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EARLY  
GERMAN HYMNOLOGY  
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY REV. J. H. DUBBS, D.D.

It was remarked by Robert Proud, who wrote before the American Revolution, that "in Pennsylvania there is a greater number of religious societies than, perhaps, in any other province throughout the British dominions . . . yet it is apprehended there is not more real harmony known anywhere in this respect, even under the most despotic hierarchies." "Here," he adds in his quaint and peculiar style, "are the Quakers, who were principally the first settlers; the Episcopalians according to the manner of the Church of England, and the German and Swedish Lutherans; the Presbyterians or Independents of various kinds and the German Calvinists (*i. e.* Reformed), and the Church of Rome and the Jews; the Baptists of various kinds, with those among the Germans called Mennonists and Dunkards, or Dumplers; the Moravians and Schwenkfelders; besides the Aborigines of America, etc."

The history and peculiarities of the German churches of Pennsylvania, here so oddly grouped and enumerated, suggest a field of study which has never been properly cultivated. Their Hymnology, for instance, has, so far as we know, never received systematic treatment. Some five years ago Dr. Oswald Seidensticker, of the University of Pennsylvania, published in

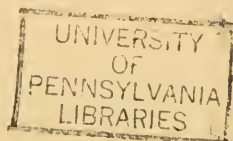
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German, in the "Deutsche Pionier," a series of articles on "German-American Bibliography" which throw much light on this obscure subject; but these articles are now out of print and very difficult to obtain. Some information may, of course, be gleaned from the Prefaces of German hymn-books and the writings of foreign hymnologists, but the subject still demands original investigation. At present we can hardly hope to do more than to give an account of the various German hymn-books which were printed in this country during the last century. These were, in many instances, hardly more than reprints of books which the early settlers had brought with them from the fatherland, with occasional original hymns inserted here and there without any indication of authorship. Under these circumstances our subject can hardly be exhaustively treated, but we can, at any rate, indicate the direction of future studies. The numerous articles which have recently been written concerning the hymnology of the English churches of America would seem to suggest that something should be done, however imperfectly, in behalf of the Germans.

In common speech, the Germans of Pennsylvania are said to be ecclesiastically divided into two great classes: "Church-People" (*Kirchen-Leute*) and "Sect-People" (*Sekten-Leute*). This distinction, though in some respects objectionable, is older than the settlement of the State. It was brought over from the fatherland, where there could be no question with regard to its meaning. The "Church-People" were, of course, those who maintained their allegiance to the established churches: Lutheran and Reformed. The Roman Catholics might also, from this point of view, have been termed "church-people," but in America they were so few in numbers and so thoroughly isolated, that they were generally known only by their proper name. The term "Sect-People" was not employed, in earlier times, by way of reproach. It simply indicated that these people were "Separatists," who were not satisfied to submit to the established ecclesiastical order, and was, therefore, nearly



equivalent with the English term "Dissenter." The sects were of many varieties, some of which have long since become extinct. Among them were "Quietists," who sought the western wilderness for the purpose of silently awaiting the speedy coming of the Lord; others, like the Moravians, were full of holy zeal for the conversion of their fellow-men; but there were also others who seem to have inherited a considerable portion of the fanatical spirit of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. The Church-People (Reformed and Lutheran) soon became most numerous and influential; but the sects were first in the field, and their hymnologic productions were so varied and curious that in the present article they will necessarily claim the greater part of our attention.

A few words of introduction may be necessary to the comprehension of the peculiarities of the German Separatists, who, at the invitation of William Penn, found a refuge in Pennsylvania. When the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 concluded the Thirty Years' war, liberty of conscience was allowed to the three great religious parties, Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed, and protection was promised to the Jews. The Anabaptists were, however, expressly excluded from the terms of the treaty, and it was even made the duty of the various governments to prevent them from holding religious assemblies. The rulers of Europe had not forgotten the excesses of Thomas Münzer and John of Leyden, and could not be convinced that under the influence of Menno Simon (properly Symons) the majority of the people popularly known as Anabaptists had become the mildest and gentlest part of the German nation. Sometimes the ruling powers seemed disposed to ignore their existence, but frequently they were compelled to suffer violent persecution. Little fragments of the early warlike Anabaptists still lingered here and there in Germany, and whenever the government came into collision with these rebellious spirits, the peaceful Mennonites were made to suffer with them. Official protection was accorded to the Mennonites only in four small

provinces,—Holstein, Cleves, Moers (including Crefeld), and Wied,—but they were generally tolerated in the Free Cities, and in Holland they secured so great a degree of liberty that they grew to be a wealthy and important body. They were regarded as a peculiar people, non-resistant, but cherishing their peculiar traditions with peculiar tenacity; and wearing garments like those which had been worn by the peasants of the previous century. They practised adult baptism only, but did not regard immersion as essential to its proper observance. Church Discipline was carried out among them with a degree of strictness that was unknown in the established churches; but on this subject there was an early schism whose effects may be traced even at the present day.

*note* The Mennonites were the most numerous of the German sects which were prominent in the early history of Pennsylvania. Most of the others were less ancient, and derived their origin from the religious movement which was commonly known as Pietism. This great awakening is generally held to have been inaugurated by Jean de Labadie (1610-1674), but its most distinguished exponents were Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705) in the Lutheran Church, and Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769) in the Reformed. The good effects of Pietism in the promotion of vital piety are universally acknowledged, but it cannot be denied that it bore with it elements which rendered it liable to run into the wildest extremes and excesses. Koch, in his "Kirchenlied," recognizes three parties among the Pietists: 1. The Mystics. 2. The Pietists Proper, and 3. The Moravians. The second of these parties, which among the Reformed, was generally known as "*die Feinen*," remained in connection with the established churches, and became the means of awakening them to a new life. The Moravians, it should be remembered, were historically connected with the most ancient forms of Protestantism, and it was only as reorganized and influenced by Count Zinzendorf and his coadjutors that they could be accounted Pietists. It is, however, princi-



pally with the Mystics, who soon broke up into numerous sects, that we are concerned on the present occasion.

It is necessary to the proper understanding of German Mysticism, to take into account the immense influence of the teachings of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), who is sometimes called "the inspired shoemaker of Goerlitz." To give even a brief account of this wonderful man would be impossible in our present limits. He was, as Emerson says of another and a greater mystic, "a philosopher who projected his metaphysics on the clouds." Believing that God had "given unto him to comprehend the centre of all things," he professed to reveal the mysteries of nature and of grace. His disciple Gichtel informs us that, though imperfectly educated, he had in his youth carefully studied the writings of Paracelsus; and it has been remarked by a modern writer that "his views when closely analyzed bear a close resemblance to the fundamental doctrines of the speculative system of Hegel," who himself calls him "ein gewaltiger Geist." His style is, however, so overloaded with quaint and obscure metaphors, it contains so much that appears to be borrowed from the cabalists and alchemists, that the average modern reader can hardly expect to do more with his writings than to pick out here and there some precious jewel of thought which abundantly testifies to the transcendent genius of the mind that produced it. It is as though some great master of harmony had attempted to render his grandest compositions on a rude and imperfect instrument, where the most delicious strains were constantly interrupted by the harshest discords.\*

Boehme's writings—and especially his "Morgenröthe"—were well suited to the taste of their age, and were studied by the learned and unlearned. To many of the pious peasantry they

\* For information concerning Boehme see the memoirs written by Frankenberg and de la Motte Fouque. Also Dörner's "Person Christi," Goebel's "Christliches Leben," the encyclopædias, and especially a series of articles by "W. J. M." in Schaff's "*Kirchenfreund*."

came with all the force of a divine revelation, and they unhesitatingly accepted them as a key and commentary to the Sacred Scriptures. Though the disciples could not fathom the meaning of the master, they had at least the consciousness of standing on the verge of a great mystery, and imagined that through the darkness they could catch glimpses of the "morning-redness" that heralded the everlasting day.

In various places throughout Germany, and elsewhere, circles were formed for the study of the word of God with the aid afforded by the writings of Boehme. The most important of these was the "Philadelphia Society," which in time became the fruitful mother of sects. Its formation was first suggested by the celebrated Eleonore von Merlau (wife of the chiliast, Dr. Petersen), who claimed to be a prophetess, and accordingly announced the speedy advent of a period when the "old church of Sardis should be supplanted by the new church of Philadelphia." To prepare the way for this grand epoch, a Philadelphia society was founded in London by Jane Leade, assisted by John Pordage and John Bromley. Branches of this society were soon organized at various places in Holland and Germany, and some of these developed into separate sects, which generally enjoyed but a brief existence. Among them we may mention the "Inspired" (*die Inspirirten*), Ronsdorfers, Ellerians, and others, which were transplanted to Pennsylvania, but failed to grow on unaccustomed soil. All of these sects regarded their leaders as directly inspired, or illuminated, by the Holy Spirit.

Alexander Mack and seven others founded at Schwarzenau, in 1708, a society for the study of the Scriptures, that closely resembled the Philadelphia societies, if it was not directly connected with them. The result of their studies was the organization of a sect which was called by its founders "Brethren." They were, however, often called "New Anabaptists," and were popularly known as "Dompelars," or "dippers," from their practice of baptism by immersion; which name *note* appears to have been corrupted in America into Tunkers, Dun-

kers, or Dunkards.\* With their numerous external peculiarities we are not at present concerned; it is more to our purpose to observe in their writings how fully they were under the influence of the spirit of Jacob Boehme.† This fact must be distinctly kept in mind, if we would appreciate the peculiarities of their hymnology.

It is well known that Mack's whole society emigrated to America, but it is rather amusing to find on the records of the Reformed Synod of Solingen, in 1719, a resolution directing the churches to return thanks, because the Dompelars of Crefeld have run away and sailed to Pennsylvania. These rejoicings were rather premature, as it was not until 1729 that the last of the "Dompelars" set sail for America.

In America the "Church of the Brethren" prospered greatly, gathering into their communion many scattered members of the various mystical German sects. Within a few years of the first settlement there was, however, a violent controversy concerning the proper day for the observance of the Sabbath, which resulted in the separation of the party known as the Seventh-Day Baptists. The latter body adopted the seventh day of the week for public worship in 1728, and in 1732 organized a monastic order at Ephrata, which in its rules and observances closely resembled the Capuchins or White Friars. Such Protestant orders were by no means unknown in those days, even in America, and we need but refer to the monastery of the "Woman in the Wilderness," on the Wissahickon, near Philadelphia, and the somewhat similar institution founded by the Labadists at Bohemia Manor, in Maryland.

*Conrad Beissel* (1791-1768) was the founder and first prior of the "Order of the "Solitary" at Ephrata. He was a native of the Palatinate, and had been in his youth a member of

\* The term appears to be of Dutch origin, but is plainly allied to the German verb "*tunken*," to dip.

† The writer has in his library several copies of books written by Boehme, printed by the "Brethren" in America and extensively circulated by them.

the Reformed Church. As he possessed wonderful facility in versification, and was withal a fine musician, one of his first objects was to provide his society with hymns that were permeated by his own peculiar mystical spirit.

THE EPHRATA HYMN-BOOKS.

The earliest volumes printed for the Ephrata society, of which there are extant examples, issued from the press of Benjamin Franklin. As there was at that time no font of German type in America, the characters employed were Roman. The titles of these books are long, and according to the peculiar taste of the age, are in many instances rhyming or alliterative, so that we will give only so much of the title as will insure the recognition of the book. The first of these Franklin imprints is dated 1730, and is entitled "*Göttliches Liebes und Lobes Gethöne*," or, in English, "Divine Melodies of Love and Praise." The only copy of this book of which we have any knowledge is in the celebrated library of Mr. Abraham Cassel. We have not had an opportunity of examining it. The second book of the series is dated 1732, and is called "*Vorspiel der Neuen Welt*," that is, "Overture of the New World." In 1736 still another volume was issued from the same press, entitled "*Jacob's Kampf und Ritter Plätz*," "Jacob's Scene of Conflict and Knighthood." These volumes are all hymn-books, consisting principally of original hymns, written it may be presumed, by Conrad Beissel. Many of them are addressed to Sophia, or Sophie, a personification of the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs, who is here represented as a female personage of extraordinary grace and beauty, with whom the poet is violently enamored. Thus, for instance, he sings:

"Fairest Sophie, may the longings  
That within my bosom rise,  
May a heart that loves thee dearly,  
Win me favor in thine eyes."

Some of these hymns, or ditties, it must be confessed, are so "realistic," in the most recent sense of the word, that it would require some boldness to translate and publish them.

The Ephrata community was probably not fully satisfied with the books published by Franklin. They, no doubt, desired to have their hymns brought together into a single volume, and printed in the German character, with which they were most familiar. In 1739 a larger volume was published for the Ephrata society of Christopher Saur, of Germantown. Its title is "*Zionitischer Wejrauch's Hügel, oder Myrrhen Berg,*" that is, "Zion's Hill of Incense or Mountain of Myrrh." It is a well-printed 12mo. of 792 pp., not including preface and index, and contains 654 hymns, besides an appendix entitled "The Rod of Aaron," with 37 hymns. The book is divided into thirty-three sections, a few of which are entitled as follows: "1. Aurora, or Beginning of the Light of God. 2. The Clearness of the Light. 3. The Gates of the Abyss are opened. 4. Foretaste of Paradise. 5. The Holy Sabbath and its Profound Peace. 6. Love and Spiritual Stillness. 7. The Virgin's Betrothal in the New Covenant, confirmed by the Water of Baptism. 8. The Excellence of Celibacy, and what it means to become one with Christ in Spirit." In this way the sections run on to the end of the volume. The book is dedicated to "all the solitary turtle-doves that coo in the wilderness," and the turtle-doves of Ephrata certainly themselves kept up a billing and cooing that made the forests ring.

The Ephrata hymns are not of a high order. The following rough version of the first two verses of No. 227 gives a good idea of their general character:

"Awakened by the midnight cry,  
The virgins know the morn is nigh,  
For now the watchman's call they hear  
That will not cease till day appear.  
No more shall slumber close their eyes,  
The bridegroom comes! The sun will rise!

The splendor of their garments bright  
Scatters the darkest shades of night;

The lamps now burning in their hand  
 Send forth their light to every land;  
 That men may see, with one accord,  
 How ransomed saints await the Lord."

About a year ago a copy of the "Weyrauch's Hügel" was secured by the Philadelphia Library, on which occasion Mr. Samuel W. Pennypacker contributed to its bulletin an interesting bibliographical note, from which the following is an extract:

"There are a number of facts in the bibliographical history of the '*Weyrauchs Hügel*,' any one of which would be enough to make it a remarkable production. It was the first book printed in German type in America. It was the first *book* from the justly celebrated and prolific Colonial press of Saur, of Germantown. A letter from Germantown, dated November 16th, 1738, and published in the *Geistliche Fama*, a European periodical of the '*Inspired*,' says: "We have here a German book-publishing house, established by Saur, and the Seventh-day Baptists have had a great hymn-book printed, of old and new hymns mixed.' In rather a curious way, it led to the establishment of the Ephrata press. The thirty-seventh verse of the four hundredth hymn runs as follows:

*'Schet, schet, schet, an!  
 Schet, schet an den Mann!  
 Der von Gott erhöret ist,  
 Der ist unser Herr und Christ,'*

which, literally translated, is:

'Look, look, look,  
 Look, look upon the man:  
 He is heard by God;  
 He is our Lord and Christ.'

"The compositor asked Saur whether he thought that more than one Christ had appeared. Saur inquired of him why he suggested such an idea; when the man pointed out this verse, and said it appeared to him that by it Conrad Beissel, the founder of the Ephrata cloister, meant himself. Saur wrote this to Beissel, and asked whether it had any foundation; whereupon Beissel replied to him that he was a fool. This language did not please Saur, who soon after issued a pamphlet censuring Beissel, saying, among other things, that his name contained the number six hundred and sixty-six of the beast of the Apocalypse, and that he had received something from all the planets—'from Mars his strength, from Venus his influence over women, and from Mercury his comedian tricks.' Beissel became quite angry, and one of the results of the widening breach was a new press at Ephrata. The '*Weyrauchs Hügel*' is the

largest and most important collection of Hymns of the Ephrata cloister. Many of them were written there by Beissel and others, but unfortunately it is not possible, except in a few instances, to determine the authorship of particular hymns. Christiana Hoehn, 'a pious and God-fearing woman,' who died an inmate of the cloister at an advanced age, wrote those upon pages 465 and 456, beginning: 'Wenn mir das Creutz will machen Schmerzen,' and 'Ich dringe ein in Jesu Liebe.' A miscellaneous book, beautifully written and illuminated, in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, contains the music to which these hymns were sung."

We have a theory, based on an examination of several copies of this curious book, that on account of the difficulties with the publisher it was not very favorably regarded by the "Brethren," and was perhaps never extensively circulated. Most of the extant copies were evidently made up of sheets which had been lying until some of them were greatly discolored, and when they were finally put together some of the sheets could not be found. At any rate the Brethren did not cease their hymnologic labors, and in 1747 issued "*Das Gesang der Einsamen und verlassenen Turtel-taube.*" [The Song of the solitary and forsaken Turtle-dove], 4to., pp. 495. This book, which is of the same general character as the preceding, appeared in various editions. In 1755 the rewas a "*Nachklang-zum Gesang der einsamen Turtel-taube,*" and, in 1762, an improved edition, entitled "*Neu vermehrtes Gesang der einsamen Turtel-taube.*" In 1756 we have two small 4to. volumes, "*Das Bruderlied*" (The Brother's Song,) and "*Ein angenehmer Geruch der Rosen und Lilien im Thale der Demuth* (A pleasant Odor of Roses and Lilies in the Valley of Humility." The first of these books is dated at "Bethania," the brothers' house, and the second is said to have been composed in "Saron," the dwelling of the sisters.

The last of the Ephrata hymn-books is the "*Paradiesisches Wunderspiel,*" published in 1766. This is a handsome 4to. of 472 pages, which is especially interesting as containing a brief autobiography of Conrad Beissel. On the title page is a vignette representing a bird's nest on an altar, with the legend "*Invenit hirundo nidum Jehova altaria tua.*"

We have seen it stated, though we do not know on what authority, that the whole number of hymns composed at Ephrata was about 750, of which nearly two-thirds were written by Beissel. In the determination of the authorship of the several hymns there is, however, much room for further research.

#### OTHER BAPTIST COMMUNITIES.

“Der Ausbund” (The Paragon) is a book of hymns and religious ballads, first printed in America by Christopher Saur, in 1742. There have probably been more than a dozen American editions, and it is still in print. Though at one time extensively circulated among the Mennonites of all kinds, it is now regarded as the exclusive possession of the sect known as the Amish, or Ohmish,\* who, we believe, still use it in their religious services.

According to the title-page, the “Ausbund” consists of “beautiful hymns composed in the prison of the castle of Bassau (*sic*) and elsewhere by the Swiss brethren and other orthodox Christians.” Besides these hymns it contains a confession of faith by Thomas von Imbroich,† and a series of sketches of Mennonite martyrs, who from their names appear to have been related to many of the first settlers of Lancaster county. It was first published at Schaffhausen in 1583, and has been printed in Basel as recently as 1838.

The “Ausbund” is in every respect a curious book, which cannot be ignored by any one who desires to become familiar with the life-history of the German sects. The writers were

\* The Amish are a small sect of rigid Mennonites, principally found in Lancaster county. The name is said to be derived from Jacob Ammen, of Ammenthal, in Switzerland, a preacher of the seventeenth century, who led a reactionary party among the Mennonites.

† Thomas Drucker von Imbroich (1531-1556), who is justly considered one of the chief Mennonite worthies, was pastor of a congregation at Cologne, and suffered martyrdom at the age of twenty-five. His writings were extensively circulated in the form of tracts, and finally acquired a sort of confessional authority.



evidently illiterate, and employed a "*Babylonish*" dialect, but their sincerity and earnestness are everywhere apparent. Their verses are roughly constructed, and mystical contemplation is sought in them in vain, but they tell the tale of their persecutions with a degree of simple fervor that cannot fail to awaken responsive sympathy. In every instance the name of some popular tune is given, to which the hymn may be sung, which produces an effect that is sufficiently incongruous.\* Thus, one of the most solemn hymns is to be sung to the tune of "There went a maiden with a jug." It is remarkable that in these hymns there are but few words of condemnation for cruel persecutors; but once in a while the indignation of the poet is not to be repressed, as, for instance, in the following verses from the "martyrs' song" of George Ladennacher and Wilhelm von Kepsel:

"Cologne, Cologne, upon the Rhine,  
When wilt thou heed our praying?  
When wilt thou cease to drink the blood  
Of saints, which thou art slaying?"

Now from thy wicked raging cease,  
And from thine evil turn thee!  
Or hell at length will be thy grave,  
Eternal fire will burn thee."

There are in the "Ausbund" many things which one would hardly expect to find in a Protestant hymn-book, such as stories from the Apocrypha, and legends of the saints. In the ballads descriptive of the sufferings of the Anabaptists, the supernatural is made to play an important part. One of the martyrs, Haslibacher, is, for instance, said to have been visited by the angels, and when he was executed a number of wonderful signs occurred, in accordance with his predictions. These stories were read and sung by the early Mennonite settlers until they became an element in their daily thinking. They

\* It has been suggested that these secular tunes were employed in times of persecution for the purpose of misleading their enemies, who might chance to overhear the Mennonites at their devotions. This, however, is doubtful.

must have had a tendency to cause them to regard themselves as an oppressed and persecuted people, long after all occasion for such a feeling had passed away.

“*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel der Kinder Zions,*” Germantown, C. Saur, 1744. 530 pp.

This book was a favorite with Separatists of various kinds, and was an abridgment of a larger European collection. It was produced by the fanatical brotherhood known as “the “Inspired,” which must have been at one time quite numerous in Pennsylvania, but was generally absorbed, as we suppose, by the new church of the “Brethren. *Johann Friedrich Rock* (1687–1749) was, if not the founder, the chief leader of this peculiar people, who, according to Goebel, derived much of their spirit from the French “Prophets of the Cevennes.” Their inspiration was at times accompanied by violent convulsions. Several of the leaders—Gruber, Gleim, and Mackinet—emigrated to America, and resided in Germantown. Saur was also originally connected with them. In Germany, after Rock’s death, they maintained a feeble existence until the beginning of the present century, when they again began to increase and prosper. In 1853, under the leadership of Metz and Weber, most of them emigrated to America, where they founded several socialistic institutions, of which “Ebenczer,” near Buffalo, is the most prominent.

Like all the hymn-books of this school, the “*Psalterspiel*” runs riot in the imagery of the Song of Solomon, and seems “perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant.” There is perhaps less extreme mysticism than in some of the preceding publications, and we find no reference to the glories of celibacy. It contains many real beauties, and was for many years a great favorite, having been republished, in America, in more than a dozen editions.

Other hymn-books of the German Baptist sects, “*Die Kleine Harfe*” (1753), “*Liebliche und Erbautiche Lieder*” (1788), “*Unpartheyische Lieder Sammlung,*” and others, which we have no room to consider.

## THE SCHWENKFELDERS.

*Caspar Schwenkfeld von Ossig* (1490–1561), was a Silesian nobleman and canon of the cathedral church of Liegnitz. He was for some time a follower of Luther, but having manifested certain peculiarities of doctrine, became involved in a violent controversy with the great reformer, which resulted in his persecution and banishment. His followers, after two centuries of suffering, in 1734 emigrated in a body to Pennsylvania, as the only means of escaping violent extinction. Here they settled in parts of the counties of Montgomery, Berks, and Lehigh, where they have individually become prosperous and wealthy, but have not greatly increased in numbers. Ten years ago the whole number of the Schwenkfelders was estimated at three hundred. A full account of their history and denominational peculiarities is contained in an article by Rev. C. Z. Weiser, D. D., in the "Mercersburg Review" for July, 1870.\*

The first edition of the Schwenkfelder hymn-book was printed by Christopher Saur, in 1762, at the expense of certain "united friends." It is entitled "*Neu eingerichtetes Gesangbuch, in sich haltend eine Sammlung (mehrentheils alter) schöner, lehrreicher, und erbaulicher Lieder.*" We are careful to repeat the greater part of the title because there is no intimation anywhere of the religious body for which the book was intended. It is a handsome 12mo., containing 917 hymns, which, according to the preface, are mostly derived from the hymn-books of the "Bohemian Brethren," though there is an appendix containing some of the best hymns of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. The preface is scholarly, and the arrangement admirable.† There is a three-fold index, of melodies, festivals, and first

\* See also "*Ausführliche Geschichte Kaspar v. Schwenkfelds und der Schwenkfelder,*" von Oswald Kadelbach, Lauban, 1860.

† The Preface does not claim that the Schwenkfelders were historically connected with the "Bohemian Brethren," but on the contrary speaks of "the peculiar tenets and expressions" of the latter body, which have occasionally made it necessary to change the language of their hymns.

lines. The index of hymns arranged according to the festivals not only indicates hymns proper to be sung on every Lord's Day in the year, but also for many saints' days which are not ordinarily observed by Protestants, and for six annual days of fasting and prayer.

It is only when we come to examine the hymns which were intended to convey the peculiar doctrines of the sect that the book reveals its weakness. Here some of the Schwenkfelders had evidently been tempted to "try their 'prentice hand," and bad work they made of it. It would be impossible to render these verses into English in such a way as to convey a correct idea of the singularly inharmonious character of the originals, but parallels may easily be found in the "Bay Psalm-Book," or the ancient Scotch versions.

Notwithstanding these imperfections, the Schwenkfelder Hymn-Book is, in our opinion, a publication of a very superior order, and a credit to the community that produced it.

#### THE MORAVIANS.

The "Unitas Fratrum" occupies a peculiarly honorable position in German hymnology. Its history records the names of a long series of sacred poets, whose best hymns are not only sung wherever the German language is spoken, but have been translated by faithful missionaries into languages whose very name the authors did not know. Some of these hymns were written in America, or by men who were prominent in the establishment of the American church, but the relations of the different ecclesiastical provinces have always been so intimate, that to consider them apart from other productions of the same authors would be mechanical and unsatisfactory. The whole field of Moravian hymnology is, however, so extensive, that to do it justice would require at least a volume, and we cannot therefore hope to do more than to indicate its outlines.

The most recent English Liturgy of the Moravian church claims that the "Unitas Fratrum" was the first among Pro-

testant churches to publish a hymn-book. This statement refers to a collection of hymns in the Bohemian language, chiefly composed by John Huss and Bishop Luke of Prague, which was published in 1505 by the "Bohemian Brethren," from whom the Moravians derive their origin. These hymns were well translated into German by Michael Weisse, in a volume printed in 1531, and reprinted with additions in 1544, by Bishop John Horn. We have already referred to these compositions, in connection with the Schwenkfelders, and need only add that they were highly appreciated by Luther, and exercised an important influence on the development of Lutheran hymnology. Herder says concerning them: "In the hymns of the Bohemian Brethren there is a simplicity and devotion, an inwardness and fraternal communion, which we fail to reproduce because we do not possess them." Several of them are still employed in worship,—as, for instance, "*Nun hilf uns o Herr Jesu Christ,*" and "*Nun lasset uns den Leib begraben.*" The latter is, however, based on the "*Jam moesta quiesce querela*" of Prudentius.

Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), who in 1722 gathered the scattered Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, and subsequently organized the renewed "Unity of the Brethren," was himself a poet of no common order. Knapp, in his "*Liederschatz,*" enumerates no less than one hundred and thirty-two of his hymns which have become classic; and among these are several which have been well translated, and are found in many English hymn-books. Among the hymns which are most frequently sung in our American churches, we may mention "*Aller Gläub'gen Sammelplatz,*" of which there is a translation in the "*Lyra Germanica:*"

"Christ will gather in His own  
To the place where He is gone,  
Where their heart and treasure lie,  
Where our life is hid on high."

Other favorite hymns are "*Die Christen geh'n von Ort zu Ort,*" "*Herr, dein Wort, die edle Gabe,*" "*Herz und Herz ver-*

*rint zusammen,*" "*Jesu, geh voran,*" and "*Der du noch in der letzten Nacht.*" The best of them is, perhaps, "*Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit,*" in whose language we were taught to pray, in earliest childhood :

"The Saviour's blood and righteousness,  
My glory is, my precious dress.  
Thus well arrayed I will not fear  
When in Christ's presence I appear."

Dr. Schaff has, however, informed us ("*Deutsches Gesangbuch,*" No. 291), that this beautiful stanza is not original with Zinzendorf, but was borrowed from a hymn by Paul Eber (156!).

Unfortunately, there was a period in the life of Zinzendorf, shortly after his visit to America (1741-1743), when he and his followers were carried by their enthusiasm into the wildest extravagancies. Some of the hymns and hymn-books produced during the so-called "*Sichtungs-Zeit*" (1745-1750) are in the highest degree fantastic. Concerning them it is said, in the most recent English hymn-book of the Moravian church, that they were "the outgrowth of a period of sentimental fanaticism," and were therefore gradually suppressed.

The earliest collections of hymns issued by Zinzendorf were not recognized by him as hymn-books of the church. The first book to which this title may properly be applied was published in 1735. It was often reprinted, and we have a copy of the edition printed at Barby in 1757, which contains hymns which are probably unequalled in eccentricity, and which bears the impress of the peculiar "*Blut und Wunden Theologie*" on almost every page. A great improvement was the "*London Hymn-Book*" of 1753, which contains upwards of three thousand hymns; but the formative period of Moravian hymnology was not concluded until 1778, when Gregor and Spangenberg compiled an excellent German hymn-book, which, we believe is still in use. No authorized hymn-book for the Moravian church was issued in America during the colonial period, but a small collection, intended probably for missionary purposes and

entitled "*Hirtenlieder von Bethlehem*," was printed by Saur as early as 1742. This collection we have not seen, but it must have been popular, as it was frequently reprinted.

There is plenty of evidence to show that Zinzendorf finally regretted the peculiarities which for a time disfigured the hymnology of the Moravian church, and so greatly prejudiced the early work of missions in the opinion of its cotemporaries. It should, at any rate, be remembered that they sprang from a form of piety which, if for a time morbid, was certainly thoroughly sincere. In an age when one portion of the church was satisfied with a vague idea of an omnipotent Father, and another was carried away by mystic notions concerning the direct and immediate inspiration of the Spirit, Zinzendorf never wavered in his work of directing the world to Christ as the proper centre of its faith and life.

Several of Zinzendorf's family possessed the gift of sacred song in a remarkable degree. His son, *Christian Renatus von Zinzendorf* (1727-1752) was the author of several hymns which are in no way inferior to those of his illustrious father. Among these the most celebrated is "*Marter Gottes! wer kann Dein vergessen.*" *Countess Erdmuth Dorothea* (1700-1756), daughter of Henry XXVIII. of Reuss, and first wife of Count Zinzendorf, composed "*Was liebst du, grosser Seelenmann,*" and several other hymns which have been favorites in the Moravian church; and *Anna Nitschmann* (1715-1760), the count's companion on his journey to Pennsylvania, and subsequently his second wife, wrote "*Theurer Freund, hier ist mein Herz.*" Other eminent sacred poets of the Moravian church were *Johann Nitschmann* (1712-1783); *Christian David* (1690-1751); *Leonhard Johann Dober* (1706-1766); *Baron Frederick von Watteville* (1700-1777); *Johannes von Watteville* (1718-1788); *Matthäus Stack* (1711-1787); *August Gotthelb Spangenberg* (1704-1792); *Christian Gregor* (1723-1801); and *Henriette Luise von Hohn* (1724-1782). These are but a few of the most brilliant names in the annals of Moravian hymnology. Several of them were among the founders of Bethlehem, in Pennsylvania; and Spangenberg,

especially, who was probably the greatest of them all, deserves a prominent place in the history of the State. It is evident, therefore, that Moravian hymnology has been from the beginning, in a certain sense, international, and that it cannot well be considered apart from its European relations.

#### THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

In hymnology the Lutherans easily take the front rank among the Protestant churches of Germany and of the world. A German author, who was himself a "Separatist," said, more than a century ago: "The Catholics pray most frequently, the Lutherans are the best singers, and the Reformed excel in preaching." Whatever may be thought of this judgment in all its particulars, there can be no doubt that with reference to Lutheran pre-eminence in hymnology it is entirely correct. From the days of Martin Luther down to the present time the stream of sacred song has never ceased to flow; and of the eighty thousand hymns which compose the body of German hymnology, the vast majority are the offspring of Lutheran piety and genius.

With such an abundance of Lutheran hymnologic material in other lands, it is somewhat depressing to find so little of it in America, during the period which we have undertaken to consider. The wants of the churches in this respect had, however, been so fully supplied by the great hymnologists of Germany, that there was no pressing necessity for the production of new hymns and hymn-books. For many years hymn-books, in large numbers, were imported from the fatherland, and these were no doubt entirely satisfactory. The collection which was generally used was known as the Marburg Lutheran Hymn-Book. It is said to have been first published in 1543, and was no doubt regarded with peculiar reverence. The writer has a copy of the pocket-edition printed at Marburg in 1716, which, it would seem, must have had an antique appearance even at the time of its publication, as it contains many forms of expression



which belonged peculiarly to an earlier generation. Among other similar compositions it contains the curious bi-lingual hymn which has been ascribed to Henry Suso (1300-1365):

“ *In dulci jubilo*  
 Nun singet und seydt froh.  
 Unsers Herzens Sonne  
 Liegt in *presepio*,  
 Und leuchtet als die Sonne,  
*Matris in gremio*,  
*Alpha es et O*,  
*Alpha es et O.*”

We can hardly imagine that these “*Mischlieder*” were ever sung in the American churches, but as the book contained upwards of six hundred hymns, including many which are still dear to the German people, there can have been no difficulty in making appropriate selections for public worship.

The “Marburg” hymn-book appears not to have been reprinted in America until 1762, when an edition was published by Saur.\* A second edition appeared in 1770. Its popularity is indicated by the fact that even after the appearance of an original American collection, it was once more reprinted, in 1799, by Charles Cist.

The earliest original collection of hymns, designed for the use of the Lutheran churches in America, was published in 1786, “under the auspices of the German Lutheran Ministerium.” It is entitled “*Erbauliche Liedersammlung*,” and is generally known as the “Muhlenberg” hymn-book, because the preface was written by Dr. Henry Melchior Mühlenberg, “the patriarch of the Lutheran church in America,” two years before his death. Though, of course, giving no evidence of the critical research which is the offspring of a later era, this book is re-

\* The Saur edition of 1762 is an exact reprint of the Marburg edition of 1716, except that the Latin stanzas of the hymn “*Puer natus in Bethlehem*” are omitted. There is a “*Neuester Anhang*, containing thirty-four hymns which was probably taken from a more recent European edition. As was usual in those days, there is an appendix containing Family Prayers, Luther’s Smaller Catechism, and an account of the destruction of Jerusalem.

cognized as a very creditable production. The preface is signed by twenty-five Lutheran ministers, among whom we recognize two writers of religious poetry whose names deserve to be remembered :

*Dr. John Christopher Kunze* (1744–1807), a native of Saxony, was for fourteen years pastor of St. Michael's and Zion's churches in Philadelphia. In 1784 he removed to New York, where he became pastor of the Lutheran church, and was for many years Professor of Ancient Languages in Columbia College. He was the author of a collection of German religious poems, which were much admired, and in 1795 published a hymn-book of German hymns translated into English verse.

*Dr. Justus Henry C. Helmuth* (1745–1825) was a native of Brunswick, Germany, and studied in Halle. He came to America in 1769, and was for ten years pastor of the Lutheran church in Lancaster. In 1779 he became pastor of the German Lutheran church of Philadelphia, and continued in this relation until 1820. During the prevalence of the yellow fever in Philadelphia he manifested much heroism and devotion; and on the occasion of the death of the Reformed pastor, John Henry Winckhaus, who fell a victim to the pestilence, he composed a very beautiful hymn which is preserved in Harbaugh's "Lives of the Fathers of the Reformed Church." He was the author of "*Geistliche Lieder*," 12mo., pp. 200. Next to Muhlenberg, Helmuth was the most prominent man in the early history of the Lutheran church in America.

The old "Muhlenberg" hymn-book has been succeeded by a series of collections better suited to the tastes of later generations; but it possesses an interest, derived from its historical associations, which can never be equalled by any one of its successors.

#### THE REFORMED CHURCH.

The Reformed churches of Germany and Switzerland, in their earlier history, devoted but little attention to hymnology. Though a Reformed hymn-book was issued by Johann Zwick,

as early as 1540, as a sort of appendix to his version of the Psalms, the stern legalism which then prevailed was opposed to the singing of uninspired spiritual songs. The Reformed church was never entirely destitute of sacred poets, and in certain cities, like Strasburg, where Lutheran influence was strong, small collections of hymns were published for the use of the churches; but as a general thing the devotional requirements of the Reformed people were completely met by the Psalter. It should, however, not be forgotten, that their versions of the Psalms were of a very superior order. Lobwasser's was the one most frequently employed, and though not equal to the French Psalms of Clement Marot, it was very much superior to those employed in the churches of Holland and Scotland. Indeed, there are persons even now who regret that the magnificent psalmody of former times is no longer heard in the German Reformed churches.

It was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that the Reformed church of Germany began to produce the brilliant series of sacred poets to whom we are indebted for some of the grandest of modern hymns. Under the influence of the great religious awakening, to which we have already referred, the stream of devotion could no longer be contained in its ancient channel. In 1679 Joachim Neander (1659-1680) published his "Hymns of the Covenant," and these unequalled productions may be said to have struck the key-note of subsequent Reformed hymnology.

In an article on "Early Reformed Hymnology," published in the "Reformed Quarterly Review," in October, 1880, we have given a full account of the work of Neander and his successors. In this connection we can but reiterate the opinion, that these great hymnologists exerted an influence on the development of the church which was not exceeded by that of her greatest theologians. The German Reformed church cannot be understood by merely studying the writings of Zwingli, Calvin, and Ursinus; for it was not until it brought forth the Biblical Theology of Coccejus and the sacred poetry of Joachim

Neander that the "ancient stock" began to produce its most precious fruits.

Among the successors of Neander in the field of Reformed hymnology, we can but mention a few of the most brilliant. *Louisa Henrietta, Electress of Brandenburg* (1627–1667) is best known as the authoress of "*Jesu meine Zuversicht*." *Frederick Adolph Lampe* (1683–1729), the celebrated pastor of St. Augustin's church in Bremen, wrote "*Mein Leben ist ein Pilgerstand*," and many other beautiful hymns. *Gerhard Tersteegen* (1697–1769), "the greatest of modern mystics," was one of the best hymnologists of his age, and many of his productions have been translated into English. *Johann Heinrich Jung, called Stilling* (1740–1817), who is celebrated in science and in general literature, no less than in the annals of the church, was also the author of hymns, which are still employed in worship. *Casper Zollikofer* (born 1707), and *George Joachim Zollikofer* (1730–1788), have bequeathed us many treasures of Christian song. *Hieronymus Annoni*, of Basel (1697–1770), called "the pastor after God's own heart," was the author of hymns whose piety and childlike devotion have endeared them to the churches. *Johann Caspar Lavater* (1741–1801), who was called by Goethe "the best, greatest, wisest and sincerest of all mortal and immortal men," and who is best known by the most insignificant of his achievements—the supposed discovery of a science of physiognomy,—is said to have written more than seven hundred hymns. *Friedrich Adolph Krummacher* (1768–1845) and *Gottfried Menken* (1768–1831) may be regarded as leading a more modern school of Reformed hymnologists, among whom may be mentioned Dr. Theremin, Emanuel Fröhlich, Dr. J. P. Lange, Samuel Preiswerk, Dr. F. W. Krummacher, Dr. C. R. Hagenbach, and two gifted women, Anna Schlatter and Meta Heusser-Schweizer. This list, which might easily be extended, may serve to show that though the Reformed church entered late into the field, she has no reason to be ashamed of her contributions to the general treasure of Christian hymnology.

The earliest Reformed hymnal published in Germany by synodical authority is said to have been issued in 1731, at the direction of the Synod of Juliers, Cleves, and Berg. Individual churches had, however, printed small collections at an earlier date, and, for convenience, these were bound up with the psalm-book. Of this character were most of the collections which the early settlers brought with them to America. The most popular was the "Marburg Reformed" hymn-book, of which we have a copy printed in 1746.\* The merits of this book were fully discussed, some years ago, in connection with the Liturgical movement in the Reformed church in the United States, so that we need not enlarge upon them. It is, we believe, generally acknowledged to have been a very good collection, containing more of the hymns of the Primitive church than was usual in those days.

The "Marburg" Reformed hymn-book was reprinted by Christopher Saur as early as 1752. It is one of the finest specimens of the typography of that celebrated printer, containing, besides the Psalms and Hymns, the Heidelberg Catechism, Morning and Evening Prayers, Gospel and Epistle Lessons, and the History of the Destruction of Jerusalem. A second (perhaps third) edition was published in 1763.

It is stated on the title-page of the European editions of this book, that it was published "for the use of the churches of Hesse, Hanau, the Palatinate, and other adjacent provinces." The American printer has extended the series by inserting the name of "Pennsylvania," which produces a somewhat comical effect, as though the Palatinate and Pennsylvania were to be regarded as "adjacent provinces."

It appears evident that this book was printed by Saur as a private speculation. In the preface to the first authorized hymn-book of the Reformed church in the United States, there is no reference to these editions, though the writer speaks of the difficulties which have been hitherto experienced in import-

\* It is a somewhat curious coincidence that both the Lutheran and the Reformed churches, of this country, should at first have used hymn-books which were printed in Marburg.

ing suitable hymn-books from Germany.\* The secret is probably to be found in the fact that Saur was a "Separatist," who was rather fond of saying hard things in his paper concerning "church-people;" or, as Dr. Seidensticker expresses it, though the Reformed and Lutheran ministers had no quarrel with Saur, "they took no pleasure in him."

The earliest American hymn-book of the German Reformed church can hardly be regarded as an original production. It was prepared in accordance with a resolution adopted at the Synod of Reading, in 1794: "Resolved, That a new hymn-book be prepared, of which the Psalms shall be taken from Lobwasser and Spreng's improved version, and the Palatinate hymn-book shall form the basis of the hymns, with this difference only, that some unintelligible hymns be exchanged for better ones." It is evident, however, that the work of revision and alteration became much more extensive than was originally intended. The preface says: "We have chosen the most edifying and best known hymns in the Marburg and Palatinate hymn-books, composed by Joachim Neander, Friedrich Adolph Lampe, Casper Zollikofer, and other godly men among Protestants. To these we have added a number of edifying spiritual songs, taken from the hymn-books recently published in various parts of Germany. The metres are throughout arranged according to the Palatinate hymn-book."

This collection, entitled "*Neues und Verbessertes Gesangbuch*," was printed by Steiner and Kammerer, Philadelphia, 1797. It was an unfortunate period for the compilation of a hymn-book, and it was probably well that it was based on older collections. As it is, it contains a few hymns which were evidently composed under the influence of the Rationalistic spirit which was then prevalent in Germany. Others contain expressions which would be offensive to a more modern taste; but with all its imperfections, the book was in some respects better than the "Chambersburg" collection, which immediately succeeded

\* As the Saur editions were, no doubt, out of print, in consequence of the destruction of the printing establishment during the Revolutionary War, it is, of course, possible that it did not occur to this writer to refer to them.

it. It was reprinted in numberless editions, each with a frontispiece representing the Psalmist playing on his harp. Michael Billmeyer, of Germantown, was for many years the publisher. Its use in some of the churches must have continued longer than is generally supposed, inasmuch as a handsome edition was printed, as recently as 1850, by Enos Benner, of Sunnyside, Pennsylvania.

In the present article we have sought to confine our researches to the publications of the last century, and cannot therefore consider more recent collections, which might themselves be made the subject of an interesting essay. We will, however, venture to add that the second German hymn-book prepared by direction of the Synod of the Reformed church in the United States, was published in 1842. This collection was replaced by the excellent "*Deutsches Gesangbuch*," prepared, at the request of the Synod, by Rev. Dr. Philip Schaff, and finally adopted in 1861.

In preparing a sketch of early German hymnology in Pennsylvania, it has been our main object to direct attention to a subject which has been generally neglected. The careful investigation of original sources would, no doubt, reveal many interesting particulars. In a preparatory essay, like the present, omissions and errors are almost unavoidable, as it is only by a succession of laborers that the work can be satisfactorily performed. There are some minds to which such researches may appear dreary in the extreme, but there are others for whom they are possessed of peculiar fascinations. Even the morbid and eccentric forms, in which the devotion of the fathers was sometimes manifested, are not destitute of interest for those who beneath them all can discern the workings of a common Christian life. Above all, every one who has thus silently communed with the worship of former generations, could feel—with the martyr who, as Archbishop Trench tells us, was imprisoned for many years with no companion but his Psalter—that "it bore him, up as a lark perched between an eagle's wings is borne up into the everlasting sunlight, till he saw the world and its troubles forever beneath him."











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