, on the part of his people, only by faith. The new life of the believer includes degrees, and will become complete only in the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> The symbols of it are the human body, the vine and its branches, and marriage. The generic life of the body pervades the arm. Differing in form and function, they are yet one. The life-principle in the vine supports the branch. Without an internal organic oneness, light, air, heat, and other influences would destroy the branch, instead of promoting its growth. A force deeper than will, understanding, or feeling, unites husband and wife — a mystic life-bond. Mystic, because deeper and stronger than the understanding can fathom or calculate. Such is the union of the believer, by the Holy Ghost, with the divine-human Saviour. Internal, most intimate, without which no knowledge, purpose, or sensibility can promote salvation, its nature, mode of action, and relations are mysterious; not accessible to the logical understanding, but a matter of supernatural revelation, and therefore an object of faith. Hence the use of the term *mystical*.

#### *The Incarnation.*

The mystical union implies the old doctrine of the incarnation, as being the *principle* of Christianity. The Son of God did not assume human nature in appearance merely, nor as an expedient to teach and make an offering for sin, nor for a time only. As by the fall the virus of sin was in the nature of mankind, salvation involved the necessity of a new creation of that nature;<sup>2</sup> for the regeneration of the individual is impossible unless the generic whole, or human life as such, in which the individual inheres, is first created anew; just as the natural birth of the first child was possible only after the existence of Adam and Eve. The general always goes before the particular as its ground. Without the general, the particular is not, and cannot be. The creation of human nature in Adam is the condition of the natural

<sup>1</sup> *Mystical Presence*, pp. 164 - 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. Cur Deus Homo?* by Dr. Nevin, *Mer. Rev.*, Vol. III. 1851, p 290.

birth of the individual, according to the law of natural generation ; and the new creation of human nature in the person of Christ, the second Adam, by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, is the condition of the new or spiritual birth of the individual according to the law of the Spirit. Being a new creation, the humanity of Christ is a necessary, organic, and eternal constituent of his personality — the condition of the church, of individual salvation, and of all real communion of man with God.

*The Nature of Christianity.*

It follows that Christianity is not a system of *doctrine*, nor an *example*, nor a *rule* of moral conduct ; but it is a new life in Christ, and in his mystical body, the church.<sup>1</sup> He meets and overcomes sin, suffers under it, bears the curse of the law, and removes it by his death on the cross ; is carried, by the law of sin, into the grave and into hades, and prevails against its gates in his triumphant resurrection from the dead ; and then ascends, in the new-created, perfected, glorified humanity, as head over all things unto the church, to the right hand of God (John i. 18 ; v. 21, 26 ; xiv. 6, 9 ; xi. 25, 26 ; 1 John i. 1, 2 ; v. 11, 12 ; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 23 ; Eph. i. 22). Sharing his life by a new birth of the Holy Spirit, his people are members of his family ; the partakers of his nature (2 Pet. i. 4), as children are of the nature of their parents ; and follow him, not only in thought or feeling, nor by the formation and execution of holy purposes, but also in a real way, meeting and overcoming sin in his strength by faith (1 John v. 4), partaking of his sufferings (2 Cor. i. 7 ; Col. ii. 24), bearing the curse of the law in death and burial (2 Cor. iv. 10), triumphing over sin and death in the resurrection, and ascending up far above all heavens to possess the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was ; all done in virtue of the new life, which is nourished by the means of grace, and hid with Christ in God, according to the working of the mighty power of God, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Compare two Articles on Early Christianity, by Dr. Nevin, Mer. Rev. Vol. III 1851, pp. 461 and 513, and a third Article Vol. IV. p. 1.

Such views of the mystical union, the person of Christ, and Christianity, expressed with great force, were seen to be in broad conflict with the theological and religious opinions common in America. Dr. Hodge charged on Dr. Nevin a resuscitation of the old exploded Eutychian heresy, and the introduction of the pantheistic philosophy of Germany; Dr. Berg reiterated the same charges, and raised a warning voice against unmistakable evidences of Romanizing tendencies, while a score of editors saw a brood of abominable errors overrunning the blooming fields of Christ's kingdom. Dr. Nevin replied, charging on the puritan Calvinism of the American churches a dualistic philosophy, gnostic theology, and a subjective, divisive, self-destructive Protestantism, that must run out into bald rationalism and infidelity. The storm was heavy and loud; the little ship was tossed upon the rolling waves, and in seeming danger of being wrecked on the rocks.

A controversy so exciting and earnest, mixed with no little misapprehension, misconstruction, and acrimony, served to intensify the interest of the German Reformed church in the momentous questions. The mental agitation was deeper, the attention given to the study of theology more absorbing, and the development of Christological ideas more rapid among ministers and people, than would have been caused by direct theological teaching, without the stimulus of polemical friction. In these circumstances, — considering the animus of the Heidelberg Catechism, the moulding influence of Rauch's philosophy, the ability with which Nevin and Schaff conducted the discussion theologically and historically, and the previous history of the church, — it should surprise no one to be informed that, among the more thoughtful, the reaction from subjective to objective, from abstract to concrete, from mechanical to organic views of Christianity and the church, was decided and deep, intelligent and general.

#### *The Church.*

In all these discussions, the church question was central. What is the church? What is its relation to Jesus Christ?

to the Holy Ghost? to the Bible? to the individual Christian? to the world? What is the relation of the Protestant to the primitive and Roman Catholic church? These points were involved in the entire series of controversies; Dr. Nevin discussing rather the theological, and Dr. Schaff the historical, side of the general issue.

The church of Christ is not merely an association of professing Christians, nor the invisible communion of the faithful, nor an external organization. A number of unbaptized persons accidentally cast upon an island, who are awakened and become penitent and believing by reading the scriptures, do not make a church by the forming of a religious society. Our Lord Jesus Christ has not simply made an atonement for sin, and taught the general principles by which the organization and management of the church is to be regulated. The Holy Ghost does not operate efficaciously on the hearts of men, and establish real and full communion with Christ, outside of the church. The Bible is not the principle nor life of the church. The individual Christian is not such by a subjective act of faith in a conception of redemption by Jesus Christ, without the intervention of divinely instituted sacraments and ordinances as the medium of real fellowship with our Lord. A man of the world is not converted and saved merely by reading the Bible, refusing at the same time to submit to the head of the church in holy baptism. *Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus.* The Protestant church is not based *immediately* upon Christ and his apostles; nor is Protestant theology drawn *immediately* from the holy scriptures. Protestantism is not a transfer, by means of thought and reflection, of primitive or early Christianity. It does not begin, nor revive absolutely, a valid ordination and a valid administration of the sacraments *de novo*. While we may distinguish between the visible and the invisible church, yet the invisible cannot be where the visible is not.

On the contrary, the Christian church is a divine-human constitution in time and space, — divine as to its ultimate ground and interior life, and human as to its form, — brought into existence by the miraculous working of the Holy Ghost on the

day of Pentecost, who is sent by Christ as the bearer of his incarnate life and salvation, in order to continue and develop this life and salvation, according to the law of the Spirit, in its membership down to the end of time uninterruptedly. As such, it is not a collection of units, but an objective organism that has a principle, a unity, a law, organs, and resources of power and grace which are in it and its own absolutely.<sup>1</sup> Supernatural, because its origin, being, order, and end are above the resources of the first creation; spiritual, because organized, animated, and perfected by the agency of the Holy Ghost; and divine, because not of man, but of God in Christ. The idea of the church embraces, first of all, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is its head and all-pervading life, the apostles and evangelists, the confessors, martyrs, and saints of every age, all united by the Holy Ghost into one living, spiritual body (Rom. xii. 4-8). A conception excluding Christ and his apostles, is radically false (Eph. ii. 18-22; iii. 4-6). Thus viewed, the church has produced the Bible, and is its pillar and ground (1 Tim. iii. 15). The Bible is a book, infallible indeed, because plerarily inspired, yet only

<sup>1</sup> "The church is really and truly a constituent part of Christianity, the necessary form of its existence or being in the world."—Nevin's *Thoughts on the Church*, Mer. Rev., Vol. X. 1858, p. 189. "The church is of the essence of Christianity, the necessary form of its presence, the only medium of its grace, the true organ of its power, in the world."—Ibid. p. 191. The creed makes the church "to be a mystery, the presence of a supernatural fact in the world, which men are required to acknowledge as a *necessary part of the Christian faith*. It is made to be this, moreover, in such a way as to carry along with it, in its own place, the full power of the Christian salvation."—Ibid. p. 193.

The church "is an institution established by God through Christ, for the glory of his own name and the salvation of men. It is the bearer of all God's revelations, the channel of Christianity, the depository of all the life-powers of the Redeemer, the habitation of the Holy Ghost. The apostle styles it in several places, the body of Jesus Christ, and calls believers the members of this body. His meaning in this is, that Christ dwells in the church as an organic unity of different personalities and powers, as the soul in the body; and that he acts through it as his organ, just as our soul by means of the body shows itself active, and exerts an influence on the world."—*What is Church History?* by Dr. Schaff, p. 31. 1846. Compare Schaff's *Catechism*, p. 99. 1862.

"The church, like Christianity itself, of which it is the vehicle, is a supernatural principle, a new creation of God through Christ, far transcending all that human intelligence and will can produce."—Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, p. 13. 1853.

an authoritative record of the truth in human language, and not the being of the truth itself. As the *body* of Christ, a real supernatural constitution in the world, the church is, not a thought or an arrangement, but divine-human *being*; of which, not language, but only a person, Jesus Christ, can be the principle. A person becomes a Christian by union to the church, effected objectively by the Holy Ghost working in the means of grace, and subjectively by repentance and faith; not a union in form only, but in form and spirit. As a person comes into natural being by becoming, in the act of birth, a member of the human race, so does he come into the sphere of the new creation in the act of being born of water and the Spirit; thus becoming a member of the body of Christ. The Protestant church is connected, by inward, historical process, with the apostolic period. It is based, indeed, on Christ, but *mediately*, all the successive stages in the history of the catholic church necessarily intervening; just as the present generation of men come from Adam, through all the intermediate generations, in lineal succession. Protestant theology presupposes all the theological conflicts and attainments of the church, in her past history, as its basis; and must be regarded as an actual advance of the religious life and consciousness of the church, by means of a deeper apprehension of God's word.<sup>1</sup> The Reformation was not a revolutionary separation from the Catholic church. It is rather the greatest act of the catholic church itself, — the full, ripe fruit of all its better tendencies.<sup>2</sup> Protestant ordination and Protestant sacraments are valid because received from the church immediately preceding. The invisible and the visible church are one, two aspects of the one body of Christ, the invisible being the internal life, and the visible the external form pervaded by that life. A member of the one is a member of the other. A branch may be externally connected with the vine, yet be dead. But a branch, unless both internally and externally united to the vine, cannot live and bear fruit.

<sup>1</sup> Schaff's *Theses*. Principle of Protestantism, p. 181; 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 181; 31, 33.



We have endeavored to set forth the gist of the controversy, in its negative and positive aspects. The statement gives the general position of Drs. Nevin and Schaff,<sup>1</sup> and a large portion of the church. Another portion, both in the eastern and western synod, would modify some of the negative as well as positive forms of expression. Yet we believe the general tendency to be towards an adoption, in the main, of these views of the church.

### *The Sacrament of Baptism.*

The sacrament of Baptism has been a less prominent theme of discussion than the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and on the whole there may be less maturity of thought and belief in regard to it. We all agree in saying that it is not merely a form or sign of grace, but really confers grace, whether the subject be an infant or an adult; though we do not concur in defining the grace conferred. Those who, as we think, develop the Christological principle logically, hold baptism to be, not regeneration, but the sacrament of regeneration,—the means by which the subject passes from the state of nature into the covenant of grace; the covenant being, not an agreement existing in the mind of God and the mind of man, but a spiritual institution, in which God remits sin and bestows salvation on those who comply with its conditions. There are others, represented by Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger, D. D., of Philadelphia,<sup>2</sup> who teach that the child of believing parents is somehow interested in the atonement of Christ, and assured of salvation from the curse of sin

<sup>1</sup> A Catechism for Sunday Schools and Families, in Fifty-two Lessons, with Proof Texts and Notes, by Philip Schaff, D.D., lately published, contains an outline of popular theology. The work combines the advantages of a historical with those of a merely doctrinal character, and clearness and simplicity of style with fulness of matter. We refer the reader to it for the author's theological views.

<sup>2</sup> See an Article on the Old Doctrine of Christian Baptism, by Dr. Nevin, *Mer. Rev.*, Vol. XII. 1860, p. 190; an Article on the Efficacy of Baptism, *Ibid.* Vol. X. 1858, p. 1; and an Article on the Doctrine of Christian Baptism, by Dr. H. Martensen, translated by Dr. Harbaugh, *Ibid.* Vol. IV. 1852, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> Editor of a condensed translation of Herzog's Encyclopedia. See his work on Infant Salvation and Baptism. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston. 1859.

without baptism ; that baptism is nevertheless necessary as signifying and sealing the salvation of Christ, and confers a spiritual blessing, but this spiritual blessing is not defined.

Throughout the church, great stress is laid on the importance of observing the ordinance. Baptized infants are members of the church. As such, they are taught and trained in the nurture of the Lord, with more or less fidelity and success, according to the character of the parents and the zeal and ability of the pastor. Many of our charges being still composed of three, four, and even six congregations, the instruction of children must be entrusted chiefly to parents and the Sunday school. But so soon as they arrive at the age of sixteen, or fourteen, or even twelve, they are assembled in catechetical classes to receive regular systematic instruction in the great truths of Christianity ; the grace of baptism being regarded as the basis of Christian nurture, and the warrant of God for the belief that faithful tuition will result in a surrender, from the heart, to Christ, in confirmation. As expressive of the general sentiment of the church, we quote a passage from the report on the state of religion, adopted by synod in 1859 : " The growing estimation of covenant relations, and the love of holy baptism and catechetical instruction as necessary results, work favorably upon the family. Parents see how the church includes the family, as well as themselves, in its warm bosom ; they feel a support beneath and around them stronger than their own individual faith and exertions ; they are led to regard their baptized children as young Christians, already admitted into the Christian church, and distinguished from the children of infidels and unbelievers ;<sup>1</sup> they see their work to be to train them up in the Lord, as well as into the Lord ; in grace, as well as into it ; they see that it is their privilege and comfort to assure their covenanted children that the covenant is the sure basis of their hopes, and feel free to encourage them to accept fully what is already theirs by the covenant of a faithful God, and to assure them that they have the surest and best warrant, as children, for claiming all the promises

<sup>1</sup> Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 74.

and all the grace which they need in order to grow up to the stature of Christians. They can teach them, what it is their joy and comfort to learn, that, from their washing in baptism may and does begin the renewing of the Holy Ghost,<sup>1</sup> and that it is only by wickedly despising and wilfully wandering from this grace that they finally perish.”<sup>2</sup>

If the phrase *baptismal regeneration* is ever used, it does not mean that baptism, regarded simply as an external transaction, is regeneration; but that, regarding its interior substance, it is the means of regeneration by the appointment of God. Such a power is never predicated of the external act of washing with water in the name of the Trinity. The *opus operatum* theory, taught by the Roman Catholic church, is entirely discarded. Regeneration is wrought by the Holy Ghost only; but in the sacrament of baptism the internal grace and the external sign, the Holy Ghost and the element of water, are indissolubly conjoined. Otherwise the ordinance would not be a sacrament; for this consists in the *union* of the invisible to the visible, of the supernatural to the natural. It is the Holy Ghost, then, who, in the outward transaction, begets the subject of baptism anew in the life of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Tit. iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> “In relation to the sacraments there is remarkable unanimity of sentiment, resulting, no doubt, from the system of the catechism being better understood and appreciated by ministers and people generally. Baptism is the act of Christ, by which he, through his ministers, introduces the unconscious and sinful infant into the eternal covenant of grace. He does not only signify that his death is a full atonement for sin, but also assures us by this outward and solemn transaction, which is the form under which he confirms this promise by an oath, that it is as certainly washed by the blood and spirit of Christ from all the pollution of the soul as it is washed externally with water. (Heid. Cat. Q. 69.) Thus transferred from a state of nature into a state of covenant grace, a child is the proper subject of Christian nurture. The tender plant set in the garden of the Lord possesses the warrant of God, that, nourished by the rich soil in which it stands, and trained diligently and in faith, it shall grow up into the light and beauty of the Sun of Righteousness.” — Report on State of Religion, Synod of Ger. Ref. Ch. 1856.

“We must also notice the encouraging fact, that during the past year, the number of the churches members has been greatly increased. Some eight or nine thousand souls have been added to the infant membership of the church by baptism — receiving thus the sign and seal of the covenant of grace and the pledge of an immortal life.” — Ibid. 1861.

The term "regeneration," however, is not used in the sense of *conversion*. The two are widely different. Conversion is the voluntary act of the soul consciously embracing Christ in faith; while *re-generation* is a second creation, wrought by Almighty God. As an infant is passive in the act of natural birth, so is a person passive in the act of spiritual birth. In conversion a man is necessarily active. Any one who fails to make this distinction, will misapprehend the idea intended to be conveyed by calling baptism the sacrament of regeneration.

### *Modern Protestantism.*

The controversies concerning so many fundamental truths of Christianity, involved, from the start, a severe criticism and exposure of the present posture of modern Protestantism. In a series of papers on pseudo-Protestantism, published in the *German Reformed Messenger*, 1847, in a small work entitled *Antichrist*,<sup>1</sup> and in various articles of the *Mercersburg Review*,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Nevin charged a serious defection from the confessional standards of the Reformation. Dr. Schaff did the same thing, but from a different point of view, in his *Principle of Protestantism*, and in another work on *Historical Development*.<sup>3</sup> Their opponents, going on the presumption that the admitted change is legitimate progress instead of a defection, charged on Nevin, Schaff, and the German Reformed church, a renunciation of Protestantism and a return to Rome. The real issue raised was rarely met; the point, on the one side, being *original* Protestantism, and on the other *modern* Protestantism; the one condemning as false what was contradictory to the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, and the other condemning what was contradictory to the Protestantism of the present day. In these circum-

<sup>1</sup> See two Articles on the Sect System, Vol. I. 1849, pp. 482 and 521. Article on Anti Creed Heresy, Vol. IV. 1852, p. 606.

<sup>2</sup> *Antichrist, or the Spirit of Sect and Schism.* By John W. Nevin, D.D., President of Marshall College. New York: John S. Taylor. pp. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *What is Church History? A Vindication of the Idea of Historical Development.* By Philip Schaff. Translated from the German. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1846. pp. 128.

stances, there was abundant room for misapprehension and misconstruction. Great injustice was done to the church and its representatives. The lapse of more than a decade of years has demonstrated that, while the church is receding from prevailing theories on fundamental points of theology, she is returning, not mechanically but freely, to a clearer and fuller apprehension of the confessional standards of the Reformation, and is firm in her adherence to the great principle of Protestantism, both as to matter, — the doctrine of justification by faith in the person of Christ, — and as to form, the normal authority of the scriptures; opposing, with equal decision and perseverance, the rationalistic and Romanizing tendencies of the age.

Schaff's *Principle of Protestantism* is a masterly vindication of the great truth developed by the Reformers; and the tract on *Historical Development* is an equally forcible justification of the *re-formation* of the church catholic, on historical grounds. After exhibiting and setting aside the orthodox and rationalistic historiographies, — the one embracing the historical method of Roman Catholicism and of the older Protestant orthodoxy, the other the pietistic method and the proper rationalistic method of history, — he unfolds the modern historiography, or the view of organic development, the principle of which is stated satisfactorily in a few words: "Christianity, in itself and objectively considered, is complete in Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; as also in his word, which is exhibited in the holy scriptures of the New Testament, in a pure, original, perfect, and absolutely normative form, for all times. Subjective Christianity, on the contrary, or the life of the God-man in his church, is a process, a development, which begins small and grows always larger, till it comes, at last, to full manhood in Christ; that is, till the believing human world may have appropriated to itself, both outwardly and inwardly, the entire fulness of objective Christianity, or the life of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

On this principle it is not necessary to despise one age in

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Development*, p. 81.

order to exalt another, or to anathematize one tendency of thought in order to honor its opposite; but justice is done to all ages of the church as being alike possessors of the life of Christ, and to all tendencies and systems as being important factors in the subjective process by which humanity is transformed into the image of our Lord; while the great rupture of the sixteenth century, accompanied as it was with many irregularities, can be successfully vindicated against the aspersions of the hierarchical system of Rome, as good, necessary, and legitimate; and modern Protestantism may be criticised and condemned for its theoretic and practical subjectivism, yet revered as the true bearer of the Holy Ghost, for its deep practical earnestness, and its zeal for personal piety.

#### *Liturgical Worship.*

The German Reformed church is liturgical. Zuingli, Calvin, Bucer, and even John Knox, as well as Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, were all in favor of a settled order of worship. Liturgies have always been in use in Switzerland, France, the Palatinate, and indeed in all parts of Germany. They were in use also in Scotland, for at least a century after the Reformation. To this day the Protestant churches of Germany make use of prescribed forms in every service, in connection with more or less extemporaneous prayer.<sup>1</sup>

The liturgies contain offices for the regular service of the Lord's day, for the administration of the sacraments, for confirmation, and the ordination of deacons, elders, and ministers, for the solemnization of marriage, burial of the dead, etc.; and embody the creed, the Lord's Prayer, confession and absolution, the "Gloria in excelsis," "Te deum," the litany, and responses; though no one book unites all these elements. They vary very much, and are excellent in many respects, yet none can be said to be equal in depth, fervor, and power to the Heidelberg Catechism.

The number and variety of Reformed liturgies has pro-

<sup>1</sup> See a complete history of the new liturgy of the German Reformed church, by Dr. Schaff, *Mer. Rev.* Vol. X. 1858, p. 199.

duced some confusion in America. The missionary fathers of the last century brought with them the liturgies of those sections of Germany, Switzerland, or Holland from which they emigrated. These continued in general use, in our German congregations, until 1840; and in some of them they hold their place to the present day. As our congregations introduced the English language, the free-prayer system became common, partly for want of an English liturgy adapted to our wants, and partly on account of the anti-liturgical spirit prevailing in the surrounding English churches. It became the custom to extemporize not only the regular service of the Lord's day, but also the offices for the holy communion, baptism, the ordination of elders and deacons, marriage, and the burial of the dead. But there existed a very general dissatisfaction with this state of things; and a loud call for a liturgy came from every part of the church. As early as 1820, synod appointed a committee to revise the church *Agenda*, with a view to publication in the English and German languages; yet, though the subject was under discussion from year to year, nothing tangible was accomplished until 1840, when the liturgy prepared by Rev. Dr. Mayer was adopted. For various reasons this book never took root. The revival of Christological theology during the ensuing decade of years, intensified the general feeling of want. There was a demand for a liturgy answerable, in tone and spirit to the Christological, churchly, and sacramental ideas which had been revived in the church. In answer to this demand, a committee was appointed in 1849, which was modified at subsequent meetings of synod.<sup>1</sup> Specific instructions<sup>2</sup> were given in 1852; in accordance with which

<sup>1</sup> "The committee on the liturgy, as it finally stood, since October, 1855, and is alone responsible for the work as actually prepared and published, consisted of ten ministers and four elders, namely: Philip Schaff, John W. Nevin, B. C. Wolff, J. H. A. Bomberger, Henry Harbaugh, Elias Heiner, Daniel Zacharias, Thomas C. Porter, E. V. Gerhart, Samuel R. Fisher, and elders William Heyser, John Rodenmayer, George Schaefer, and George C. Welker."—Schaff's Article on New Liturgy.

<sup>2</sup> We quote several of these instructions: 1. "The liturgical worship of the primitive church, as far as it can be ascertained from the holy scriptures, the

the New liturgy was prepared, and reported in 1857. The report was adopted and the book was submitted to the churches for *trial*. Every congregation was left to settle the question for itself, how far it would accept the new book, or whether it would accept and use it at all. Synod sanctioned it merely as a *provisional* liturgy; and has, up to this time, neither adopted nor rejected it.

The new liturgy at once excited opposition. A controversy began which has been going on, with more or less earnestness for five years, though in the spirit of Christian charity and forbearance. Dr. Bomberger, the principal representative of the opposition, does not object to prescribed forms of public worship, particularly not to offices for Baptism, the Lord's Supper, confirmation, etc.; he has even very warmly defended liturgies,<sup>1</sup> against the usual objections preferred by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches; and in 1849 was the chairman of a committee which presented to synod a report<sup>2</sup> vindicating liturgical forms of church worship, and recommending immediate measures to be taken to prepare such forms as would be generally acceptable. On this point we are not divided. But he and others resist the adoption of the New liturgy mainly on account of its *responsive* services, which, it is alleged, involve a departure from the customs of our fathers, and would radically change the established mode of worship. Here the controversy hinges.

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 the forms of confession and absolution, the litanies, the creeds, the *te deum*, the *gloria in excelsis*, the collects, the doxologies, etc. . . . . 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*; inasmuch as these liturgies themselves exhibit to us a considerable variety with essential unity, and every age of the church has the promise of the Spirit and a peculiar mission to fulfil."—Minutes of Synod, 1852.

<sup>1</sup> See *Mer. Rev.* Vol. II. 1850, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> The entire report is quoted in Dr. Schaff's *History of the New Liturgy*.



The question is not — liturgy or no liturgy ; but, a liturgy *with* or *without* responses ; or rather, a *pulpit* liturgy or an *altar* liturgy. Shall we have a book of forms to guide and aid the minister in performing the offices of the sanctuary, or a book to be placed, like the hymn-book, in the hands of the people and of the officiating clergyman alike, that, as in praise, they may unite also, with heart and voice, in prayer and supplication before God ?

It would be premature to express an opinion as to the issue. Whatever action may be taken, however, one thing is certain : the church will not adopt a liturgical form of worship to the exclusion of free prayer ; nor will it fall back on the free-prayer system to the exclusion of liturgical forms.

The classes, with but few exceptions, approve the general plan and substance of the provisional liturgy. Some objections are urged to the strong language of the book concerning baptismal grace and the powers of the church ; but the objections lie rather against the phraseology, which may be understood in a sense which it does not convey when properly interpreted, than against the idea which the committee design to express.

Only a few congregations have introduced the new liturgy fully. But parts of all the offices are in use in a majority of them. The present order of worship obtaining in our congregations generally, does not differ from that which prevails in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches ; though the custom of sitting during prayer is not in vogue.

#### *Unity of the Movement.*

Though we have pursued mainly the order of time in portraying the theological progress of the church, yet a little reflection must reveal the fact that the movement has not been a succession of controversies on isolated or disconnected topics. The essence and form of doctrine asserted in each case, is determined by its internal relation to a fundamental truth. That truth is the person of Christ. In the incarnation, the Son of God has taken fallen human nature, sanctifying it in the act of assumption, into real, organic, and eternal

union with himself. Thus created anew in him, human nature is the medium and form of the revelation of God, of his will, and of all the acts of Christ which, following each other according to the law of the natural order of being, constitute the objective verity of the Christian salvation. The glorified humanity of Christ continues to be the only medium of gracious communication from God to mankind, and of all real approach on the part of man to God, and fellowship with him.

From this general idea of the person of Christ, there follows, logically, a distinctive theory of the church, as being the organic continuation of the divine-human life of Christ in time for the salvation of men; of the Holy Ghost, as the bearer, through all the ages, of Christ, the true life, and the condition of the helpless sinner participating in his grace; of the sacraments, as the organs of the church, or means of grace, by which men are made sharers of the life of Christ; of regeneration, as the inception, by divine power, of the new life in the act of transition from the state of fallen nature to the sphere of the new creation; of conversion, as the voluntary act of the conscious subject, acknowledging and submitting, in contrition of heart, to the authority of the spiritual kingdom in which he is by baptism; of justification, as the act of God, by which the believing sinner is made righteous in Christ; of worship, as the common act of the congregation of believers offering themselves, in union with Christ's glorious merits, on the altar of the gospel, in sacramental acts, in confession, prayer, and praise; of hades, as an imperfect state, intermediate between death and the resurrection; and of the resurrection, as the consummation of the regenerated life, in the triumph of the entire man, soul and body, over sin and all the powers of darkness.

The whole movement is Christological. It was not philosophical. Not of philosophy in general, nor of any particular system, was it born. Neither the system of Schleiermacher, nor of Hegel, much less of Kant, produced it. Philosophy disciplined the mind to a method of thought that was homogeneous with the theological process. It did

no more. Nor was the movement merely historical. It did not originate in the study of the general history of Christian doctrines, nor in the study of any particular period. It was not designed to be the reproduction of the theology of the church fathers. This was rather a justification and support. Properly speaking, it was not designed at all. There was no plan thought out previously, and deliberately determined upon. Dr. Rauch taught Anglo-German philosophy from the love of it. Dr. Nevin did not anticipate the position he would ultimately occupy in relation to the entire circle of Christian truths. He was himself borne along by a deep tide of faith and thought. Nevin and Schaff were the organs of a self-moving, self-ordering process of development, starting in one great idea. The idea was given in the Heidelberg Catechism. It presented itself in a learned, thorough, and comprehensive exegesis. With special force did the idea announce its presence in the apostles' creed, which is the basis and governs the structure of the catechism; and informs the theology of the post-apostolical period. Once truly revived, it became a potent internal force that impelled and carried forward the mind of the church organically from point to point. Admit the old idea of the incarnation, and all the other doctrines follow by necessary consequence. The opposition differs not at single points; it does not hold another theory of one part of Christianity, and harmonize fully in regard to other parts. But the difference is principiant and generic. It runs, like the sap of a tree, through the entire Christian organism, at every point ruling a view answerable to its character. The opposite theology is the product of logical reflection starting with some metaphysical idea, as the will of God or the will of man; and rejects Jesus Christ as the *principle*, substance, and end of supernatural revelation. He becomes the wonderful expedient only by which an almighty Sovereign fulfils his purposes, and the blessed medium by which sinners may be reconciled to God and attain to the felicity of heaven. His divine nature overshadows and sets aside the human. The human is but a temporary condition of the work of redemption; not an es-

sential constituent of his personality. It has no necessary place in the work of the Holy Ghost; it is not an element of practical religion; nor is it an actual condition of communion with God. The result is, on the one hand, a religion of reflection, of definite intellectual apprehension of doctrines; and, on the other, a religion of emotion, of states of feeling and frames of mind. Though seemingly exclusive, these two forms of religion are nevertheless alike as to general character, and flow together in experience and practice. Both spring from a metaphysical idea, instead of from him who is God and man; and deal rather with abstractions, human notions of divine things, than with divine-human realities, the immediate objects of faith and devotion.

The one thing by which, more than by anything else, the theology of the German Reformed church is distinguished from that of New England, consists in the person of Christ being held firmly as the *principle* of a scientific system of faith, of the theory of worship, of practical religion, and of all philosophical thinking. This formative principle impresses distinct features on every doctrine, features which we cannot characterize more correctly in a word than by calling them *Christological*,—a fact which no one can fail to perceive who will investigate and compare the systems candidly.

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The present condition of the German Reformed church, considered socially, intellectually, morally, and theologically, is the resultant of all the forces, internal and external, which have been molding her past history. The German national life is still predominant. It determines her psychical traits of character; and causes deep sympathy with German, in preference to Scotch, modes of philosophical thinking. The original Protestant schism continues to rule her position in relation to the distinctive spirit and doctrines of Lutheranism. The civil commotions and the theological conflicts in the midst of which the Heidelberg Catechism originated, have impressed upon it a character which is intermediate

between certain extreme and one-sided tendencies of the Reformation. This character distinguishes her theology and piety now in relation to the extreme and one-sided tendencies of the present age. The great disproportion between the number of ministers and congregations during the first and second periods of her history in America, necessitated the formation of large pastoral charges. The evil, at first unavoidable, became a custom, and was perpetuated for many years; hence the difficulty of dividing pastoral charges at the present time as rapidly as the numerical strength of the ministry would warrant. A state of entire dependence on Holland and Germany for forty-five years, seems to have disqualified the church to take prompt and energetic measures to establish literary and theological institutions. It is one reason why the theological seminary was not founded before 1825. The want of educational institutions, the lowering of the standard of ministerial qualifications, laxity of discipline, and the confusion of theological opinions, during the second period, opened the way for some abuses, which crept in and took deep root, and still embarrass the church in various ways. They cannot be eradicated at will. The exciting religious and theological conflicts of the third period quickened the latent Christological ideas which had been begotten and nourished by the catechism, and explain the rapid and vigorous development of what is known by the name of *Mercersburg Theology*. All these facts must be weighed intelligently and without prejudice, in order to form a correct judgment, in all respects, of the German Reformed church in America.

In reviewing the controversies, we have stated the opinions of those who have been most prominent in sustaining the professors of the seminary; not the views of the whole church. Some among us would dissent on several points. To forestall misapprehension, and exhibit received opinions in a more logical order, we will recapitulate in brief the results of the controversies.

The German Reformed church *denies* that the will of God, or the will of man, is the principle of theology; that

Christianity is merely a system of doctrine, or a rule of moral conduct; that the covenant is only a compact between God and man, or between the Father and the Son; that there is a twofold eternal decree, electing some unto salvation and others unto damnation; that the election of God unto eternal life in Christ becomes effectual outside of the economy of grace; that the humanity of Christ, or the incarnation, is an expedient in order to make an atonement for sin; that the church is an association of converted individuals; that the Bible is the foundation of the church; that the relation of the contents of the Bible to the individual is immediate; that the authority of the church is subordinate to the private judgment of the individual Christian; that holy Baptism is only a sign of the covenant and the washing away of sin, and confers no grace; that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is only a solemn commemoration of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ; that communion in the sacrament is exclusively with the divine nature of Christ; that the flesh and blood of Christ are after a carnal manner, or locally, present in the ordinance; that the unconverted and ungodly may commune; that justification consists in a forensic act of God, imputing the righteousness of Christ, *ab extra*, or that it is realized by an act of faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ; that the faithful use of the ordinary means of grace is inadequate to the wants of the church and the world; that the church of Rome is a *total* apostasy; and that Protestantism has its ground *immediately* in the sacred scriptures.

On the contrary, 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 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 by an act of faith in the person and work of Christ, and consists both in the imputation 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 the world, and, if faithfully applied, do not fail to promote a steady and vigorous growth of the church; that although the church of Rome holds many articles of faith, and approves and perpetuates many customs which are not warranted by the scriptures and are wrong, 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.

We think three fourths of the ministry and intelligent membership, perhaps four fifths, would unite in denying and affirming the foregoing propositions. A large part of the church, however, how large we cannot say, perhaps only a minority, would go a step further, and *affirm* that the humanity of Christ, or the mystery of the incarnation, is the only medium of real communion of God with man, and of man with God; that the Christian church is a real constitution in the world, divine and human, supernatural and natural, an organic continuation in time and space of the life-powers of the new creation in Christ Jesus; that the

covenant is an order or institution of grace, spiritual and real; that communion in the Lord's Supper is with the glorified humanity of Christ, and with his divine nature through his humanity; that Baptism introduces its subject into the covenant of grace, and is therefore the sacrament of regeneration, — regeneration being the transition from the state of nature to the state of grace, as natural birth is the transition to the natural world; that regeneration, succeeded by conversion and sanctification, completes itself in the resurrection from the dead, inasmuch as regeneration and salvation pertain to the entire man, the body no less than the soul; and that extraordinary measures and human inventions are only apparently a good, reveal an unhealthy and retrogressive condition of the church, and always prove themselves to be a great evil.

In drawing this summary of faith, we have had in our eyes chiefly the eastern synod,<sup>1</sup> which comprises three fifths of the ministry and four fifths of the membership of the whole church. Of the western synod<sup>2</sup> the proportion is smaller that would concur in the negative and both sets of affirmative propositions. Fifteen or twenty years since new measures were more generally introduced in the West than in the East, and the catechetical system was in a corresponding degree set aside. But there has been a strong reaction going on for ten or twelve years against anti-reformed doctrines and measures, and in favor of the old ideas and ways of our fathers.<sup>3</sup> There is no conflict of philosophy

<sup>1</sup> Corporate name: The Synod of the Ger. Ref. Ch. in the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Corporate name: The Synod of the Ger. Ref. Ch. of Ohio and adjacent states.

<sup>3</sup> At the meeting of the western synod, held at Dayton, in May last, the following action was taken in reference to the Provisional Liturgy: "Whereas the synod of the German Reformed church of North America has prepared a Provisional Liturgy, with the intention of making it the liturgy of the entire Reformed church in this country; and whereas said provisional liturgy has been referred back to the original committee for revision; and whereas said committee, in their published report, ask of the church instruction as to the kind of liturgy wanted; therefore, *Resolved*, That it be the sense of this synod that we desire the liturgy now before the church to be so modified as to omit the responsive part as it has respect to the people in the ordinary service of the church, and such



and systems of thought between Heidelberg College<sup>1</sup> and Franklin and Marshall College, and no conflict of faith and scientific theology between the theological seminary, Tiffin, Ohio, and the seminary at Mercersburg. Dr. Kieffer, Professor of Theology at Tiffin, would not differ,<sup>2</sup> on the principal and essential features of our theological system, with Dr. Wolff<sup>3</sup> or Dr. Schaff. Differences of opinion on subordi-

phrases as may be in conflict with generally received doctrines of the German Reformed church."

There is no opposition to a liturgy, as such; none to prescribed forms of prayer, nor to offices for special occasions; and none to the doctrinal character of the provisional book, properly interpreted. The objection lies mainly against the responses, not against all the responses, but the responsive part "in the ordinary service." A modification of certain "phrases" will remove their liability to misconstruction, yet preserve the original sense. The action of the synod, rightly understood, shows that the East and West are not divided as to principles and tendencies.

<sup>1</sup> The professors are alumni of Marshall College.

<sup>2</sup> In proof, we quote a few passages from Dr. Kieffer's Inaugural Address, published as an Article in the *Mercersburg Review*, Vol. VIII. 1856, p. 478: "In the commencement Christianity made its appearance in the world as a new life, in the totality of its own being and in the unity of its own elements, all symmetrically united and blended in the common centre of its Author's own person." Speaking of Christianity as a dogma and moral law, he says, that "neither of these forms is, abstractedly considered, perfect or complete." Doctrine is essential, yet "Christianity does not consist in doctrine alone, however good and however true." The gospel, as redeeming power, "brings man into a saving relation to God in Christ Jesus; but not by any means in an outward or abstract way, but in the form of an internal, real, spiritual life-union with the person of the Saviour." If this union be not real, "the sacraments are merely signs, and not seals." "For without this real union, the feeding on Christ's body and blood, truly and really, in the sacrament is not possible, which is, nevertheless, the doctrine of the scriptures and of our catechism." Again, "The religion of mere doctrine is at best a cold intellectualism." "The religion of mere ceremonial forms and observances is like the marble statue." "The religion of abstract spiritualism, which makes but little account of doctrines and none whatever of forms, is like the mist and vapor of morning, that vanish into air." Christianity "redeems man in the totality of his being, both soul and body." "Hence its true idea involves more than doctrine or precept; yea, even more than faith, as receiving power and grace; it is life and spirit flowing over to us continually from the fulness of him who filleth immensity with his presence, while at the same time he is formed in the heart of every believer as the hope of eternal glory." These quotations are an index to the leading ideas of the inaugural. Dr. Kieffer is an alumnus of Marshall College, and a pupil of Dr. Rauch.

<sup>3</sup> Professor of Theology at Mercersburg. He was born in Martinsburg, Va., December, 1794; studied theology in the seminary while located at York, under

nate points exist, as a matter of course; but the spirit of the colleges and the seminaries is the same. Hence the combined influence of the institutions serves to strengthen and direct the reaction, both in the East and West. The present course of things looks towards complete internal and external harmony and consolidation.

*Rauch, Nevin, and Schaff.*

This general status has been reached by a peculiar combination of mental and moral forces in the persons of the principal professors of the seminary — a combination undesigned and unforeseen by the church. Rauch came without a call. Becoming obnoxious to government by an expression of rather too liberal political sentiments, he escaped to America, and presented himself to synod for examination and admission. Synod recognized in the man a gift from God, and forthwith placed him at the head of her infant institutions. At the instance of one or two clergymen, Nevin was called from the Presbyterian church. At first he hesitated; but the influence of the patriarch, Dr. Alexander, and others turned the scale. The church called Krummacher, but Europe sent Schaff; and he was received by the unanimous voice of the church. Not to any prescience or keen insight into character, much less to any

Dr. L. Mayer; and, in 1833, was ordained and installed as associate pastor with Rev. Thomas Pomp, of the Ger. Ref. church at Easton, Pa., where he labored twelve years, and became distinguished as an able preacher and an active and efficient pastor. In 1845 he accepted a call to the pastorate of the third German Reformed church of Baltimore. Here he continued until, in November, 1854, he was inaugurated as professor in the seminary. Dr. Wolff did not take a conspicuous part in conducting the theological controversies, but he was, from the start, in living sympathy with the teachings of the seminary and college; and in his pastoral charge, and on the floor of classis and synod, he has always been an earnest supporter and unfaltering advocate of the Christological movement. As a member of the liturgical committee from its first appointment, he has sustained the interpretation of synod's instructions which the provisional book embodies. He favors the responsive service, and in general an altar, in preference to a pulpit, liturgy.

For a clear and full statement of the question at issue in the liturgical committee and in the church, respecting worship, see "The Liturgical Question," a small book of 72 pp. by Dr. J. W. Nevin. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blackiston.

design or plan, is it due that these three men became associated in the seminary. It must be attributed to the special ordering of Divine Providence. What Dr. Nevin says of Dr. Rauch in his eulogy, we may say with equal propriety of himself and his colleague: "I could not but look on it as a strange and interesting fact, that the infant college of the German Reformed church should have placed at its head, there in Mercersburg, — without care or calculation, or consciousness even, on the part of its friends generally — one of the very first minds of Germany, which under other circumstances might well have been counted an ornament and honor to the oldest institution in the land."

No three men, coming together from different parts of the world, could well be more like each other. Rauch and Schaff, both born in the Reformed church on the continent, enjoyed all the advantages of early training which the best schools and gymnasiums afford, and completed their education in the most celebrated universities, and under the tuition of the most powerful and best disciplined minds of Europe. And both at an early age received the highest honors which these universities confer. Dr. Nevin had similar advantages for thorough culture in the best institutions of America. The fact, that upon finishing his course of theological study he was immediately appointed to teach temporarily, in the place of Dr. Hodge, in the oldest and most distinguished seminary in the Presbyterian church, and then called to the seminary at Alleghany, demonstrates the confidence of his teachers and of the Presbyterian church in his learning and ability.

They are alike also in their *generic* psychological character. Naturally averse to superficial and arbitrary speculation, to mechanical and inconsequential philosophizing, and especially to all intellectual activity that breaks with faith in first truths; they move according to the laws of thought, each one in his own sphere, governed by one central power, which informs their labors and binds them into unity. That central power is the Christological idea. The same fundamental idea is developed by the same method of thought, but in different departments of knowledge.

No three men, however, could well be more unlike. Rauch is a German; Nevin, Scotch-Irish; and Schaff a Swiss. Rauch is a philosopher; Nevin a theologian; and Schaff a historian. But each one is at home also in the special departments of the others. Rauch was learned in theology, conversant with the whole field of biblical literature, and devoted to the study of the fine arts. Nevin is familiar with all systems of metaphysical speculation, and learned in history generally. Schaff, as a historian, surveys the whole current of the world's life, including philosophy and theology. Rauch is theologico-philosophical; Nevin is philosophico-theological; and Schaff logico-historical.

They differ also psychically. Rauch thinks synthetically, or rather genetically; his mind invariably unfolding an idea in the order of natural growth, and infusing into it the freshness and beauty of life. The genesis develops itself into blossoms and fruit. Rauch is not satisfied unless the general runs into its particulars as consequences. His production must be an organism, all the branches growing from a germ, and no branch wanting. He would be complete as well as thorough.

Nevin produces. He lays hold of a comprehensive principle, and considers it in its organic relations. He comes to particulars by an effort, not because he does not see or appreciate them, but because the manifold relations of a principle open out broadly before him, which he would unfold and exhibit before touching the singular. He is predisposed, however, simply to indicate particulars and consequences. Blossoms and fruit being of less account, may in due time come to view of themselves. The deepest, all-pervading law of an object is with him the absorbing theme. He is thorough and comprehensive, rather than complete.

Schaff reproduces. No less thorough and philosophical, he sees the manifest facts of science and life in their fundamental and reciprocal connections. Apprehending and penetrating the whole, he constructs, with great facility, an organic unity in aesthetic proportions. Truths and events take their place in life-like order, as if by the law of instinct.

Blossoms and fruit catch his eye ; but he studies them in their relation to the life-principle of the organism. Schaff is a scientific artist, who is loth to lay down his chisel so long as one shade of thought is too deep or too faint.

Nevin and Schaff are complementary. Rauch, preceding them in time, unites, in a great degree, peculiar psychical qualities belonging to both. Specifically different, these three co-workers are generically one—different as to psychical characteristics, but one in principle, in life, and organic method ; thus constituting a triune educational force, under which the church has been growing, not by accretion, but by a manifold or many-sided process of development.

#### *Ecclesiastical Government.*

The principles of government are Presbyterian. A congregation is governed by a consistory, which is composed of the pastor, elders, and deacons. No congregation is without either elders or deacons. They are chosen by the communicant members for a term of two, three, or four years, generally only two years, and ordained by the laying on of hands, and installed. When the term expires, the administrative power ceases, but not the office. The officer is an elder or deacon without administration. If re-elected, installation is repeated. The consistory is subject to the classis, which consists of the ministers, and an elder from each pastoral charge, within a given district. The classes are subject to the synod, which consists of a delegation of ministers and elders from all the classes. The eastern and western synods are united in a general synod. The consistory answers to the session in the Presbyterian church, classis to presbytery, synod to synod, and general synod to general assembly.

The tendency to presbyterian government has been characteristic of the German Reformed church from the beginning. In the sixteenth century it was fully established in the Rhine provinces ; more so than in Switzerland or France ; and in advance of the organization of the Reformed church of Scotland. But the form of government

was not made a fundamental article, as in the Scotch Presbyterian church; nor do we find the same bitter antipathy to Episcopacy. In this respect the German Reformed church holds an intermediate position between the English and Scotch Reformation. Luther did not endeavor to establish a form of government; the Lutheran church being from the beginning more closely allied to and dependent upon the state. Subsequently opposite extremes arose. In Sweden the government of the Lutheran church is episcopal; in America it is congregational.

The origin and progress of representative government, or self-government by elders, in the Reformed church on the continent, form a very interesting and instructive chapter in church history.

#### Conclusion.

The founding of the theological seminary in 1825 constitutes, as said before, the most important epoch in the history of the church. It gave an impulse to intellectual culture, theological science, practical piety, and external growth. In connection with the college, it is the power which has quickened the latent life, reproduced the old faith, and restored the catechism of the church. The church has been recast in the mold of its own original genius. There has been no going back mechanically, or in a slavish spirit. Much less has there been a revolution, or a violent breaking with the past. The change has been an organic process. Holding firmly the ancient *symbolum apostolicum* and the great fundamental principle of the Reformation, the church has advanced by legitimate development to a stage of life and faith, which is different from the past, yet not contradictory to it, but in full harmony with its truth.

The western synod is subdivided into eleven classes; and has 168 ministers, 411 congregations, and 21,311 members. During the year ending in October, 1861, there were baptized 3,319 persons; confirmed, 1,740.

The eastern synod is subdivided into fifteen classes; and has 253 ministers, 711 congregations, and 79,676 members.

During the year ending in May, 1862, there were baptized 8,575 persons; confirmed, 3,895.

Total: 1 general synod, 2 synods, 26 classes; 421 ministers, 1,122 congregations, 100,987 members; 11,894 baptisms, and 5,635 confirmations. The congregations are located principally in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and Virginia.

## ARTICLE II.

### ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY.<sup>1</sup>

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TIMES have somewhat changed with the English people since the tradition concerning the elder Pitt was quoted and received with a look of wonder, "that he had actually read Bailey's Dictionary twice through in course." 'Indeed! and what could have been his motive? What possible interest could a man of his genius feel in a task so irksome?' The

<sup>1</sup> 1. *On the Study of Words.* By Richard Chenevix Trench, D.D. New York: Redfield. 1857.

2. *On the English Language Past and Present.* By Richard Chenevix Trench, D.D. New York: Redfield. 1859.

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4. *Rambles among Words: Their Poetry, History, and Wisdom.* By William Swinton. New York: Charles Scribner. 1859.

5. *An American Dictionary of the English Language.* By Noah Webster, LL.D. Revised and enlarged by Chauncey A. Goodrich. With Pictorial Illustrations, Appendix of New Words, Synonyms, etc. etc. Springfield: George and Charles Merriam. 1859. pp. 1750.

6. *A Dictionary of the English Language.* By Joseph E. Worcester, LL.D. Boston: Hickling, Swan, and Brewer. 1860. pp. 1854.

7. *Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary by the Philological Society.* London: Trübner and Co. 8vo. pp. 32.

8. *Lectures on the English Language.* By George P. Marsh. Revised and enlarged edition. New York: Charles Scribner. 1862. 8vo.