

*Yours in Christ,
J. J. Schmucker.*

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

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"I have lived, and am dying, in the faith of Jesus."

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CHAPTER EIGHTH.

1775—1823.

HINDRANCES AND OPPOSITION TO THE GENERAL SYNOD.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR—INFIDELITY—SOCINIANISM AMONG
 MINISTERS—DEFINITION—CONTINENTAL SOLDIERS—FOR-
 MALITY AND SKEPTICISM—MINISTERS IN POLITICS—AD-
 HERENCE TO GERMAN—SCHMUCKER'S RETROSPECT—
 DESIGN OF THE GENERAL SYNOD—NOT CONFINED TO THE
 LAITY—MINISTERS OPPOSED FROM THE BEGINNING—OP-
 POSITION IN THE NEW YORK MINISTERIUM—THE TENNES-
 SEE SYNOD—A GERMAN AGITATOR—RUPTURE IN THE
 NORTH CAROLINA SYNOD—BOOK OF CONCORD—DAVID
 HENKEL'S ORDINATION—RELIC OF OAK TREE—LATITUDI-
 NARIANISM—EPISCOPALIANS—REV. GOTTLIEB SHOBER—
 SHOBER'S LETTER TO THE NEW YORK MINISTERIUM.

The Revolutionary War at the close of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries had a very demoralizing effect on the country and the church.

French and English Infidelity and German Rationalism of the grossest type had gained great prevalence among the educated or higher classes of society, and found expression in Tom Paine's "Age of Reason." As a consequence, the morals of the common people were at a very low state. The members of the New York Ministerium, as can be seen from young Schmucker's letter to his father, were nearly all Socinians, and the Pennsylvania Ministerium was not much better. These were the two largest bodies of Lutherans in America at that time, containing more

members than all the other small synods, scattered over other parts of the country, taken together. There was a little salt yet left in the church, however, that kept the whole mass from spiritual putrifaction. This was found in such men as Helmuth, Schmidt, Lochman, J. G. Schmucker, the Schaeffers, who became the nucleus of the General Synod. But the great bulk of the ministers in the two above named Synods were Socinians. Socinianism denies all the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, as will be seen by the following definition: "Socinianism is a system of doctrines taught by Faustus Socinus, an Italian theologian of the 16th century, who denied the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the personality of the devil, the native and total depravity of man, the vicarious atonement, and the eternity of future punishment. His theory was, that Christ was a man divinely commissioned, who had no existence before he was conceived by the Virgin Mary; that human sin was the imitation of Adam's sin, and that human salvation was the imitation and adoption of Christ's virtue; that the Bible was to be interpreted by human reason; and that its language was metaphorical, and not to be taken literally."

The state of morals among the people corresponded with the debasing Socinianism among the ministry. The following extract from the biography of Dr. Archibald Alexander gives a glimpse of the state of things in the Valley of Virginia from 1789 to 1818. Whether this is a true picture of the state of religion in other parts of the country we will not undertake to say. The following is his account:

"My only notion of religion was, that it consisted in becoming better. I had never heard of any conversions among the Presbyterians. The state of morals and religion in the country, after the Revolutionary War, was very bad. The old continental soldiers, many of whom in that quarter

were convicts, now returned, and having received certificates for their wages, were able to live for a while in idleness and dissipation. Robert ——, a shrewd, intelligent man, who was one of this number, had acquired a house in Lexington, the old farm house of Israel Campbell, who owned the land. Here he collected all the vagrants in the country, and a drunken bout would be kept up for weeks. They called themselves the Congress, and made Bob their president. Hard battles were fought here. The better class of people were much injured by the profane and licentious manners of the officers of the disbanded army, as the lower classes by the soldiery. There were a few pious people in the land, who kept up the power of religion, and were as salt to preserve the mass from universal putrefaction."

The Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia seems to have been in a still more deplorable condition, not only as regards the laity, but still more so in regard to her ministry. This is what Archdeacon Tiffany of New York says in his history of the Episcopal Church :

"Two-thirds of the preachers are made up of leaden lay priests of the Vesteries ordination (evidently lay-readers) and are both the grief and shame of the rightly ordained clergy there."

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, after similar deliverances in previous years, declared in 1798: 'We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension a general dereliction of religious principle and practice—an abounding infidelity—a *dissolution* of religious society seems to be *threatened*. Formality and deadness, not to say hypocrisy, visibly pervade every part of the Church. The profligacy and corruption of public morals have ad-

vanced with a progress proportioned to our declension in religion.' " *

"The Evangelical Lutheran Church had her full share of these disastrous experiences. Rev. Storch, writing from North Carolina, in 1803, says: 'Party spirit has risen to a fearful height. The prevalence of infidelity, the contempt of the best of all religions, its usages and servants, the increase of irreligion and crime, have occasioned me many sad hours.' She had fearful trials in addition to those which threatened the extinction of other denominations that had advanced beyond her in organization and growth. She was subjected to fiery ordeals which once more and to the last degree tested her vitality and her inherent powers of endurance."

Some of the prominent ministers became absorbed in party politics, permitted themselves to be elected to political offices, and resigned the ministry of the Gospel. The writer distinctly recollects hearing one of these old ministers, in Pennsylvania, earnestly discussing political questions, on Sunday morning, with the male members of his congregation, outside of the church, till it was time to go into the pulpit and preach.

Rev. J. P. G. Muhlenberg, the eldest son of the Patriarch Muhlenberg, was one of the predecessors of Rev. S. S. Schmucker at Woodstock, Va. In January, 1776, he preached his farewell sermon. After service he laid aside his clerical robe, disclosed a military uniform, and enlisted, outside of the church, about 300 men for service in the

* "A frightful apostacy from religion ensued. Skepticism and reckless blasphemy became common. Infidelity was never more rampant among influential citizens and professional men, never more deliterious in its work. Revelation was decried as without authority or evidence, moral obligation as a cobweb. 'The clergy were a laughing stock, or objects of disgust' Young men especially became enamored of the new ideas. Bishop White of Virginia wrote, that scarcely a young man of any literary culture believed in Christianity."—*Wolf*.

revolutionary army. He became Colonel of a regiment, participated in a number of battles, and was promoted to the grade of Brigadier General. After the war he was called back by his old congregation to Woodstock, in 1783. But he declined the call, and was elected to the legislature of Pennsylvania. After this he was elected to congress successively from 1789 to 1801.

Rev. Henry A. Muhlenberg, was pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Reading, Pa., from 1802 till 1828, when he resigned his charge, and soon after was elected a member of the twenty-second congress, from the districts of Berks and Lehigh Counties. To this post he was re-elected until 1838. In 1835 he was nominated as the candidate of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania for governor, but was defeated. In 1837, President Van Buren tendered him a position in his cabinet, and also a mission to Russia, both of which he declined; but in 1838 he accepted the mission to Austria, and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. In 1844 he was again nominated by the Democratic party for governor, and would undoubtedly have been chosen, had not his death occurred before the election.—*Sprague.*

The following letter dated, Nov. 12th, 1828, was written by Rev. J. G. Schmucker, D. D., of York, when he heard of Rev. H. A. Muhlenberg's election to Congress.

*"My dear and much respected Brother:—*I am truly sorry that you have relinquished your Episcopal charge for one of vastly less importance in the kingdom of God. There are thousands qualified for congressmen before you find one fit for a truly able messenger of the glorious gospel of Christ. Besides all this, you are perfectly acquainted with the state of our church in this country, and how much we stand in need of your first rate and superior abilities and labors. When I consider the loss your Synod

sustains, I cannot but pronounce it irreparable. You are the only one who possessed sufficient weight of character, around whom the brethren formed a rallying point of union; and thus by proper exertion and judicious management, you might, like your worthy father and grandfather, have proved a vast blessing to the church.

J. GEORGE SCHMUCKER."

Our readers will be interested in the following congregational call extended to Rev. H. A. Muhlenberg in 1802. It will also indicate the confessional state of the churches in the Pennsylvania Ministerium at that time. The congregation at Reading was, no doubt, at that time one of the largest in the church.

SPECIMEN OF A CONGREGATIONAL CALL.

It was extended by the Lutheran Trinity Church of Reading, to Rev. H. A. Muhlenberg, grandson of the Patriot, H. M. Muhlenberg:

"Inasmuch as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Reading has elected Rev. H. A. Muhlenberg as their teacher and preacher, therefore we desire and expect of him, that he will preach in this congregation the pure and simple word of God, administer the holy Sacraments in a Scriptural manner, visit the sick, etc.

"On the other hand we promise for ourselves and our congregation, so long as he remains our pastor, and faithfully performs his duty, the following:

"Free residence in the parsonage and the use of the grounds attached thereto.

"Six cords of hickory and six cords of oak wood.

"Five hundred dollars per annum, payable every half year.

"Also the customary perquisite.

"And especially all love and friendship, which a faith-

ful and conscientious pastor should have, so that he may fulfill his office among us with joy, and not with grief."

Dr. Fry, in his "History of Trinity Church" remarks, "It was a sign of the times that in neither of these calls (Muhlenberg's and Miller's) was there any mention of the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, which were always mentioned in the calls of the pastors during the preceding century."—*Fry's History pages 156 and 157.*

Rev. Christopher Emanuel Schultze was a son-in-law of Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, born in 1740 and died 1809. His son, John Andrew, was for several years Governor of Pennsylvania.

Another great obstacle in the formation of the General Synod was the unyielding adherence of the early Lutherans to the German language, while the synods and congregations composing the General Synods were predominantly English.

The antipathy to English, on the one hand, and the anxiety to have English on the other, occasioned a violent struggle in the Philadelphia Congregation, of which Drs. Helmuth and Schmidt were the pastors. The advocates of English under the leadership of General Peter Muhlenberg insisted that a third pastor should be called, who would officiate in English. The feeling was intensified by the impression on the part of the opponents of the English, that Rev. H. A. Muhlenberg, afterwards pastor in Reading and minister to Austria, then completing his studies under Dr. Kunze, was to be the English pastor. At the election, Jan. 6, 1806, 1,400 votes were polled, the majority against the proposition being 130. Prior to this the controversy had been carried into the Ministerium, which at its meeting in Germantown in 1805, passed the resolution, that it "Must remain a German speaking Ministerium," and forbidding the introduction of any measure, "which would

necessitate the use of any other language, than the German in synodical session." The English speaking Lutherans then organized themselves into a congregation. This was the first exclusively English Lutheran Congregation in Pennsylvania. It was organized in Philadelphia, by Dr. Mayer, who ministered in the same church for upwards of half a century. *

In his "Retrospect of Lutheranism," Dr. Schmucker gives the following description of the state of the country during and succeeding the Revolutionary war :

"The struggle by which this glorious declaration of Independence was sustained and in which our forefathers took a distinguished part, was like every other war, detrimental to the religious prosperity of the community. Christianity is a religion of peace, and the tempest of war never fails to blast and scatter the leaves which are for the healing of nations. Hear the account of one of those venerable men, the Rev. Dr. Helmuth, just after General Gage had landed at Boston with 9,000 British troops, dated February 25th, 1775. 'Throughout the whole country great preparations for war are making, and almost every person is under arms. The ardor is indescribable which is manifested in these melancholy circumstances. If a hundred men are required, many more immediately offer, and are dissatisfied when all are not accepted. I know of no similar case in history. Neighborhoods concerning which it would have been expected, that years would be requisite to induce them voluntarily to take up arms, became strongly inclined for war, so soon as the battle of Lexington was known. Quakers and Menonists take part in the military exercises, and in great numbers renounce their former religious principles. The hoarse din of war is

* See Jacob's History, Page 328.

hourly heard in our streets. *The present disturbances inflict no small injury on religion.* Every body is constantly on the alert, anxious, like the ancient Athenians, to hear the news, and amid the mass of news the hearts of men are, alas, closed against the good old word of God. The Lord is chastising the people, but they do not feel it. Those who appear to be distant from danger are unconcerned; and those whom calamity has overtaken are enraged and meditating vengeance. In the American army there are many clergymen, who serve both as chaplains and as officers. I myself know two, one of whom is a Colonel and the other a Captain. The whole country is in a perfect enthusiasm for liberty. The whole population, from New England to Georgia is of one mind and determined to risk life and all things in defence of liberty. The few who think differently are not permitted to utter their sentiments. In Philadelphia the English and German students are formed into military companies, wear uniform, and are exercised like regular troops. Would to God that men would once become as zealous and unanimous in asserting their spiritual liberty, as they are in vindicating their political freedom! *

“This melancholy state of things lasted upwards of seven years.—Many of the churches were destroyed throughout the land, and especially in New England. Zion’s church, the largest in Philadelphia, was occupied as a hospital † by the British army in 1778, and the congregation for a season wholly expelled; and their other church, St. Michaels, which had been built 1743, the year after Muhlenberg’s arrival, was used by the enemy as a garrison church, half of every Lord’s day, the congregation having

* Hallische Nachrichten p. 1367—8.

† Hallische Nachrichten p. 1408.

the use of it in the afternoon. During the ravages of this war, no regular reports were forwarded to Halle, and our acquaintance with the particulars of our history is necessarily circumscribed. Many, however, of the fathers of the church survived the revolutionary struggle, and remained in the field during the earlier part of this period; yet one by one they dropped off, and were received to their eternal rest. From the (Kirchenagende) 'Directory for Worship,' published in 1786, three years after the Independence of these United States was acknowledged by Britain and the war closed, we learn, that at that time our ministry in the Middle States embraced the following twenty-four persons: Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, D. D., senior of the ministerium, Nicolas Kurtz, his younger brother William Kurtz, Lewis Voigt, John Andrew Krug, Christian Imanuel Schultze, John George Bager, Just Christian Henry Helmut, D. D., John Frederick Schmidt, John Christopher Kunze, D. D., Gotthilf, Henry Ernst Muhlenberg, D. D., Conrad Wildbahn, Jacob B. Buskirk, John Friderici, Christian Streit, John George Jung, Conrad Roeller, Jacob Georing, Daniel Schroeter, Daniel Lehman, Henry Moeller, Frederick Ernst, Frederick Valentine Melsheimer, and Daniel Kurtz, D. D.

"In addition to these, the following laborers, among many others, entered the field during the second period, and carried forward the work of the Lord: John Frederick Weinland, Frederick David Schaeffer, D. D., Wm. Carpenter, George Lochman, D. D., John George Schmucker, D. D., Christian Endress, D. D., Ernst L. Hazelius, D. D., Philip F. Mayer, D. D., John Bachman, D. D., John Ruthrauff, George Flohr, Paul Henkel, John Stauch, F. W. Geissenhainer, D. D., Augustus Wackerhagen, D. D., G. A. Lintner, D. D., G. B. Miller, D. D., Jno. Herbst, John Knosky, H. Muhlenberg, D. D., David F. Schaeffer, D. D.,

John Hecht, Jacob Miller, D. D., Ulrich, Baetis, Ernst, D. D., J. Becker, D. D., F. C. Schaeffer, D. D., J. P. Shindel, A. Reck, B. Kurtz, D. D.*

“ The number of congregations and ministers was much increased during this period ; but owing to the want of a suitable institution for their education and to other causes, the proportion of men destitute of a learned education was also augmented. Nor can it be denied, that, whether it is attributable to the unhallowed influence of the war, or to this and other causes in conjunction, the standard of piety in the churches was somewhat on the decline, especially in the latter part of this period. As the same remark is also applicable to other religious denominations of our land, the war of the Revolution and the war with England in 1812 were most probably its principal reason ; for a general effect requires an equally general cause. With this cause co-operated another, almost as influential, the general and unprecedented facilities offered by our young and nascent country to accumulate deceitful riches, and to neglect the treasures in heaven ; and also the less pious character of the late accessions made to our churches by emigration from Germany, then devastated and demoralized by the deadly poison of war.”

In the minutes of the Maryland and Virginia Synod, held in Shepherdstown, Va., November, 1823, we find a petition from a meeting held in Baltimore, beseeching the Reverend Synod to send several of their brethren successively to preach in the English language. They state in their petition, that Lutherans have left, and others are wandering for the want of those doctrines and principles which they deem compatible with the Holy Scriptures, and the practice of their forefathers.

* To which should be added S. S. Schmucker, D. D.

It was

"*Resolved*, that Synod approve of the intention of our brethren in Baltimore, to establish an English Evangelical Lutheran Church in that city, and sincerely wish them the divine blessing in their undertaking."

After discussion the yeas and nays were called for, and the result was as follows :

YEAS : Revs. Sackman, Benj. Kurtz, Koehler, Krauth, S. S. Schmucker, Schnee, Winter, Ruthrauf, Moeller; Messrs. Ebert, Esig, Rohrer, Weis, Jr.

NAYS : Rev. Mr. Haas, Messrs. Link, Paulus, Strayer, Feyry.

Thirteen yeas and five nays. The President, D. F. Schaeffer, had no vote, except there had been a tie. It was then

"*Resolved*, that any of our brethren, who officiate in the English language, may visit the petitioners according to their request; and it was further

Resolved, that under existing circumstances it is desirable, that brethren, who may visit Baltimore for the purpose above specified, to regulate their appointments so as to interfere as little as possible with the services performed in the German Lutheran Church, and that those who are at this time members of the German congregation, and may attach themselves to the contemplated English church, should not, for the present, withdraw their support from said congregation."

This was the beginning of the first English Lutheran congregation in Baltimore. Rev. J. G. Morris became its first pastor, and served it with marked ability and success for many years.

In regard to the design of the General Synod, and the withdrawal of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, Dr. Schmucker writes in his *Dedication to the Church of the Redeemer*, 1866 : "The original design of the General Synod of our church, in this country, was to effect a fraternal union or

confederation, of limited and chiefly advisory powers, between all the Lutheran Synods then existing in our country. This object was also happily effected in the organization of that body in 1820, in regard to all those synods, except that of Ohio, which had not yet completed its connection with us in 1823. In that year the Pennsylvania Synod, after having attended a single meeting, withdrew from the union, not on account of any dissatisfaction with its principles, (for they expressly affirmed the contrary,) but because their congregations had listened to the misrepresentations of ignorance and prejudice, which were caught up and circulated in their congregations by political demagogues, for selfish purposes. The charges, forsooth, were, that the General Synod, the Bible Societies, Tract Societies, and Theological Seminaries were all parts of a secret scheme to unite church and state, and to introduce into our church in this country religious coercion, like that in the Fatherland. Thirty years afterwards the Pennsylvania Synod again united with the General Synod."

Dr. Morris represents the matter in his brusque manner thus: "A resolution was passed (at the meeting of the General Synod in Frederick, 1823) expressing deep regret that the Pennsylvanians were induced by peculiar circumstances to secede from the institution which they had aided in establishing.

" 'The peculiar circumstances' were the prejudices of the congregations, and the fear entertained by some of the ministers, that the General Synod would exercise too much authority, and invade the rights of the districts; all of which was simple nonsense, and unworthy of the men who pretended to entertain these fears. The fact is, that some of those ministers were intimidated by the ravings of some fanatical foreigners, who made the simple people believe that their civil liberties were in peril, and that church and

state were about to be united through the agency of the Synod. Some of the ministers were afraid to assert their rights, lest they might lose their bread."

Dr. Jacobs gives the cause for the withdrawal of the Ministerium as follows :

"The withdrawal of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania was due to the fact that the leaders of the Synod were unable to overcome the opposition of the rural districts. A country school teacher, by the name of Carl Gock, published a small book, in which he excited the prejudices of the country people against the General Synod. The scheme was declared to be a plan of the ministers to tread the rights of the people under foot. An entire chapter was devoted to a picture of the despotism exercised by Romish priests in Europe, and a warning that the General Synod was attended with such perils. Another chapter dwells on the great evils of theological seminaries, and urges that the money of the people would be better spent in establishing elementary schools. All the proceedings of the General Synod, it was urged, will be English, and the rights of the German will be given away, because the lay delegates will not know what is transpiring. It will be an aristocratic spiritual congress. As to the expenses, who is to pay them? We farmers, collections upon collections, etc.*

"The country clergy from the beginning had not cared much for the General Synod, which had its chief advocates in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, York, Lancaster and Reading. While they had generally voted for it, they made no efforts, when the excitement against it arose among their people, to

* The writer becomes most eloquent in the apostrophe: "Spirit of Washington, appear from the spirit world, quicken in us the true sense of freedom, in order that the foundation thou hast laid we may defend, even with our blood." Jacobs' Church History p. 360.

instruct them, or withstand the current, but acquiesced and carried their demands to Synod.

“The form of opposition, however, was, that the General Synod interlered with the plans that had been projected for a closer union with the Reformed, and the establishment of a Lutheran Reformed theological seminary. Congregations in Lehigh County petitioned the Synod, *for this reason*, to ‘return to the old order of things;’ and the Synod, in the spirit of charity (?) towards its congregations, in order that nothing might interrupt the mutual fraternal love that subsisted between the brethren, consented, by a vote of seventy-two to nine,* to desert the child which it had brought into being.”

The opposition to the General Synod was not confined to the laity; some of the prominent ministers of the Pennsylvania Ministerium were also opposed to it. An example of this is given in a biographical sketch of Rev. Jacob Miller, D. D., pastor of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Reading, by Dr. Hiester H. Muhlenberg: “Still another of his strong prejudices was to be seen in his opposition to the General Synod, which he looked upon as a mere scheme for religious and even political influence. Whether this view originated in mere distrust of the men, who were at the head of the enterprise, or in general views of human weakness, or both, I am not able to say. . . . I have repeatedly argued this point with him, and could never even get him to agree to the expediency of the General Synod as a bond of closer union to our churches. Nothing, in his judgment, but similarity in religious faith and principles could be permanent.”

*The nine were Dr. G. Lochman, (J. G. Schmucker?) Revs. J. Herbst, B. Keller, C. T. Cruse and J. Schnee; and the lay delegates Barnitz of York, Stoever of Germantown, Schmeiser of Gettysburg, and Bohn of Berlin. Jacobs' History p. 361.

In 1839 a movement was made to have the Ministerium resume its connection with the General Synod, which will explain the foregoing :

“The vestry and congregation met in the church. The president of the vestry, Rev. Dr. Jacob Miller, informed the congregation that he was instructed by the Reverend Synod to take the vote of the congregation, whether they desired to join the General Synod, or to remain as they now are. The vote was taken and was unanimous against making a change. So testifies John Hanold, *Secretary*.

“Dr. Miller personally was opposed to the return of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania to the General Synod, and at the subsequent meeting of that body offered the resolution, that for the present it was not advisable, which was adopted by a vote of 33 to 28.” *

We must not suppose, however, that Dr. Jacob Miller was the only minister in the Pennsylvania Ministerium who was opposed to the General Synod. It will be noticed that at the meeting of the Ministerium in Baltimore, 1819, where the initiatory steps were taken, the motion to form a general Synod was adopted by a vote of forty-two in favor, and eight against the organization. The names of the eight men who voted in the negative are not given, but they were doubtless influential members and Dr. Miller probably was one of them.

But opposition to the General Synod was found not only in the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. It had some warm friends and advocates in the New York Ministerium ; but in the minutes of that body in the year 1822, we find that it was not thought expedient to send delegates “for the present.” The year previous, the president had been requested to lay before the next Synod a circumstantial

* History of Trinity Church, Reading, Pa. Page 169

report concerning the decision, which he received from the different church councils, on the subject of a proposed union with the General Synod.

“The Secretary stated, that but few congregations had sent in their declarations concerning the General Synod ; and that a majority of the few, who had expressed an opinion on the subject, had deemed the proposed plan inexpedient for the present.”

OBJECTIONS OF THE SYNOD OF OHIO.

The Synod of Ohio presented eight objections against uniting with the General Synod. Among these were the following :

“The introduction of uniform hymn books and liturgies is contrary to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession ;

“The freedom and parity of the ministry is infringed upon, since the delegates to the General Synod will usurp their rights ;

“An act of incorporation will follow, and the resolutions will be enforced by the strong arm of the law ;

“The Ministerium of Ohio must remain a German speaking body, and in the General Synod the English will soon prevail.”*

How unreasonable these objections were ! It is difficult to see how intelligent, sensible men could urge them ; the Ohio Synod certainly has long since disowned them in theory and practice.

The New York Ministerium had assisted in forming the General Synod in 1820, but did not send delegates again till the ninth session, in Hagerstown, June 1837, seventeen years after. It seceded again in 1866-7, and became a part of the General Council.

* Jacobs' History of the Lutheran Church, p. 159.

OPPOSITION FROM THE TENNESSEE SYNOD.

The most violent and persistent opposition to the organization of the General Synod, however, came from what was then called the Tennessee Conference. Their opposition was founded mainly on doctrinal grounds. In the year 1821 they appointed a committee, consisting of Adam Miller, David Henkel, Ambrose Henkel, and others, to "compile objections to the General Synod, and have them printed."

The Synod approved the objections compiled by the committee appointed at the previous year's session in opposition to the constitution of the General Synod. Their principal objections to the constitution of the General Synod seem to have been :

1. "That it was not sufficiently definitive on the Lutheran doctrine of the Sacraments.
2. "That it declared that Christ had given no special direction or order for the establishment of Church Government.
3. "That it maintained that the synods should be ruled by the majority."

From a German paper, published in Baltimore, June 25, 1823, the Tennesseeans heard that the Pennsylvania Ministerium had withdrawn its connection with the General Synod. In view of this fact, and in order to obtain desired information, they deemed it proper to submit the following inquiries to the Pennsylvania Ministerium. It will be noticed that some of the inquiries point to the Rationalism and the third one especially to the Socinianism of some of the members of the Pennsylvania Ministerium at that time :

1. "Do you believe, that Holy Baptism, administered with natural water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, effects the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and confers everlasting

salvation upon all who believe it, as the words and promises of God declare ?

2. "Do you believe, that the true body and blood of Christ, under the form of bread and wine in the Holy Supper, are present, administered, and received ? Do you also believe, that the unbelieving communicants receive in this Supper the body and blood of Christ, under the form of bread and wine ?

"We do not ask whether the unbelievers obtain the forgiveness of their sins thereby, but whether they also receive the body and blood of Jesus in this Sacrament.

3. "Do you believe, that Jesus Christ, as true God and man in one person, should be worshipped ?

4. "Is it right for the Evangelical Lutheran Church to unite with any religious organization that seeks to deny the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechism ? Or is it right for Lutherans to go to the Holy Supper with such ?

5. "Is your Synod to be henceforth ruled by a majority of the voters ?

6. "Does your Synod intend still to adhere to the declaration, that Jesus Christ, the Great Head of his Church, has given no special direction or order for the establishment of Church Government, as it is declared in the Constitution of the General Synod ?

"Your answers to these questions in writing, addressed to our Secretary, Rev. David Henkel, Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina, will be duly appreciated." *

The name of the German agitator, who influenced the members of the Pennsylvania Ministerium against the General Synod appears to have been Carl Gock. In 1823, he wrote a letter to the Tennessee Synod, in which he ex-

* We do not find, that the Ministerium ever made a reply, or paid any attention to these questions.—ED.

pressed himself dissatisfied with the General Synod, and stated, that he had reprinted the report of their committee, appointed to compile objections to the constitution of the General Synod, and circulated 1,200 copies.—*Hist. Tenn. Synod.*

Several letters from Pennsylvania were sent, requesting Rev. David Henkel to visit that state, and preach and vindicate the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church. He was advised to go, and he finally agreed to do so.—*Hist. Tenn. Synod.*

Some time before the organization of the General Synod, a disruption of the North Carolina Synod occurred; differences of opinion had arisen among the members on the subject of denominational union, revivals of religion, and subscription to the Symbolical Books. We quote from the History of the Tennessee Synod, pages 13, 14 :

“ There were conflicts in the pulpit, in the congregation, and in the family. One of the leading ministers charged Rev. David Henkel with teaching doctrines contrary to the position of the Church. To defend himself against such unfounded charges, the latter appealed to a Latin copy of the Book of Concord, which he had in possession. That gave him a decided advantage, in some respects, in the estimation of many of the people, who were not willing to acquiesce in the extreme, latitudinarian views inculcated by the former. To counteract this increasing advantage, that minister called into question the correctness of these translations from the Latin. This proved disagreeing for a while, but soon afterwards Rev. David Henkel happened to come across a German copy of the Book of Concord, at the residence of a German in South Carolina, with whom he spent a night or two. After much persuasion the German let him have the book. This he brought with him, rejoicing in his good fortune to get it, to North

Carolina. This he presented, to sustain the correctness of his translation made from the Latin copy of the Book of Concord. For, this the people could now understand for themselves, and finding that the translations from the Latin copy referred to, were correct, many members of the Church took a decided stand in favor of him and his positions, and faithfully defended him and his doctrines against the innovation and false doctrines of his opponents. *

"The council of the congregation met, and after considering the matter, one of the elders, Captain John Stirewalt, father of the late Rev. Jacob Stirewalt, presented the Book of Concord to the minister, saying, 'We want to know whether you intend to preach according to this book in the future?' The minister hesitated and evaded, but being pressed, he raised the book up and brought it down on the table, saying, 'From this day henceforth, I will not; it is nothing but a controversial book.' Mr. Stirewalt then raised the book up, and brought it down on the table, saying, 'From this day henceforth, you won't be our preacher.'"

This was certainly a very summary, arbitrary and unjustifiable proceeding. It required the minister to conform his preaching of the gospel to the teachings of a book, which he had never read, perhaps never seen before.

The following extract from an Historical Address, by Rev. Geo. H. Cox, will give the reader an idea of the violence of feeling which agitated the church in the South, about the time of the organization of the General Synod. The address was delivered in St. John's congregation, Cabarras Co., N. C.:

"The third regular pastor was Rev. C. A. G. Storch, who served the congregation twenty-one years, from 1800 to 1821. During his administration were those terrible times when, in the church, father was pitted against son, mother against daughter, brother against brother, and friend

against friend; when anger and malice and hatred, and all the evil passions, seem to have run rampant, and which culminated in the organization of what is now known as the Tennessee Synod. But amid it all Pastor Storch stood untouched and unstained. I have yet to learn of one unkind criticism of him, though he was the most prominent and conspicuous man in the North Carolina Synod."—*Luth. Visitor*.

The Synod of North Carolina also changed the time of their meeting, and made it on August 26, 1819, in order that their delegates might be present in Baltimore at the initiatory steps for the organization of the General Synod on Trinity Sunday.

In the minutes of the North Carolina Synod, on May 28, 1820, we find the following: "Revs. Paul and Philip Henkel, together with candidate Bell and David Henkel, a former catechist, took possession of the church.

"As it was known, that the last two had separated themselves from us, and Paul Henkel no longer belonged to us, Philip Henkel was asked if he would unite with us, and submit to be governed by a majority of votes. He answered nothing.

"The Rev. Storch offered up a fervent prayer to the God of love, to again establish peace and harmony among us.

"Rev. Storch's offer, that we were inclined to forget everything, because mistakes have been made on both sides, and on the question, whether we would unite again, being put, they answered No! Because we did not preach Baptismal Regeneration, did not in the Holy Communion receive the elements as the true body and blood of the Lord, and that the plan for a General Synod was against the Augsburg Confession, that therefore they would not submit to a majority of votes. To put an end to David's

coarseness, it was resolved that Synod meet in the afternoon."

In 1819, some charges having been made against David Henkel, who was at that time (1819) a licentiate in the North Carolina Synod, he with a few others separated themselves from the Synod. The Secretary remarks, "Here Satan began his division among us . . . he and others of his adherents came with Philip Henkel on Trinity Sunday to the church, where the convention of Synod was being held, and as the door was locked against them, Philip ordained his brother David and J. E. Bell under an oak tree! In this manner did they separate themselves from us."

At the next meeting of the Synod, this ordination under the oak tree was declared invalid.*

Subsequently Joseph Bell, who had also been ordained under the oak tree by Philip Henkel, reported himself as willing to unite with the Synod. He acknowledged, that he had been led astray contrary to his own conviction.

"On the question, whether the administered ordination was proper, it was considered invalid, according to the rules of all Christian denominations."—*Minutes of the N. C. Synod. Pages 40, 41, 42, 43.*

At the same meeting of the North Carolina Synod,

* It is reported that the above named oak tree died the next year after the ordination had been performed. Some superstitious people then attributed its death to some baneful influence which proceeded from this irregular performance. The tree was then cut down and sawed up into small pieces, which were widely distributed as relics. The writer saw one of these relics in the Historical Library at Gettysburg. It is a small block of wood about four inches long and two inches wide, smoothly planed, having a label pasted on one side. On this label is written, said to be in the handwriting of Prof. H. E. Jacobs, the following statement: "From the tree near Concord, N. C., beneath which David Henkel was ordained in 1819 (Trinity Sunday), and the rupture with the North Carolina Synod effected, leading to the formation of the Tennessee Synod. From Rev. S. L. Keller, Concord, N. C."

Rev. G. Shober presented his report as representative to the Pennsylvania Synod, which met in 1819 (in Baltimore). He reported that a plan had been agreed upon, which had been printed, setting forth how all Synods could join in one General Synod. The plan was considered, item by item, and the necessity of having a central union was admitted, even by those who were against this plan itself, and it was adopted by more than two-thirds majority.

“Hereupon two ministers and two lay delegates were elected according to the provisions of the plan, to meet with other representatives of other Synods this year in Hagerstown, Md., to unite with them in adopting a constitution, and in forming the General Synod.”

Another obstacle to the formation of a union of the Lutherans in this country at that time, was a very general desire for a union of all Protestant denominations. In the Ministerium of Pennsylvania this project had been very strongly agitated. A book had been written by Revs. Probst and Jaeger in advocacy of a union between the Lutherans and Reformed. Negotiations had been carried on between the respective synods, but the effort failed. The subject of a union with other Protestant denominations was also proposed in Baltimore, at the meeting of the Ministerium, in 1819, where the organization of the General Synod was first agreed upon. But here also the proposition was not entertained.

In North Carolina and Virginia a union with the Episcopalians was proposed, with whom the Lutheran Church at that time stood in very peculiar relations. A remarkable illustration of this is given in the case of Rev. Johann P. G. Muhlenberg. After having pursued his theological studies under the tuition of Provost C. M. Wrangel, and been ordained in 1768, he received a call in 1772 to the pastorate in the Lutheran Church, in Woodstock, Va. In order

to accept this call, Muhlenberg was obliged to go to England and receive a new ordination, as the law of Virginia required that the ministers should belong to the Episcopal Church. His ordination took place April 23, 1772, at the royal chapel of St. James, the bishop of London officiating.* †

The most active advocate of the General Synod, and one of its founders was Rev. Gottlieb Shober. He was the President of the General Synod when it met in Frederick, in 1825, and was on this account also very obnoxious to the members of the Tennessee Synod. He was born in Bethlehem, Pa., and in his 17th year became a member of the Moravian Church. He removed with his parents to Salem, N. C., a new settlement of Moravians, where he engaged successively in school teaching, mechanical and mercantile trade, built a paper mill (the first establishment of that kind south of the Potomac), and opened a book

* Anderson's History, American Lutheran Biographies, page 540.

† If Muhlenberg had not enlisted in the army of the Revolutionary War, or had returned to his charge after the war, instead of devoting himself to politics, we might have had the boasted Apostolic Succession in the Lutheran Church of America.—ED.

† This regulation was changed after the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States, when ministers of the Gospel in Virginia were no longer required to secure ordination from the hands of a bishop of the Church of England. This will appear from the following certificate:

"This shall certify to all whom it may concern, that at a court, held for Shenandoah County, on the 13th day of February, in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one, Samuel S. Schmucker produced credentials of his ordination, and also of his being in regular communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, took the oath of allegiance to this commonwealth, and entered into bonds, as required by the act, reducing into one the several acts, to regulate the solemnization of marriages, prohibiting such as are incestuous, or otherwise unlawful; to prevent forcible and stolen marriages; and for punishment of the crime of bigamy; and that he is thereby authorized to celebrate the rights of matrimony agreeable to the forms and customs of said Church, between any persons, to him regularly applying therefor, within this state. Given under my hand and seal the day and year above written.

JACOB LANTZ. [Seal.]"

store, serving at the same time as postmaster. Subsequently he studied law, and was engaged for some years in the practice—being prompted to this chiefly by the desire to assist his Moravian brethren in the law-suits in which they were involved in respect to a portion of their property. He was also repeatedly elected to the state legislature, and was a prominent member of that body. During all this time Mr. Shober was living an eminently godly life, and endeavoring to make every employment in which he engaged, subservient to the cause of Christ, and the best interests of his fellowmen. At length, having passed his fiftieth year, and lost all relish for secular business, he resolved to devote what remained of his life to the ministry of the Gospel. Having determined to enter the ministry in connection with the Lutheran Church, he offered himself, in due time, to the North Carolina Synod, and was received with great joy. He was solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry, and immediately became pastor of the church in Salem, and several other churches in the neighborhood. Here he continued laboring with great zeal till a few years before his death, which occurred at Salem, the place of his residence, June 27, 1838. Just before his last illness, he said, with great cheerfulness, to one of his brethren, "When you hear of my death, you may be sure I have gone to my Savior."

Mr. Shober also took a deep interest in the establishment of a seminary for the training of young men for the ministry, and was appointed one of the first directors of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. In his last will and testament he left three thousand acres of land to the institution; and though the land did not increase in value, as the donor expected when the bequest was made, yet his act was an evidence of his deep interest in the institution.

Many of the earlier students in the Seminary at

Gettysburg will remember the sign in large letters on the door of the Reading Room, "*Shober Room*," the expense of furnishing which was contributed by Rev. Shober.

The only offense charged against Rev. Shober was that he was not a good Lutheran. Rev. Dr. Bernheim gives the following description of him in his History of the Lutheran Church in the Carolinas: "He was a man of decided opinions, unyielding in everything which he considered right, with a mind that knew no dissimulation, an ardent temper, and a character decidedly affirmative. . . . The lineaments of his countenance gave indication of a strong and active mind. He was one of the most active defenders of the General Synod, as he had also been prominent among its early founders. But Rev. Shober was no Lutheran, he was a member of the Moravian Church, and never disconnected himself from communion with the same, but lived and died as a member of that church. This information the writer has from his daughter, the widow of Bishop Herrman."

To this I remark, that Mr. Shober did not need to make much of a doctrinal change in coming from the Moravian to the Lutheran Church, for both denominations hold to the Augsburg Confession. Further, his communion with the Moravian Church could not have been of a very intimate nature, as the Moravians undertook to eject him from their colony in Salem, because he had joined the Lutheran Church, but he appealed to the highest authority in the Moravian Church, in Hernhut, and received permission by letter, that he might remain in Salem and continue his business, although he had joined the Lutheran Church, by which he had been ordained. This information I have from a verbal statement by Dr. D. J. Hauer, who was at that time a young minister, laboring in that part of the

country, was acquainted with the facts, and can vouch for their truth.

The best fruits of a Christian's faith are his works, and the best evidences of a man's Lutheranism are his love for the doctrines and usages of the Lutheran Church, and his labors and sacrifices for her defence and upbuilding. According to these tests no man has a better claim to be called a Lutheran than Rev. Gottlieb Shober.

The following extract from the minutes of the New York Ministerium, of 1823, will be interesting reading. It shows the unsuccessful attempt of the Episcopalians to annex the Lutheran Church in the South, and Mr. Shober's manly stand and courageous defense of the church of his choice :

" The beginning of Rev. President Shober's letter contains an expression of regret, at the propagation of false accounts concerning the late intercourse between the Lutheran Synod and the Episcopal Convention of North Carolina. The President alludes also to certain articles which have appeared in several religious journals, and to a communication under his official signature, which he had caused to be inserted in some Southern publications, in order to counteract the painful mis-statements which were made in various places.

" The '*Family Visitor*' and the '*Theological Repertory*,' among others, had published to the world, ' that the Episcopal and Lutheran churches had effected an honorable and Christian union ; ' and added : ' which places the Lutheran Church under the care and superintendance of the Episcopal authority of that diocese.'

" President Shober then remarks in substance : About seventeen years ago, a former Episcopalian layman was desirous to enter some ministry, and no Episcopal church being then known in North Carolina, except in sea-

ports, he applied to the Evangelical Lutheran Ministry for ordination; and, as our church was increasing, though the laborers were few, the ministers were glad to accept his services. He was born in Scotland, and cannot speak the German language. His name is Robert Johnson Miller. He was ordained by the Lutheran Ministry; but on his part he reserved at that time, that if ever the Episcopal Church should arise in this state, his ordination should be without prejudice to the membership of that church. Under this ordination he formed and served sundry congregations, and was at sundry times employed by our Synod as an itinerant preacher—and he was serviceable to our church for many years.

“Sometime ago the Episcopal church lifted up its head in this state, and when they had formed a convention under Bishop Moore, of Virginia, they called upon the Rev. Mr. Storch, the President and Senior of our church, to meet them in convention as one of their church. President Storch requested me to answer the invitation, which I did, and explained to them that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is independent of the Episcopal Church, and stated to them how our church was governed, etc., but invited them to preach in our churches, and thereby gather in their dispersed members in the western parts, which would be the way to form congregations among the English, for we then had but the above named English preacher among us!

“To this my statement and invitation, I received no answer. Two years afterwards I received a letter from R. J. Miller, mentioning that as he was invited by the Bishop to attend their convention, he had determined to unite with his original church, which he did; and by the minutes of their convention, the information is held forth, that Mr. Miller had appeared as deputy from the Lutheran Church, which, however, was not true, though he might have

received a sanction from one or two of his congregations. His appearance, as a deputy from the Lutheran Church, was unknown to our church as a body. Yet he was received as such, for purposes which afterwards appeared, and suffered himself to be ordained by the Bishop to priest's orders. Mr. Miller may have persuaded that Convention, that all the Lutheran ministers would come under their Bishop; and they elected and sent deputies to our next Synod, to treat of a union.

“ We could not but exercise common politeness, and granted them a seat with us. A committee was appointed to converse with them about a union. They had found in private conversation that our Ministerium spurned the idea of accepting re-ordination, as whereby we should have disgraced our Church forever. They proposed no such thing when our committee met them, and offered, that if we sent deputies to their Convention, they should have seat and vote with them on all questions not relating to their church: in course of common politeness, we offered them the privilege to meet us on similar terms. Consequently this ‘union,’ concerning which they make much noise, is no more than a civil intercourse.

“ Our Synod approved of this; their Convention did the same. We elected deputies to meet them at their next convention, but none attended. I made my excuse in writing. I could not perceive that a true Christian union was contemplated by the Episcopalians; for, when we invited the above mentioned Mr. Miller to commune with us, and thus to take a friendly leave of us, he refused, except he or some Episcopalian consecrated the elements! Now, although none of us had attended their succeeding convention, they elected deputies to meet us last year, and these according to agreement, took seat with us, but when we ordained, or administered the sacrament, they went out!

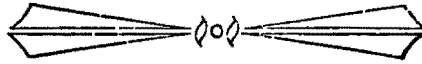
But, as their Convention was to meet this year in our centre, we elected deputies to meet them, which we did in Salisbury, and were treated genteelly, according to contract. I was one of the deputies. I was determined to find out how far their love extended, and motioned, that as we had given them the privilege of our churches, they should give us the same in theirs. This motion, although seconded by one of their own lay deputies, was refused to be minuted, and in friendly debate they told us to our faces that it could not be admitted, as our ordination was not valid! The conclusion was, that I withdrew my motion, but told them that we should retire to our former significancy. We on our part refused to commune with them; and on being questioned why we did so, I told them that as they had refused to commune with us, and did not invite us to preach as they had done in our Synod, cordiality was wanting. After this Convention our Synod met; when, without saying much, in order not to irritate their deputy, we declined electing deputies to their next Convention—of course the union is on the wane.

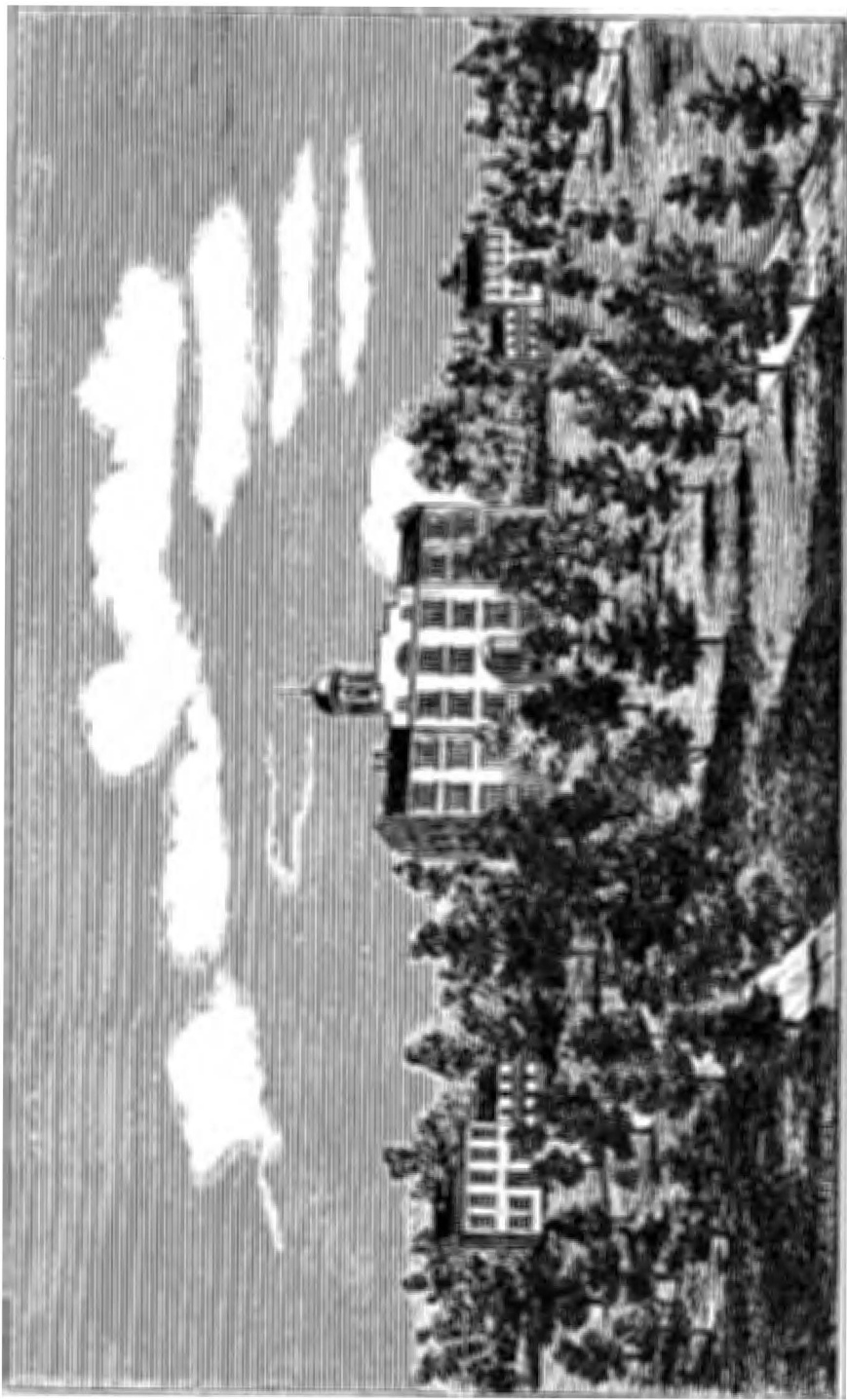
“ This being the true situation of our Connection, I am surprised that honest Christian Ministers should propagate to the world, that we had come under the Episcopal superintendance of another Church, and were re-ordained by a Bishop! If it were the case, we should deserve to be disowned by our Church throughout the United States, with whom we desire to remain one body and soul, in brotherly affection and indissoluble union.

“ Public use may be made of this letter, and I should wish the information in the printed communication aforementioned, to be widely diffused, so that all Christians may see, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church had not surrendered and will not surrender any of her rights and senior privileges; for, all Protestants have their origin in Luther.

“The Rev. President concludes his letter with the following expressions: ‘Be pleased to salute your synod from me and the steadfast brethren in North Carolina. Commend us to their intercession at the Throne of Grace, that we may remain united in love and principle; and, may the Lord guide us all to his heavenly rest. This is the sincere prayer of your fellow laborer in a rough vineyard.

(Signed,) G. SHOBER, President.’”





Theological Seminary, Old Building.