

THE  
MERCERSBURG QUARTERLY REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1854.

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ART. I.—SPIRIT OF THE AGE.\*

IN obedience to your call, I am here this evening to share with you in your first anniversary festival in this city, in honor of the distinguished Scholar, whose name as a Society you bear. And you will allow me first of all, to congratulate you in view of the circumstances of promise and hope under which we are assembled, and your deliverance from the dangers and anxieties incident upon your transplantation to this place. For one, whose hopes have been long and largely invested in the College with which you stand connected, as also in the Societies subject to her maternal care, their history for the last four years has been to me the object of untiring yea, increasing solicitude. I have rejoiced with their friends, as it passed through its brighter phases, and have shared in the common despondency which attended its darker transits. And now that the night of uncertainty is past and the day-spring of a prosperous future has begun to arise, I may be permitted to render with you, my tribute of rejoicing, and praise to the merciful Dispenser of all our prosperity—that wise Restorer of order and harmony, out of the deepest discords of confusion and noise.

Yet to one whose home is in the past history of your Society, the greetings of this evening are not unmingled with the gentler sentiments of sorrow. For how can he forget his part-

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\* An Address delivered before the Gæthean Literary Society of Franklin and Marshall College, at its first Anniversary in the city of Lancaster, Pa., on the 29th of August, 1853.

## ART. III.—THE DUTCH CRUSADE.

IT is to be presumed, that even our Dutch brethren themselves, as well as their small company of misguided allies in our own body, have become pretty well satisfied by this time, that their late attempt to get up a Dominican crusade against the German Reformed Church, was both wrong and unwise. There was no occasion for it, and it has accomplished nothing but the contrary of what the movers of it proposed. It was a grand impertinence from first to last; and it is sufficiently plain, that it is so regarded by the good sense and right feeling of the community generally, the very tribunal whose verdict, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, was most confidently expected to go in its favor.

## THE CASE IN ITS FACTS.

There was no fit occasion, we say, for any such denominational assault. The ostensible plea for it, as all know, was the charge of certain wrong tendencies on the part of the great body of the German Reformed Church, which a small faction of discontented minds in its bosom, pretending to be particularly evangelical and orthodox, had no power to redress, without the aid and comfort of such foreign ecclesiastical *intervention*. But curious enough was the process by which it was pretended to establish the truth of this grave accusation. The Church still professed to hold the Heidelberg Catechism, and had never before in truth shown itself more in earnest in magnifying its authority and insisting upon its use. No doctrine had been pronounced ecclesiastically, which could be said to call for reconsideration or repeal. No step had been taken by the Church, no rule imposed, no decision given, which could be regarded as in the least degree changing its creed or constitution, or laying so much as the shadow of embarrassment

on any man's conscience, however tender or weak. There was nothing positively, in the action of the Church as such, that could be said to require either remedy or reform; not so much as an inch of ground, on which to plant fairly an issue with it in any measure answerable to the gravity of the charge in question. All fell back on the vague general statement, that the Professors at Mercersburg had been for some years past publishing views, which the anti-catholic spirit of the times chooses to stigmatize as *Romanizing*, and that the Synod of the German Reformed Church had not called them to account for so doing, at the cry simply of this same spirit.

This offence was taken to have reached its climax, when the Synod, nearly two years ago, refused to receive the resignation of the senior Professor, simply because it was seen at the time that there was a disposition with some to make an unrighteous use of the case, by construing it into a virtual act of censure. There was of course no room for that; for there had been no charges tabled and no trial of any sort then or before; it never suited the policy of Berg, Helffenstein & Co., to proceed in any such regular and honorable way. The body of the Synod, moreover, was fully persuaded that there was no just cause for prosecution of any sort, and that the agitators in the case could neither form nor sustain charges amounting to what they loosely affirmed. There was proof enough of this indeed in the simple fact, that with full opportunity given them for the purpose, year after year, they had all along refused to make the attempt in a regular and constitutional form. Had they done so and failed, there might have been *some* show of reason in their pretending that the Synod would not allow justice to take its course; although even then it would have been hard to say, why *their* judgment must be accepted as right, and that of the Synod condemned as wrong. But no such issue was ever joined. They never gave the Synod a chance to try their complaints. They demanded rather that their agitation should pass for a full prejudgment of the whole case, and that the Synod should act upon this as a sentence already established and settled beyond contradiction. This

the Synod would not consent to do. Had there been a general conviction in the body that there was cause for prosecution and censure, no other course could properly have been taken, in the default of everything like a regular inquisition and trial. How could such a body consent to resolve itself in this way into a tribunal of mere Lynch law? But, as already said, there was no conviction of the sort named; but a very strong and general conviction just the other way; a conviction, namely, that the agitation in question could not make good its own indefinite charges and accusations, and was to be regarded as in the main malicious and unjust. *In such circumstances*, what must have been thought of the German Reformed Synod if it could have allowed itself to become the tool of any such irresponsible prosecution, passively lending itself to its iniquitous views and aims? By an almost unanimous vote, as it will be remembered, the body not only refused to enact what in the predicament of the case would have been construed into a virtual condemnation of the Mercersburg Professors, but went still farther: passed resolutions, declaring its unabated confidence in them, its approbation of what it conceived to be the reigning drift of their teaching, and its wish to retain their services still under the same general form in its institutions.

Out of this proceeding, it has been endeavored since to raise what some have facetiously affected to call a *crisis* in the history of the German Reformed Church. Dr. Berg did not himself, indeed, see it in that light just at first; and no one more distinctly condemned the use which was made of it by his hot-headed colleague, the Rev. Jacob Helffenstein, in his famous alarm put forth at the time, through the religious papers of other denominations. In a marvellously short time, however, he was brought to change his key. Whatever *other* reasons may have influenced the step, it was found convenient to lionize his transition to the Low Dutch Church, by making it a step for conscience' sake; and he now fell in, accordingly, with the hue and cry which had been got up in certain quarters on the outside, that the German Reformed Synod had formally endorsed all the views of its Professors, and that these

views were all that Tom, Dick, and Harry saw fit to make them, after their own crude fashion and humor.

Then came the report of the Dutch delegates to their own Synod, designed to help forward the same misrepresentation, by clothing it with a sort of documentary semi-official authority on the minutes of that body. Altogether, it was a most unbecoming paper. The delegates had no right to act as hostile spies, under the garb of pretended friends, and to lay themselves out to serve the views of a disorganizing clique, in the bosom of the body whose ecclesiastical hospitalities they were permitted to enjoy without suspicion or reserve. But if they did consider this bad office to be their privilege, they were bound, at all events, to exercise it with some regard to truth and right. When it was proposed to prejudge in such public style the whole merits of the case in hand, and on the force of such prejudication to bring the sweeping charge of heresy against a whole sister denomination, the least they could have been expected to do certainly was to have taken proper pains to study and understand the business they meant to judge, by waiting to see it to an end, and by trying to get at its real nature and sense. This, however, they did not do; and their report turned out to be, accordingly, as false in point of fact as it was ungentlemanly in purpose and spirit. It treated the case in hand as if it had been one of formal trial; when it had been, in truth, an attempt only to evade the responsibility of a regular prosecution, by securing snap judgment in another way. It assumed that the version put upon the matter at issue by the agitators, was already so much settled truth, when there had been no inquisition at all to establish anything of that sort. And then it construed the action of the Synod at once into a formal ratification, not only of all the actual views of the Mercersburg Professors, but of all that these views were taken and charged to be by this same arbitrary version; when, in reality, the action of the Synod carried in it no such intention or sense whatever. No wonder that such a paper received by the Synod of the Dutch Church, excited general indignation in the Church which was thus wronged, and that the Ger-

man Reformed Synod protested against it, as was done in Baltimore in the fall of 1852. The language of that protest may have been rather unguarded at some points; but the provocation was very great, and the notice thus taken of it was felt to be in substance not any too strong for the occasion. Several of the Classes subsequently confirmed it by their separate action; and no doubt a wide disposition was created in the Church, to have a summary stop put to the whole correspondence which had been so outrageously diverted from its original design, in the service of a barefaced conspiracy against the unity and peace of the German Reformed Church itself. Happily, however, any action which it might have been proposed to take in this form was anticipated by the Synod of the Dutch Church at its last meeting in Philadelphia. In these circumstances, the satisfaction of doing wrong has fallen wholly to the one side, while the merit of suffering it with calm dignity and patience belongs exclusively to the other. Let us hope that this latter privilege will be steadily maintained by the German Reformed Church, in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The Dutch Church, we say, has done wrong in this whole business. Her delegates did wrong in the first place; and her Synod rendered the matter a great deal worse, when it made itself responsible for their fault, and, pretending to put on the airs of an injured party, proceeded at once to break correspondence with the German Reformed Church, on the alleged ground of its being involved in false and heretical tendencies, which the orthodoxy of the Dutch Church felt itself too pure to tolerate even by such exceedingly remote contact. Never was there a more monstrously gross abuse of a simply outward and, at best, merely diplomatic relation. Who will pretend that the correspondence established as a matter of courtesy only between sister denominations, each equally independent, can ever fairly give one the right of virtually summoning the other before its self-constituted tribunal in this overbearing way, and the right of formally passing sentence of condemnation against it, on its own loose, indefinite indictment, without any examination, or the least opportunity allowed for defence

or reply? For nothing less than this was designed to be the effect, in fact, of the action taken by the Synod of the Low Dutch Church. It was part of a conspiracy formed, as all may easily see, to produce agitation and division in the German Reformed Church, for the purpose of giving a paltry minority in it the power of turning its affairs according to their own factious wish and will. The plan was fair and plausible. Advantage was to be taken of the anti-popery spirit, which is so rampant on all sides, and the blinding power of which might seem to be almost without bounds. The religious papers were to echo one another, in the way of continual alarm. Noise was to be made of defections, and threatened defections, from the German Church. Sister denominations, it was hoped, might be engaged to separate themselves from its communion, so as to get up a panic among its uninformed membership, and to open the way thus for all sorts of reformatory confusion. The Dutch Synod agreed to take the lead in this movement; and it did so for the *acknowledged purpose* of strengthening the hands of the revolutionary faction in the German Reformed Church, and stirring up a crusade on the part of the laity, to be led on by the ministers of this faction, against the order and peace of the Church as a whole. It was Kossuthian intervention with a vengeance. Who gave the Dutch Church a right to interfere with the affairs of the German Reformed Church, in this dogmatical and high-blown style? If it had been wished to drop the correspondence, it might easily have been done in a quiet and courteous way by mutual consent. The just subject of complaint is, that advantage should have been taken of a mere relation of courtesy to give the suspension on the side of the Dutch Church a quasi-judicial character before the world, that it might be clothed in this way with a factitious importance which did not belong to it in fact; and that the professed object of all this was to sow the seeds of dissension and anarchy, as far as possible, in the German Reformed Church. For this there can be no excuse.

The excuse pretended is thin and poor in the extreme. The German Reformed Church, it is said, has endorsed all the

views of the Mercersburg Professors, and these views are seriously wrong. But what precisely were the views in question, the Dutch Synod never pretended to say or know in distinct terms; much less was it considered necessary to subject them to any theological investigation. It was counted sufficient to take them at second hand, and to gather them up into the convenient category of "Romanizing tendencies." Then, again, it had no proof before it whatever that the Synod of the German Reformed Church had ever intended to endorse all the teachings of its Professors even rightly understood. To approve of the general system of teaching pursued by a Professor, and to be satisfied with his services on the whole, and not to listen to complaints against him which nobody is prepared to reduce to shape or form, is one thing; to subscribe to all his particular notions and declarations, is quite another thing. The German Reformed Synod has done the first of these two things, without the most distant thought of anything so foolish as the second. It belongs to the genius of the Church to allow here a certain degree of liberty, which, in some way, the mind of the Dutch Church would seem not able exactly to comprehend. Following the voice of her delegates accordingly, she has insisted on holding the German Reformed Church responsible for whatever it has suited her imagination to ascribe to the so-called Mercersburg system; and on such flimsy plea, she pretends now to justify the outrage by which she has been endeavoring, for some time past, to drive the ploughshare of desolation through the borders of this sister communion. For the aggression has not been limited to the action of her Synod in Philadelphia. That was but the signal rather for farther hostilities, the object of which has been nothing less than the dragooning of the whole German Reformed Church into the system of thinking graciously proffered for her use in the columns of the New York "*Christian Intelligencer*". This paper, the organ of the Dutch Church, has shown, during the past summer, as is generally known, a perfectly rabid spirit towards the German Reformed Church, hardly surpassed in scurrility and misrepresentation by the "*Lutheran Observer*" it-

self in its palmyest days. It seemed to look upon itself as the natural guardian of the interests of orthodoxy among the Germans, and has shrunk from no indelicacy in order to carry this fancied commission into effect. It has granted the free use of its columns to any disaffected minister, or layman, of the German Reformed Church, who could be induced to make them the channel of his spleen or pride; besides encouraging every scribbler at home to write what trash he pleased in the same vein and for the same general purpose. It even undertook to regulate the election of a President for Franklin and Marshall College; and by the help of its few friends in the German Reformed Church, it has had the impudence to seek a forcible entry for itself among our pastors and congregations, under the insolent pretence that the "German Reformed Messenger," the paper of our own Church, was in a plot to keep the people in the dark, and that we needed the light of the "*Christian Intelligencer*" among us to know how to take care of ourselves and to do our own work. Never was there such impudent interference before in the history of our American religious denominations; and never was there a more sorry plea presented in justification of any such aggression.

Only suppose the Dutch Church claiming the right to interfere in this style with the affairs of the Presbyterian Church; who can doubt for a moment how the intervention would be received? It would be treated as an impertinence of the first order. The only reason for its being thought of towards the German Reformed Church is, that we are a comparatively small body, and that the reigning anti-popery feeling was expected to come in as a cover to the wrong which it has been presumed to perpetrate at our expense. But it is remarkable, that even this feeling has not proved strong enough to secure for our Dutch neighbors the favor they hoped to find with other denominations in this crusade against the German Reformed Church. The pedantry of the thing has been too *characteristic* to go down favorably in any quarter. It was expected and planned to draw the O. S. Presbyterian Assembly into the conspiracy; but that body refused to lend itself to any such in-

glorious service. The religious papers, too, (the "Lutheran Observer" *always* excepted in any such case,) have preserved, generally, an ominous silence on the subject, at most noticing the action of the Dutch Church simply as an item of intelligence, with no mark of sympathy or approbation, and taking no reference whatever to the later agitational efforts of the "Christian Intelligencer." This, in the circumstances, is very significant, and amounts to a full reprobation of the course pursued by the Dutch Church, as having been at least silly, if not positively wrong. That Church has gained no laurels by what she has done. The whole relation, it is not to be questioned, is bringing more credit at this hour to the German Reformed Church, than it has brought yet, or ever will bring to the Low Dutch.

Still less has the crusade served to accomplish what it was expected to bring to pass, in the German Reformed Church itself. It is wonderful, indeed, how little it has had power to do here in the way of harm, and how signally it has been turned already to the confusion of those who allowed themselves to be carried away by its blustering parade. We have had, indeed, some internal commotion, for which the Dutch intervention would seem to have been at this time the only cause. After more than a whole year's rest, and with no new point of provocation in the Church whatever, (unless any might choose to construe as such, the action taken in regard to the Presidency of Franklin and Marshall College,) a few persons were led to start suddenly into a fit of reformation, which it was hoped would bring about in some way, a new order of things for the Church at large. In what way precisely, no one seemed able to tell. Enough, that the time appeared to be favorable for agitation, and that there was a promise of some distinction for those who could contrive to ride upon its foremost wave. We doubt if ever there has been a movement of the sort, pretending to cut so much of a figure, which was less able to give any satisfactory reason for its appearance, or to return any intelligent answer to the question: Pray what is it you want, and what exactly do you propose to secure? Such as it

was, however, it was not to be stopped in its own course. Helffenstein's secession played into its hands. Then the impotent demonstration made by the little Classis of North Carolina. Of the real insignificance of both events for all who know the parties concerned, and the circumstances of their occurrence, it is not necessary here to speak. But they answered well for popular declamation. They made good ammunition for unscrupulous religious newspapers. Hands were joined now openly with the "Christian Intelligencer" in its vile attacks on the German Reformed Church; which was ready, of course, as we have before said, to make itself the vehicle of whatever might be communicated to it in such form. Then it was tried to carry the agitation into the columns of the "German Reformed Messenger;" and because this paper refused to lend itself to any such bad purpose, it was denounced as being itself the grand abuse that called for correction; by which means the itch or tumor of reformation seemed to bring itself at last to some sort of definite head, by promising to itself a revolution which should place the editorial management of the 'Messenger' in altogether new hands. Set sermons were preached in different quarters, to help forward the pretended crisis. Letters were written in all directions, and mention was publicly made of scores of them from all sides, showing the Church to be rife for general disturbance. Much was expected from a certain convention, called to meet in Lancaster for the purpose of manufacturing in some way an epoch in the affairs of the German Reformed Church. Hopes were entertained, also, that the Western Synod might be led to take ground of some sort in favor of the revolutionary movement; and no pains were spared to turn its influence in this direction. But to what, in the end, have all these busy and restless endeavors come? They have simply brought out, more clearly than was seen before, the strength of the cause they were designed to overthrow. The action of the Low Dutch Synod has fallen as a mere *brutum fulmen* on all sides, without any lasting ecclesiastical or moral effect. The "Christian Intelligencer" has made itself to stink. Without noise or tumult, the German Reformed Church has passed an almost unanimous sentence of con-

denunciation on the efforts which have been made within her own bosom, at the bidding of this foreign intervention, to destroy her unity and peace. The agitation has produced no crisis. No epoch was created by the secret conclave in Lancaster. By the Triennial Convention at Columbus, and the meeting of the Western Synod since held in Michigan, it has been made evident enough how the mind of the Church stands on the other side of the mountains. The action of the Eastern Synod at Philadelphia, as being more directly concerned in the general case, has been still more decided and conclusive. It is not necessary to speak of it now in detail. It has spoken for itself, with a voice loud enough to be heard, and plain enough to be understood, in every direction.

So much for this small chapter of American ecclesiastical history. The Dutch Church, and the "Christian Intelligencer," have themselves come to see very well, no doubt, that they reckoned sadly without their host, in counting, as they, did upon the elements of discord and division, which they supposed to be at work in the German Reformed Church, and upon the effect which their own interference was expected to have on this combustible material in the way of inflammation. One great reason urged for breaking correspondence with the German Reformed Church, was the effect the measure would have to strengthen the hands of the *evangelical* party in it, (such was the Pharisaical sobriquet applied to those who were bent on making trouble,) and to strike terror into others. The Synod was told at the same time, that the effect would be something very different from this; and so it has proved to be in fact. The Church has been more consolidated than ever before, by the evangelical conspiracy thus got up for her general distraction; and the whole movement on the part of the Dutch Synod stands convicted before the world of being in truth a very weak as well as a very wrong transaction, a grand impertinence, as before said, from beginning to end.

#### GENERAL CONTROVERSY.

Nothing can well be more misty and senseless, than the general complaint preferred in this whole controversy, on the part

of the Dutch and others, against the German Reformed Church. It comes mainly, as we have seen, to the charge of a Romanizing tendency. But this in itself means nothing. For the Unitarian, the doctrine of the Trinity is such a tendency; for the Baptist, the practice of Infant Baptism; for the Congregationalist, the idea of a Divine Ministry, whether after the Presbyterian or the Episcopalian pattern; for the Presbyterian, the notion of Diocesan Bishops; for the Low Episcopalian, the whole Puseyite conception of Sacramental Grace. Whatever the standpoint may be, any other position which is in nearer approximation to the Roman idea of the Church, in any particular, must from such standpoint appear to be a Romanizing tendency. Especially must every churchly view, whether it stops here or there, be so regarded by all thinking which is less churchly than itself. The charge then of a Romanizing tendency is in and of itself without meaning; since all turns in the case on the quarter from which it proceeds. As compared with Unitarians, Baptists, Independents, our American sects in general, and as compared too no doubt with the unchurchly spirit that seems to have the mastery just now in the Low Dutch Church, it is not to be questioned but that the German Reformed Church is under the power of what these several bodies, each holding to its own standpoint, conceive to be a Romanizing tendency. We should be heartily sorry, and would wish to be out of the Church, if it were otherwise. But what then? What right has any of these standpoints, Unitarianism, Congregationalism, Anabaptism, any one in short, of the more than fifty sects that represent our American Christianity, to set itself up as the absolute measure and standard of truth in this case, and to say, Thus far shalt thou go in the direction of the old Catholic faith, but no farther! Why has not the German Reformed Church, as an independent denomination, as much right as any other to settle that question for herself in her own way? To become of any force, the charge in question must make itself definite, must descend to particulars, must say precisely what it means by a Romanizing tendency.

This, however, the party bringing the charge has shown itself

very shy of doing for the most part. Still at times it has ventured on something of the sort. But when it has done so, the instances have been few indeed, in which its points have been fairly put or honorably maintained. It is notorious for all intelligent lookers on, that the controversy on that side, whenever it has come to specific points, has been characterized by continual perversion and misrepresentation, much in the same way with the current popular polemics kept up against the Catholic Church itself. It would seem that the Puritan habit of mind carries in it no capacity for church ideas, so that they are almost sure to be turned by it into falsehood or nonsense, wherever they come in its way. Such a supposition at least is the best apology that can be made for its common want of fairness, in dealing with topics that lie in this direction. In the case before us, this want of fairness has been very strikingly displayed; and the wrong too often has been grossly aggravated, by being perseveringly maintained in the face of the most open disclaimers of its misrepresentations on the part of those wronged. It may be right enough to show that an opinion leads to this or that bad consequence, if with fair logic it can be done; but to confound the opinion itself with such invidious construction, and then to insist on fixing this last at once on an opponent, against his own protest and without allowing it even to be heard, is such an abomination as any truly religious mind might be expected to abhor. Such, however, to a most melancholy extent, has been the style in which the controversy before us has been carried on from first to last. The "Christian Intelligencer" has but played over again of late in this respect, the old game of the "Lutheran Observer" and the "Protestant Quarterly." How seldom has a point against Mercersburg and the German Reformed Church been fairly and honorably presented, in its evangelical columns? The last thing these outlaws of the so-called religious press seem to think of or care about, is the observance of any rule either of justice or honor towards the victims of their aggression. They have as little regard for truth as they have for charity. Their object is not to reach the real merits of anything, but to

carry a point of their own; and whatever of trick or stratagem, concealment or perversion, this may appear to require, all is supposed to have its justification in the fancied goodness of the end they propose in this way to compass and gain. To pretend to reason with this sort of newspaper *theology* would be out of the question—a mere waste of so much breath, poured forth upon the idle wind. It is made up of prejudice and passion only, without reason. You might as well enter into argument with a cloud of bats. You cannot hold it to any point. You cannot fix it to any premises, long enough to draw the plainest conclusion. It delights in all sorts of contradiction and confusion, flitting hither and thither, from corner to corner, and seeking everything, as it might seem, rather than the simple light of truth itself for the truth's own sweet sake. The best that can be done always with such unreasoning obscurantism, or bat-theology, in this low character and shape, is to answer it never a word, but just to let it take its own course till it has fairly run itself out. It is after all but little that it is ever able to bring to pass, under any enduring form. Its noise is for the moment only, and is soon forgotten. This, however, is no excuse for the wickedness of the thing itself. Wrong is not the less wrong, merely because it may be impotent.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we wish to resolve all the accusations of this controversy into mere misrepresentation or passionate mistake, and so to make a simple logomachy out of it, a battle of words rather than of things. Very real issues are indeed involved in it, of the most serious sort, which we have not the least disposition to deny or conceal. Occasionally one or more of these points is suffered to come somewhat plainly into view; while the force of them may be said to enter always as a secret power into those falsely put propositions also, of which we have just now spoken. The false issues are after all polemic devices only got up to cover issues, which are known to be real and true, but which it is felt at the same time not easy to maintain in their own proper form; and this precisely is the latent cause of the intemperate and intolerant

zeal with which such false charges and criminations are insisted upon, without regard to protest or explanation from the contrary side. Thus, for example, when it has been affirmed by the Mercersburg theology, in common with the universal faith of the early Church, and in common with both the original Lutheran and Calvinistic sides of the Reformation, that the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is such a mystery above nature as sets his whole person, not locally and carnally, but by a higher order of existence through the Spirit, in living communication with the believer; instead of meeting the proposition honestly in its own form, the gainsayers of whom we now speak have made it to mean a Capernaitic presence of Christ's body and blood after the order of nature, and have then held this up to odium as being the same thing with their own gross conception of the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Here a false point is substituted for the true one, and the controversy becomes an impudent slander which refuses systematically to let the truth be heard; but it is plain enough, at the same time, that what it is really at war with is this truth itself, which, however, it feels it necessary, with a sort of devilish instinct, thus to caricature in the first place, in order that it may fight against it with better chance of success. When all comes out, it is the whole idea of any mystery in the sacrament above nature, the idea of a real communication by it with Christ's body and blood in any way, that is hated and opposed. One thing is pretended and put forward for effect; but quite another thing is in reality meant. One thing is in the mouth; but it is something else entirely that fills the heart. The premises are a simple feint, to conceal the march of a pernicious conclusion which steals in from a different quarter altogether. So in the case of this particular example; and so in a number of other cases, which it would be easy to mention. As a general thing, indeed, whatever the ostensible points may be, there are issues behind them of real significance, which we have no right to overlook and no wish to explain away; and at times, as we have said, these are allowed to come unreservedly into view. God forbid, that we

should treat these as of no account, or consider it an object to come to terms in regard to them with those who make them matter of quarrel with us, in any way that would imply a resolution of the difficulty into a mere contest of words. The difficulty regards things. What we need is, not that these should be hid at all, but that they should be brought fully into the light, without the blind of any sophistical misrepresentation; in which case one of the last things to be thought of should be anything like compromise or common understanding with the opposing party. So far as such real matter of theological controversy extends, it cannot be expected that the German Reformed Church should be solicitous to make her own position mean nothing, over against the system of thinking that may seem to prevail in other denominations; or that she should carry her cause to any such bar for settlement and adjudication. On this real matter of controversy, we should not wish either to be or to appear of one mind with the system around us, but should count it a calamity rather to be in its good graces in any way. There are questions and points here of vital consequence, on which we are bound to see and affirm continually that we are right and those who oppose us wrong. To do so, is a duty we owe, not only to ourselves, but to the general cause of Christianity. It is the merit of the German Reformed Church already to have distinguished herself among the Protestant denominations of the country in asserting, or allowing to be asserted, principles and views here that concern the very life of religion, and which all denominations need to regard and lay to heart, however unpopular they may be now and on most sides exposed to reproach; and it is to be trusted, that this merit will not be lightly thrown away, by any change of voice or posture, in time to come. Already the testimony thus given has had its effect; and it cannot fail, if steadily maintained, to tell with still greater influence on the mind of the community hereafter.

#### THE CREED.

One primary point of difference between the German Reformed Church, as she now stands, and most of the denomina-

tions that surround her, is the importance she is disposed to attach to the *Apostles' Creed*. Her system of faith as presented in the Heidelberg Catechism, it is well known, has rested all along on this foundation. But it is not to be disguised, that there has been within a few years past a marked revival of interest among us in this old symbol, and much more of a disposition than before to make earnest with it as a rule of doctrine and a key to the true and proper sense of Christianity. And just as little is it to be disguised, that this revival of interest among us in the Creed has contributed greatly to draw upon us the disapprobation and distrust of other religious bodies. So far is this the case, that even respectable ministers in such bodies have been known to resolve all our supposed deviations from the straight line of so-called evangelical orthodoxy, as held by our sects generally, into this first principle, that the Creed is of more authority in some way than the Bible, and should be regarded as superior to it in the constitution of the Christian faith! This, however, is to put forward a false issue, in the way we have already described, as a blind to that which is true. The real point is not the relative authority of the Creed and the Bible at all; they are regarded of course as being in the most perfect agreement; but the whole question regards the real sense of the Bible itself, and the necessity of making the original faith of the Church a rule or measure for its interpretation. So the Creed has always been taken, unless among heretics, in past ages. Those, however, who now affect to place honor on the Bible at its expense, take the ground in fact that the last resort for determining the sense of Christianity must be, not the original faith of the Christian Church at all, but the private judgment of every man exercised on the contents of the Bible for his own use and in his own way. This is an abominable proposition, that stands in and of itself at war with all real faith in the general mystery which it is the object of the Apostles' Creed to proclaim; and it soon appears, accordingly, wherever it prevails, that the opposition it expresses to the Creed is not simply formal but material, that it extends in fact, either in whole or in part, to the contents of the symbol itself.

This has been brought out strikingly in the course of the controversy before us with the German Reformed Church. This controversy has served very conclusively to show, that our evangelical sects generally, no less than those which openly discard the doctrine of the Trinity, even while they may have been professing at times, in a cold way, to honor the Creed, have, in truth, no sympathy with it as a whole, and are by no means willing to be ruled by it in their faith. Why, indeed, if this were not the case, should it have gone so almost entirely out of use among these sects? Why is its voice not heard either in the pulpit or in the family? If owned at all, it is always with some exception or qualification. It is not perceived, that its articles go to form a single unit, and that to set aside one, is virtually to set aside all. There is a soul in the Creed, as it entered into the faith of the ancient Church—an energizing and form-giving idea, or thought, which holds it together and imparts to it all its worth; and this, precisely, it is, that renders it unpalatable to the reigning, self-styled evangelical taste of modern times. Rob it of this soul, and the flat residuum may be, at least, partially endured, as a venerable relic of by-gone times. But the Creed, with its own original life in it, can find no favor. We have been openly told, by good authority from New England itself, that “the Creed and Puritanism have not a *kindred spirit*”—that “its life and spirit never entered into the life of the Puritan Churches”—that “Puritanism builds on the Scriptures, and this Creed teaches, in several respects, anti-scriptural doctrines!” Any attempt to restore the “fossil relic” to life again, these Churches hold in scorn. “We look with a sort of pity,” they tell us, “upon those who are laboring to infuse life into it, and to set it up as a living ruler in the Church.” This refers directly to the interest shown for it at Mercersburg, and is very significant in regard to the point now under consideration, as showing that one great cause of controversy with the German Reformed Church, on the side of other sects, is, in truth, just her regard for the authority of the Apostles’ Creed, and the zeal she has exhibited of late for the resuscitation of its proper original life among Protestants.

For it must not be imagined, that this hatred of the Creed, in its own native and first sense, is confined, by any means, to New England. It lies in the very essence of Puritanism; which is another scheme of religion altogether, proceeding from different premises, involving throughout a different construction, and animated, by its own confession, just quoted, with a different life and spirit; and wherever the Puritan element prevails, accordingly, be the denomination what it may, it will always make itself felt in the same way as a spirit of alienation from the *regula fidei* of the Early Church. It is no railing accusation, therefore, which we bring against "American Lutheranism," as represented by Gettysburg and the "Lutheran Observer," or against the American Low Dutch Church, as represented by New Brunswick and the "Christian Intelligencer," when we say, that they, too, have no kindred spirit with the Apostle's Creed, and no power to make an *ex animo* use of it, taking it in its own genuine sense and without any mental reservation, as the true type and image of their faith. They are constitutionally Puritan; and being so, they *cannot* hold the Creed in full sincerity and truth. We may safely challenge either the "Observer" or the "Intelligencer" on this point. Neither of these can say honestly: "I believe from the heart all and every part of the Creed, *in its own original and only true sense.*" They believe no such thing. They are of one mind here substantially with the Boston "Puritan Recorder." The soul of the Creed, its reigning animus, is not at all to their taste, but much, very much, the other way. Of this the world has had ample evidence in their own columns; and here exactly is to be found, beyond all question, no small part of the reason for their animosity towards Mercersburg and the German Reformed Church. If we could have been content to use the Creed as a dead "fossil relic," mouthing it from time to time without stopping to think of its sense, our fancy for it might have been patiently indulged. But that we should "labor to infuse life into it," to make it act and speak for itself, to bring out its hidden force, to resuscitate its mysteries in their old form, and "to set it up as a living ruler in

the Church"—this was too much to be tolerated or endured. "*Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*" Hence much at least of this *celestial* indignation.

Let it be well considered, moreover, that this Puritanic dislike of the Creed links itself immediately with the idea of what is vaguely branded, in the same quarter, as a "Romanizing tendency." The "Puritan Recorder" finds the germs of Romanism in some of its articles; and there is no doubt but that the whole of it does involve an apprehension of Christianity, which both the "Lutheran Observer" and the "Christian Intelligencer," as well as the "Recorder," if true to their own theology or no-theology, must condemn and repudiate in the same view. It is not necessary, then, to be much disturbed by so blind a charge, coming from so blind a quarter, when we see in this case something of its veritable meaning and sense. Puritanism sees a "Romanizing tendency" in the Apostles' Creed; snuffs the smell of heresy, under this form, in the articles of the Descent to Hades, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, and the Forgiveness of Sins. What matters it, if, by the same diseased nostrils, the like taint be charged on the German Reformed Church? "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

And yet there are some among ourselves, it would seem, who think it necessary to have the orthodoxy of the German Reformed Church approved and endorsed by this Puritan judgment, in order that it may pass muster in the Christian world; and because this cannot be, are ready, at once, to cry out that all is wrong, and the Church in a crisis that loudly calls for reaction and reform. But what can be more preposterous, than to think of settling the controversy before us in any such lap-sided style as this? The one single difference now presented, that, namely, which regards the reception or rejection of the Creed, is enough, of itself, to destroy the weight of any judgment that Puritan denominations, or Puritan religious papers, may see fit to entertain here of the German Reformed Church; for the points at issue are, to a great extent, condi-

tioned and caused by this very difference itself. To what can it amount in such a case, to be told that such and such sect, or this and that "Recorder," "Observer," or "Intelligencer," dubbing one another evangelical, is not satisfied with our position? *Of course* they are not satisfied with it, refusing, as they do, to own the binding authority of the Apostles' Creed, which it has become with us a cardinal principle to assert. We do not wish their approval, in these circumstances; and we ought to have no patience, certainly, with those among ourselves, whose sense of what is due to the claims of the Creed is so tepid, that they can dream, for one moment, of referring the cause here at stake to the decision of any tribunal, where it is known that these claims are of no authority or weight. It is pitiful, truly, when the Lutheran Church, by its organ in Baltimore, is seen pleasing itself with the sympathy of New England Puritanism on some point that involves the complete abandonment of its own distinctive faith; as though this were a mere circumstance only, and *that* a matter, in some way, of primary account. The whole thing has in it the stench of hypocrisy and sham. And just so in the case before us, it should be considered a like solemn farce, to talk of sending the German Reformed Church to any such foreign quarter for the trial of her faith. There is treason, indeed, to her theological life in the very thought.

If those who oppose us, and make a noise about our Romanizing tendencies, could only be brought to acknowledge the Apostles' Creed in its true and right sense, and to set themselves earnestly to the use of it in their public and private services of religion, there would soon be an end of their difficulty. Let them try the experiment. *Then* we shall be ready to respect their judgment; but not before. Here is the hinge of our controversy. Is Christianity now what it was once held to be by this old Creed; or has it become something else? Shall we Romanize, as they term it, with the Creed; or shall we Puritanize, by charging it with contradiction to the Scriptures, and treating it as only the "fossil relic of by-gone ages?" Have we gone too far in our zeal for the authority of the ven-

erable symbol ; and is the German Reformed Church now prepared to take back any part of her testimony in its favor, or to give up one iota of its primitive signification, as a sop to Cerberus, or a tub to the whale? Let the people answer. It has been said insultingly, that the body of the Church, the laity, are kept in the dark by their pastors and the "German Reformed Messenger," and have not sense enough to discern the imposition they are under ; and so the task of enlightening and alarming their blind security has been generously volunteered by the Baltimore "Observer" and the Dutch "Intelligencer" of New York. Do they need such teachers to comprehend this question concerning the Creed? Will they follow them here as their guides? We presume not.

#### THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

To bow to the authority of the Apostles' Creed, is of course at the same time to own as true for all ages its doctrine of the *Holy Catholic Church*. This article is not in the symbol by accident only ; neither is it open, as it stands there, to any and every construction. It proclaims, as every other article does, a supernatural fact, a mystery which men are to receive by faith, as something that flows with objective necessity from the resurrection and glorification of Christ. Faith in Christ's glorification, and in the consequent mission of the Holy Ghost, completes itself as faith in the institution and heavenly powers of the Church, and without this can never be more, it is to be feared, than a gnostic imagination or dream. There can be no doubt, but that the sense of this necessary relation has of late penetrated the general mind of the German Reformed Church with new force, in proportion precisely to the new interest she has been led to take in the Creed ; and it is equally clear, that the want of the same right sense and feeling on the part of other denominations, has served to create some very real matter of difference here again, in the general controversy which we have now under consideration. The issue, rightly apprehended, regards no shadow, but a most serious reality. It is attempted, indeed, as usual on the unchurchly side, to throw it into a false form ; as though the question regarded the

Church as a simply natural corporation, dissociated from Christ; in which case, it becomes easy to declaim nonsense about exalting one at the expense of the other. But just here, we may see what difference there is between the Puritan theory of the Church and the idea of it as presented in the Creed. What Puritanism thus allows itself to put asunder, the ancient faith joins in indissoluble connection. In the New Testament and Creed, Christ is the head, and the Church his body, with a reciprocity of relation that puts this modern mechanical conception to shame at every point. The Church here is no accident of Christianity merely, a thing tacked to it outwardly for conveniency and form; it belongs to its very essence and constitution, and enters accordingly as a necessary element into the general mystery of its revelation in the world. But all this Puritanism has no power to understand; and the article of the Creed on the subject is for it, accordingly, a decided tendency towards Rome. So with our Puritanizing sects generally. Lutheranism, as represented by the "Lutheran Observer," and the Low Dutch Church, as represented by the "Christian Intelligencer," have no faith whatever in the mystery of the Holy Catholic Church *as taught in the Creed*. When they pretend to accept it, they mean in fact something else altogether; something which is no mystery at all, and no object of faith but only of notion and fancy, something which does not involve, with any sort of necessity, the attributes of the true idea of the Church, but sets all these aside rather as in no way suitable to its pretensions and claims. What they mean by the Church is no Divine constitution, strictly speaking; no order of relations and powers above nature, starting on the day of Pentecost, and comprehending in itself the full force of the Christian salvation for the use of men to the end of time. The idea requires no unity, no catholicity, no apostolicity, no historical continuity, no real presence of the supernatural under any outward form. It finds no contradiction to itself in the sect system, carried out to any extent. That this low view of the Church should be joined with active hostility to all that enters into the true idea of it as this meets us in the

Creed, is only what might be naturally expected; and it is easy to understand, accordingly, how the German Reformed Church also, in proportion as she has been led to own here the authority of the truth, should have drawn opposition upon herself from the same quarter.

There is real matter of controversy, it is plain enough, in this whole case. An idea of the Church prevails on one side, which is rejected on the other. Let it be observed, however, that the German Reformed Church has not after all pretended to establish any positive determination of the nature of the Church, beyond the general statement of the Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism. It is not by proposing in form any particular view or scheme, and trying to make it of binding authority for the conscience of her membership, that she has provoked hostility and opposition; but simply by refusing to take such ground on the subject, as would involve an actual surrender of the entire mystery with which the controversy is concerned. The opposition demands, that such a low view of the Church shall be formally held as may effectually turn it into a mere human corporation, strip it of the attributes ascribed to it in the Creed, and make it the *legitimate* home of schisms and sects to any imaginable extent; and that it shall then be considered heresy, to argue or plead at all in favor of any higher view. The German Reformed Church replies: "We cannot do this; because we see and feel that the article of the Creed, and the plain sense of the Scriptures, require a great deal more than is comprehended in so low a scheme. How exactly the proper sense of the article is to be carried out, in the present circumstances of the Christian world, we are not prepared to say by any formal ecclesiastical act. We leave room here for difference of opinion, and invite free discussion. Let our Professors and others, proclaim their thoughts in an earnest way. We are not called upon, as a body, either to endorse or to condemn their particular views. We do not pretend even to call to any account, those among us who choose to rest in the low Puritan notion of the Church. It is against the genius of our communion, and against the growing tenden-

cy especially which is among us at this time. But if any fancy it, we leave them without persecution to their own bad taste." This is in fact the whole state of the case; which, however, is anything but satisfactory for those who have got it into their heads, that to make much of the Church in any way is to be unfriendly to the Bible and evangelical religion. The opposition before us, accordingly, renews its violent complaint. Nothing will please it, short of a full concession practically to its own unchurchly principle and standpoint, and an intolerant denunciation of all that may not agree with this as a departure to the same extent from Protestant orthodoxy. It is not content to be tolerated itself; there must be for it no toleration of others. It is not with this or that phase merely of the old Catholic mystery of the Church that it is disposed to quarrel; what it fights against in reality is the idea of the mystery in any and every form.

A simple and ready touchstone of Church feeling offers itself always in the judgment that is entertained of the sect system, as it now reigns in the Protestant world. In proportion as the sense of what is included in the true idea of the Church is obscure and dim, the sect system will give no offence; while the activity of a sound Church feeling, on the other hand, will be sure to make it appear as a wholesale abomination. So in the case before us, it will be found that the Puritanic interest, which is in controversy with the German Reformed Church, has no proper apprehension whatever of the necessary and universal contradiction there is between Christianity and such a reign of sects as we are now cursed with in its name. It is, at most, felt only to be a pity, that the Christian world should not be able to agree better in regard to the true sense of the Bible. But, after all, no opposition is seen in it to the conception of Christianity itself; nay, this is held rather to make full room for it, by the relation in which it is supposed to stand to the private judgment and free will of men. Sects are taken to be the normal and regular order of the Church; so far, at least, that they form no serious reproach to Protestantism as it now stands, and need not be expected to pass away before

it can be said to have fulfilled and made good its own mission. With our German Reformed Church, on the other hand, all such thinking is coming more and more to an end. Our sense of what Christianity is as a *Church*, our insight into the true import of the mystery we profess to receive in the Creed, has been so quickened, as to make it impossible for us generally to acquiesce in the notion, that it can ever have its full and final force in a system of sects. The most we can do, is to trust that such a system, as it now prevails, is not fatally at war with the very existence of Christianity, but capable of being reconciled with the idea of its presence for the time being, and as an interimistic transition merely to a better state of things in the future. To say that it is not a defect, a sore disorder; in one word, a very real and ugly disease, but a sign rather of promising health, in the constitution of Protestantism, is out of the question. It does violence to Christianity; for this involves the mystery of the Church, as Christ's body; and it is not possible to sunder the idea of the Church from its own inherent attributes ascribed to it in the Creed. We loathe and detest the sect system, therefore, as in principle opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and feel bound to testify against it, and to seek its overthrow by doing what we can to assert in an earnest way the necessary claims of Christianity regarded as a Church. For in no other way can it be overthrown. The sect *principle* must give way before any end can be put to sects; and this principle can be subdued only by the Church principle; the one is just the negation of the other. To have faith and satisfaction in Christianity as a religion of sects, is to have no sense of what it is as a Church; and to have faith in it as the Holy Catholic Church, is to have no heart for it as a scheme of everlasting schisms and sects.

So much for the general question of the Church. It is easy enough to see, that there is very real matter of controversy here between the German Reformed Church and her opponents. We have no wish to conceal it. The clearer it can be made, the better. Puritanism asks us to abjure the article of the Holy Catholic Church as it has been held in all past ages, and

to accept Christianity as a religion of sects, the product of private judgment and private will. Are we prepared to come to that? Shall we be frightened into it by any system of terrorism from without; by the cry, The religious newspapers are against you, and the Puritanically minded sects from Dan to Beersheba; by the senseless clamor of Romanism and Puseyism, kept up by those who have no power to help their own bad cause in any other way! Time will show.

#### SACRAMENTAL GRACE.

This difference of view with regard to the nature of the Church, draws along with it necessarily a difference of view also with regard to the *ministry* and the *sacraments*.

Where the Church is looked upon mainly in the light of a human corporation, the office of the holy ministry must, as a matter of course, undergo a corresponding degradation. No earnestness then is made with the idea of a Divine commission or an apostolical succession. The real rights and powers of the office are regarded as proceeding from the people; and it is supposed to be magnified, by being reduced as much as possible to one and the same level with simply secular trusts under any other form. The German Reformed Church is not prepared to acquiesce in this poor view. Her sense of the supernatural constitution of Christianity involves of itself the sense also of a more than earthly force in the ministry. But as this has not been made the subject of any particular controversy, it needs at present no farther notice.

The question of the sacraments has been more prominent. As seals of the grace which is comprehended in the Church, they must necessarily have a character answerable to it; and as they are for our thinking, so also will this be by inevitable connection. Let the Church cease to be a mystery for our apprehension, and the mystery of the sacraments will also be at an end; we shall have in them the natural appendages only of an economy that belongs to nature. So if it be assumed on the other hand, that the sacraments include no grace, set no supernatural reality in contact with the worshipper, it will be in vain to dream still of a Church that is the bearer of heaven-

ly life in the sense of the Creed. How should the Church be more in this way for us than its own seals? The ancient faith saw in the sacraments accordingly, what it saw in the mystery of godliness they were given to represent. They were not signs only of something absent, but seals of something present, the visible exhibition of invisible grace. Baptism was for the remission of sins, and is acknowledged plainly enough in the Creed itself, under this character, as part of the mystery of faith. The Lord's Supper was a real participation of the body and blood of Christ, made to be present mystically, by the power of the Holy Ghost, under the elements of bread and wine, for the nourishment of his people to everlasting life. The substance of this old sacramental doctrine passed unhurt, we may say, through the shock of the Reformation; for the rationalistic view attributed to Zwingli gave way before the sounder sentiment of Calvin; and the Reformed Church united thus with the Lutheran, in declaring the sacraments to be the vehicles of the grace they represent, and in asserting especially the distinctive mystery of the blessed eucharist, as we find it proclaimed for instance in the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. But with that falling away of veneration for the Creed, and faith in the article of the Church, which as we have just seen has come to prevail among much of our modern Protestantism, this old doctrine of the sacraments has gradually gone more and more out of use; so that many of our sects now find it hard to form so much as a notion of its meaning, and as soon as it is set before them are ready to scout it from their presence as pure superstition and nonsense. In the German Reformed Church, on the other hand, there has come to prevail for some time past, the feeling that there is a deplorable error at work here among these unsacramental sects, which it is of the highest account for the interests of religion to oppose and withstand; and there may be said to be among us, accordingly, both ministers and people, a growing disposition to think and speak honorably of the sacraments, to look upon them as mysteries, and to ascribe to them a mystical supernatural force, such as they were held to

carry along with them in the times of Primitive Christianity and in the age of the Reformation.

Here of course is a very real issue, a most tangible case of controversy. Let the true form of it, however, be well kept in mind. The German Reformed Church has not enacted any new rule or definition on the subject; has never endorsed formally any particular statements of her Professors in regard to it; has brought in no test whatever in the case to disturb the most latitudinarian conscience. She has merely refused to accept the Puritanic theory of the sacraments as her own, and to give judgment against every higher view as unevangelical and unsafe. It is not what she has done ecclesiastically in the matter, but what she has declined doing, that has given offence. For with all its boasted pretensions to liberality and toleration, this Puritanic habit of thought is sure to show itself the most intolerant in the world, wherever it is brought into collision with its own true opposite, the practical acknowledgment of the Holy Catholic Church. The idea of what is called sacramental grace, considered as a supernatural virtue or force objectively at hand in the Christian mysteries, is something therefore which it finds itself unable to endure in any form or shape. It hates the whole conception, and it is ready to stigmatize it from first to last, as Popery and Puseyism. Hence its sore dissatisfaction with the German Reformed Church. As represented by Berg and Company, it sought in the first place to carry out this proscriptive spirit in the bosom of the Church itself; and now, having been foiled and defeated in that endeavor, it seeks to carry the same point by agitation and noise from the outside. It is not enough that the Church says: "We leave the matter free. We pronounce no sentence in favor of the "*Principle of Protestantism*" or of the "*Mystical Presence*;" but neither will we give sentence against them; and still less are we prepared to succumb to the Puritan rationalistic doctrine of the sacraments, as the only and necessary type of Protestant orthodoxy. We see that this is both unhistorical and unscriptural, and that the case calls for a higher view, in which room may be offered for the exercise of

faith in the sense of the ancient Christian Creed. God forbid then, that we should tax our Professors with heresy, for trying to stem the tide of rationalism here, by re-asserting what was asserted by Luther and Calvin, as well as by all the Fathers of the Church a thousand years before. We bid them God-speed rather in their pious work. Still, as just said, we pass no ecclesiastical judgment for the present on any question or point. If any one among us choose to believe or preach Puritanism, in virtue of his foreign theological affinities, or for any other reason, we call him to no account; we put no bar in his way. Our wish is simply to leave the matter free." It is not enough for the opposition before us, we say, that the German Reformed Church should answer in this truly liberal and catholic way. Its demand is not for toleration, but for persecution. It can bear no Mordecai in the gate. "Cæsar aut nullus," all or nothing, is its watchword and motto. "There is no room here," it exclaims, "for indulgence or temporization. You must take the Puritan theory of the sacraments, and require all to subscribe to it; or else stand convicted of being unfriendly to Protestantism. To consider the sacraments mysteries at all, to allow to them as such any objective grace whatever, is unevangelical. For doing so, the Mercersburg Professors ought to be called to account and condemned; and because the German Reformed Church has not treated them in this way, but has shown sympathy rather with the general drift of their teaching and a disposition to protect them in the use of their earnest freedom, she herself stands fairly exposed to the charge of a Romanizing tendency. She is on the highway to Popery; her people are in danger of being delivered over, bound hand and foot without knowing it, to the arms of the Roman Catholic Church; and a bellowing crusade must be got up accordingly, among surrounding sects, for the purpose of bringing them to their senses."

Let it be noted also, that this intolerant agitation is led off by the "Lutheran Observer" and the "Christian Intelligencer," with open treachery on the part of both to their own denominational standards. The Augsburg Confession teaches

the mystery of the real presence in Luther's sense, and without it Lutheranism is turned into a horrible farce; the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism affirm the same mystery in Calvin's sense. As represented by the papers just named, however, the Lutheran and Low Dutch Churches are seen giving the authority of these symbolical books to the winds, and joining hands with the rankest Puritanism in a sort of insane outcry against the mystery of the sacraments in any and every view. All this too in the name of evangelical piety, and zeal for the faith once delivered to the saints! Strange piety truly, and orthodoxy of the very queerest sort.

Is it to be expected now that the German Reformed Church will suffer herself to be bullied out of her own historical position, and to become renegade to the faith of her fathers, by any onset of Puritanism carried forward under *such* auspices? We rather think not.

#### LITURGICAL FEELING.

There is a close connection between the sacramental feeling in religion and the *liturgical*; and the growth of this last in the German Reformed Church may be referred to also as another real matter of difference between her and those by whom she is opposed in this controversy, although it has not yet ever been made the subject of any particular animadversion or debate. A very marked progress has taken place in the mind of the Church on the question of liturgical worship, even within the last five years; and as this has been in an almost noiseless way, without discussion, it can be accounted for only on the ground that the Church feeling in general has been gaining strength among us and taking root more deeply in the heart of the people. For there is an inward connection undoubtedly between the sense of what is comprehended in the idea of the Church, and the use of a liturgy; just as there is an inward connection also between such sense of the Church and a veneration for church festivals; for which reason the Puritan habit of mind, which is constitutionally unchurchly and unsacramental, carries with it also a low opinion of liturgies and festival days, seeing in them only the relics and shreds

of what it holds to be Popish superstition. In full distinction from this, we have now a very active demand among us for a liturgy in the liturgical form, that shall not be the product simply of private reflection, but be made to embody in it the life and spirit of what the worship of Christ's Church has been in past ages, and in which congregations shall be brought to take part with their ministers in the public service of the sanctuary. The demand is not confined to any one section of the Church; but extends, as it would appear, to the whole body, the Western Synod here being of one mind entirely with the Synod of the East. And what is particularly noteworthy, even our domestic alarmists themselves seem to be carried along, to some extent, with the course of things in this direction, so as to fall in certain cases into strange contradiction with their own position. One who has been figuring most conspicuously among them of late, is a member of the committee which is now engaged in the preparation of our new liturgy, and professes to be cordially pleased, not merely with the general design, but with the plan also, which has been laid down for its execution, and with the execution itself, so far as this has already gone. And yet there is no movement among us probably that looks so decidedly in the very direction these alarmists affect to deprecate, or that is likely to reach farther, if it succeed, in fixing on the Church the character of a Romanizing tendency in the eyes of all Puritanically minded sects and denominations. Let but this liturgy be completed, and brought into general use, and there will be a full end at once of all right understanding between us and these unchurchly sects. It is a more serious matter in such view than any amount of mere theological discussion; for it looks to practice, in its most intimate relation with the heart and life of the Church. To be consistent then, those who have been trying to get up a "crisis" among us, on the score of our Church tendencies, ought by all means to take the bull by the horns just at this point; where there is something like real ecclesiastical action to lay hold of, an overt cause of complaint on which to try their reforming hand. Let them call for an arrest of this litur-

gical movement, as being of Jesuitical origin and most decidedly Romanizing purpose and aim; and let them invoke the intervention of New England Puritanism, and its hybrid imitations in the Lutheran and Low Dutch Churches, to add weight to the remonstrance. There can be no question as to *their* feelings on the subject. They have no sympathy with worship under any such form, and can hardly be said to know even what a liturgy means. Its forms, however pregnant with the soul of devotion, can never be more to them at best than *nugæ tolerabiles*, simply endurable trifles. In the end, no doubt, the introduction of a true Church service in this form into the German Reformed Church, if the present movement should ever come to that, will be, in their estimation, quite as offensive a mark of our unevangelical tendency, as anything they now find fault with in our theology or practice at other points.

Must the German Reformed Church then cry *Peccavi* in this case also, and put a stop to the liturgical movement which is going forward within her communion, in order that she may keep on good terms with this Puritanic spirit, and prove herself fit company for it as it reigns throughout the wide and mighty Babel of our sects? Let the people answer.

#### HISTORY AND FALSE PROTESTANTISM.

The idea of the Church, as it is made an article of faith in the Apostles' Creed, involves of necessity again the conception of its perpetual continuance in the form of *history*. Such a real constitution of grace, springing from the resurrection and glorification of Christ, cannot fail. Where there is no sense, however, of the true nature of the Church, as a supernatural fact in the world, as with our sects generally, this necessity, as a matter of course, is not felt. For the sect consciousness universally, as such, Christianity is a doctrine simply or theory in men's minds, which they have it in their power at any time to draw for themselves from the Bible, and which needs, therefore, no other continuity of existence than what may be supposed to be comprehended in the preservation of this sacred volume from one age onward always to another. Hence the

familiar notion of a complete falling away of the visible historical body, known as the Church, from the institution it started with in the beginning; by which it is held to have become the seat and empire of Satan for more than a thousand years, leaving Christianity to take care of itself as it best could, all that dark and terrible time, among fanatical and heretical communities on the outside. The German Reformed Church now has expressed no judgment on the subject ecclesiastically; but she sees and feels unquestionably, with growing conviction, that Christianity regarded as a Church *must* be historical in some way, and that to deny it such character, is in fact to betray it into the hands of its enemies. Here then, of course, she stands in material disagreement with those religious bodies, which rest in the opposite view; and the difference is one, the practical bearings of which are soon found to extend very far. It involves the great question, What is the true principle of Protestantism? It conditions necessarily the universal construction of ecclesiastical history; the light in which the past is regarded, and as related to it, the signification which is felt to belong to the present. In this way, it includes at last the whole issue between Protestantism in its sound and proper form, and mere anti-popery fanaticism, making war upon the universal mystery of Christianity in its name.

Having no faith in the mystery of the Church as proclaimed in the Creed, and no sense thus of its continuously historical presence in the world, Puritanism finds it very easy to solve to its own satisfaction the problem of what is to be regarded as the right relation between Protestantism and the Christianity of earlier times. It starts with the supposition, as an axiom fixed and settled, that Protestantism is identical with the true sense of the Bible; sets this up then as the absolute measure of truth; brings all previous Christianity to it as a standard; accepts as good what may seem to agree with it; and without hesitation rejects all besides as false and wrong. In this way, because it was originally in the nature of the case a protest against Romanism, the relation between the two systems is made to be one of complete opposition. Protestant-

ism is conceived to be true simply as it is the contradiction of Romanism ; and this last is set down accordingly for pure falsehood, just because it is the object of such contradiction. The credit of the Reformation is not felt to require at all, that it should appear to flow legitimately from the life of what had been considered the Church before ; but rather, that it should have no connection with this life whatever. Protestantism must be held to turn Catholicism into a wholesale lie. What if the so called Church had existed before only under this form ? It shows simply that the so called Church was unworthy of the name, and represented in truth not the kingdom of Christ, but the cause of Anti-Christ. So far as the Church was concerned, in the character of an outward historical organization, Christianity must be taken to have proved a failure ; the gates of hell *had* prevailed against it for a time ; it was become the synagogue of Satan. True religion existed only in spite of it, in nooks and corners. And what if it be found that this state of things extended back of the Reformation for many centuries, away up through the Middle Ages, and it is not easy to say how much farther still ? It only shows then that the Church had been a synagogue of Satan all this time. To yield a thousand years here to the Devil, is no more difficult for the principle before us than it is to yield a hundred. But what if it appear, that the earliest ages of the Church, the fourth century, the third, the second, had a similar order of Christianity in many respects with that which prevailed in later times, and stubbornly refuse at least to come into any sort of general accord with Protestantism after this Puritan fashion and scheme ? Such a supposition may not be welcome to the theory in hand ; just the opposite of it will be pretended and taken for granted as long as it can be done ; but still here again, as before, the old conclusion offers itself always as a last resort. The Puritan scheme of Protestantism must be considered as at all events the absolute truth of Christianity, for it is derived directly from the Bible ; and *therefore*, if the Church of the second and third centuries *did* deviate from this in any material respect, the fault was plainly its own. It was the myste-

ry of iniquity already at work to obscure and destroy the mystery of godliness. From every such authority, we are told, it is our privilege and duty to appeal at once to the Bible. There we find Christianity in its most truly original and primitive form; and so long as we can be satisfied that we have this on our side, it is but of small account if the Church of all subsequent ages, from the second down to the sixteenth, do seem to be against us. Let the sixteenth century be true, we may say in this case, though every century besides be found a liar.

Now if there be any truth at all in Christianity, it is certain that this scheme of ecclesiastical history cannot stand, and that no defence of Protestantism can ever be firm and solid which rests on any such ground. It is against reason, against faith, against the Bible, and against facts; and the theological science of the age is fast bearing it away to its proper annihilation.

A vigorous effort has been made on the part of what is styled the Mercersburg theology, to vindicate the cause of Protestantism from the murderous hands of this unchurchly and unhistorical spirit, and to maintain, at the same time, the indefectibility of the Christian Church according to Christ's most plain and explicit promise, by insisting that the stream of Christianity lay through all previous ages, however turbid, in the Catholic Church, and that to be of any true authority and force, Protestantism must be regarded as strictly the continuation of it under a new and different form. Such a relation between the present and the past seems to involve necessarily the idea of what is called, in the broad sense, historical development, or the progressive unfolding of the original sense and substance of Christianity, supposed of course to be always the same, into new phases and forms of life. The premises of the case being what they are known to be in fact, namely, that the Church is a real constitution established by Christ in the world which can never fail, and that the Christianity of the first centuries was in many points materially different from that which is now known as Protestantism, a fact that no scholar pretends

to dispute, there would seem to be no other way certainly by which it is possible to assert rationally the credit of this last as a part of Christ's kingdom. Unless we can conceive of room in Christianity for some sort of legitimate growth and progress, it is vain to attempt the justification of Protestantism; for on the one hand it is not what this was immediately after the age of the Apostles, and on the other hand it must be joined with that first life of the Church notwithstanding by true historical derivation to be of any force.

With all this, however, the reigning anti-popery spirit has been greatly dissatisfied; just because any view of the sort requires necessarily a different notion of the Catholic Church, from that which this fanatical temper has come to regard as a part of the Bible and an essential element of evangelical religion. Protestantism being for it the sheer negation of Catholicism, it holds the last for an abomination wherever it may come in its way, hates it, and makes a pious merit of abusing and blaspheming everything that enters distinctively into its constitution. It has its special scheme of Biblical exegesis, accordingly, answerable to this view; in particular a few pet texts about Anti-Christ and the Man of Sin, which it applies directly to the Pope and the Roman Church, requiring all men then to bow to this *interpretation* as the authority of the Bible itself. And so it must have next, of course, its special scheme of Church History, also, based on the assumption of a total apostacy on the part of the Church, starting no one can say how soon after the time of Christ, involving a grand jubilee of Satan throughout the Middle Ages, and brought to an end partially by the Reformation of the sixteenth century; which same scheme of history again, in virtue especially of the exegetical theory, just noticed, is taken to be in like manner of Biblical authority in some way, and so a necessary part of all sound Protestant orthodoxy. No wonder that the Mercersburg way of thinking should prove offensive to such a theological habit as this. It was construed at once into an insidious assault on the foundations of Protestantism; as though these must necessarily give way, unless both exegesis and history were forced

to bend to the narrow hypothesis here proposed for their use—and this too, in the face of all the most solid learning of the age. So in the cry raised years ago by Berg and Helffenstein against Schaff's Principle of Protestantism; and so also on the part of the opposition since got up on the outside of the Church to the Mercersburg system in general. Sufficient reason is supposed to be found for its condemnation in the simple fact that it refuses to fall in with the common anti-popery way of interpreting the Bible and constructing Church History; and the Synod of the German Reformed Church is bound, for this reason alone, it is pretended, to call it to account and pass censure upon it as something dangerous and wrong. And because the Synod has not seen proper to do this, it is now openly charged with being itself under the power of a Romanizing tendency and unfriendly at heart to the interests of Protestantism.

For all in truth that the Synod has done in the case thus far, has been to refuse yielding itself to the views of this narrow-minded school, and to declare itself content that its Professors, in common with all the best theological science of the age, should construe History and the Bible in a different way. This was precisely the question presented and acted upon at the meeting in Lancaster, in the fall of 1851, when the vote was taken with regard to Dr. Schaff's call to Philadelphia, solemnly expressing the almost universal wish of the body that he should continue his services in the Theological Seminary; the same vote on which so much stress has been laid since, by the spies of the Dutch Church, then present as delegates, to bear themselves out in their subsequent hostile report. The Professor had given offence to a certain class of American Protestants, by refusing to echo their familiar slang about the beast, the whore of Babylon, the man of sin, &c., as being the very sense of the Bible itself applied to the Church of Rome; by adopting, in common with Neander and the universal learning of Germany, a theory of Church History that explodes their favorite hobby of a total satanic apostacy, reaching through more than a thousand years; and as a consequence of

all this, by entertaining a more respectful opinion of the Catholic Church both as it was before the Reformation and as it has been since, than they were at all prepared to endure or digest—inasmuch as it had become with them a point of fond and pleasant orthodoxy, that the Catholic Church was no Church whatever, but a “synagogue of Satan” only and the “masterpiece of the Devil.” For this offence, they wished to have him silenced. The question before the Synod then, was *not*, whether the theological and historical views of the Professor in detail were to be sanctioned or not; but, whether the German Reformed Church saw fit to allow him the freedom he claimed in his studies, and was satisfied with the general drift and plan of his teaching, or would insist rather on having him bound to the Procrustes’ bed prepared for him by his enemies; whether in calling him from Europe to teach Church History in particular, she meant that he should be at liberty to go with the science of the age, and to take facts as he might find them to be, or intended only that he should do so as far as the limits of this anti-popery tradition would permit. This was the question; and a very important one it was, as all may readily see. How the Synod answered it is generally known.

It came to this: “We will not identify the cause of Protestantism with this anti-popery exegesis, or this anti-popery scheme of ecclesiastical history. If any choose to hold the Pope for St. Paul’s Man of Sin, or for the Anti-Christ of St. John; if any fancy the notion of a Devil’s millennium in the name of Christianity and the Church, extending from the sixth century to the sixteenth; if any think it necessary to hate and curse Catholicism, as a system that is evil only without any mixture of good, in proof of their own evangelical piety; we intermeddle not with their freedom, but willingly leave them to their own taste.\* On the other hand, however, they must not re-

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\* Of this tolerant disposition, full proof has been given all along; and it was put to very clear test certainly, when the Rev. Dr. Mesick, of Harrisburg, allowed himself to harangue first the Western and then the Eastern Synod, as he is said to have done at their last meetings, in a regularly built anti-popery sermon, trying his best to make it out that the Pope was Antichrist, and that to believe this is to be considered a necessary part of the orthodoxy of the German Reformed Church. It was generally felt, that the sermon was

quire us to make their prejudices the law of orthodoxy in the German Reformed Church. We are not called upon to issue a Biblical Commentary or a text book of Church History under the *imprimatur* of the Synod, nor to endorse in detail the published views of our Professors; but we see no reason for requiring them to abandon *their* view of the Bible and of the past history of the Church, in favor of this anti-popery tradition. Nay, we wish them not to do so, but to adhere rather to their own general plan and method, as being in our estimation altogether better than any such narrow mechanical scheme. Should their teaching run counter to the Heidelberg Catechism, or to the Apostles' Creed, we are prepared of course to call them to account. But it will be time enough to do this, when the fact is charged and proved in some properly responsible way."

Such was the position taken by the Synod two years ago. It defined nothing ecclesiastically, and settled nothing, as to the positive force of any text in the Bible or any fact in Church History. It was simply a refusal to do this in favor of a particular theological interest; which, not content with being tolerated in its own exegetical and historical notions, was fanatically set on making them of obligation also, on pain of heresy, for the whole Protestant world. This, however, amounted in fact to a serious matter, over against the actual position of those religious bodies, which had already surrendered themselves, either in whole or in part, to the power of that other intolerant scheme; and it has much to do now, as is plain enough to be seen, with the crusade and would-be crisis, which

very much out of character and good taste; but who dreamed of taking the author of it to task for his freedom, or who felt that it showed any real bravery whatever, to exercise it in this bravado way? How very indulgent the Church has always shown itself towards Dr. Berg, not simply enduring his unhistorical radicalism as a private hobby, but allowing him to do all he could besides to inoculate others with the same virus, and even bearing in him for years a license which set at defiance the authority of the Church itself, and openly tended towards its dissolution—all this is something too fresh in memory still, to need any special mention in this place. The same general observation may be applied also to the case of the Rev. Jacob Helffenstein. The relation between these would-be martyrs and the Synod of the German Reformed Church, has been one throughout of insulting *persecution* on their part, and of most patient forbearance only on the part of the Church.

some among them have been trying to get up for our special benefit at the present time. The spirit which actuates the movement, whether in the Dutch Church or in the Pseudo-Lutheran, could be easily enough propitiated, if only our Synod would vote Roman Catholic baptism invalid, ring a few changes lustily on the familiar nick-names of Popery, take up the ribald song piped for it by such men as Brownlee and Berg, adopt the anti-popery key of the prophecies, fall in with the "grand apostacy" scheme of Church History, or stultify itself in any other way by turning Catholicism into a wholesale lie, for the purpose of making Protestantism, nay, modern Puritanism rather in its most unchurchly and unsacramental form, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, of all that real Christianity has ever been in the world. With this preliminary bond of fellowship, which might seem to be for many of our sects the only conception they have of the "communion of *saints*," it is wonderful indeed how latitudinarian they can afford to be with their liberality, when occasion may require, at other points. These are the main terms of their charity and favor. Are we ready to purchase the boon at any such price?

#### ARTICLES ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

Much umbrage has been taken especially with the historical articles of the "Mercersburg Review," which have been charged with countenancing directly the worst superstitions, as they are commonly considered, of the Church of Rome, and making concessions to it that must prove fatal to the cause of Protestantism altogether.

In these articles the ground is taken, that the Christianity of the first centuries, leaving out of question the age of the Apostles, was not of one form with modern Protestantism, but carried in it rather from the start the germs at least of the same system which was known afterwards as the Catholic, from the sixth century down to the sixteenth. The same general view we meet with in Isaac Taylor's work, entitled, "Ancient Christianity," the object of which is particularly to discredit the use made of the Nicene Period by the Tractarian party in

the Church of England, by showing that this period was itself fully involved in what are considered the worst errors of Romanism as established in later times. So much indeed is commonly admitted as regards the fourth and fifth centuries, by all Puritan controversialists, when their business is to fight Prelacy and Popery; however they may not hesitate, at times again, with strange inconsistency, to praise and quote the learned and pious fathers of the same period, as though they really supposed them to be somehow after all of one mind theologically with themselves. Little difficulty moreover has been made generally in the same quarter with the credit even of the third century, when it has appeared necessary to give it up for the sake of a favorite preconception. The age of Cyprian, we are then told, was already deep in the same system, which swamped the whole Christian world so completely in the next period. With this concession, Puritanism would fain be allowed to stop. But the case itself knows no such limit. By examining the documents of the second century, we find the system of the third again early at work in its controlling aims and principles at least, if not in all its details, away back to the days of Polycarp and Ignatius. This has been faithfully brought into view by the "Mercersburg Review," in the articles entitled *Early Christianity* and *Cyprian*. The object of the discussion was partly, the mere historical representation for its own sake, as having to do with facts of more than usual interest not generally well understood; and partly to show the necessity of adopting and openly professing some construction of Protestantism, that may be in real harmony with these facts. In what has consisted then the offence of the articles? It is not easy to say precisely; for it would appear to float between two occasions of dissatisfaction, which by no means agree well logically with one another. Sometimes a show is made of disputing the historical facts, as though the credit of Puritanism needed antiquity on its side, and must be wounded by any representation showing that this is not the case; and then again, almost it may be in the next breath, the displeasure is simply that the facts, let them be what they may, should be treated as

of any sort of account, in a case which this same Puritanism has already settled in favor of itself, by appealing from all other antiquity to the age of the Apostles as construed to its own modern taste out of the Holy Scriptures. Had the Review pandered to either of these presumptions, by hiding or twisting facts so as to make history what the case needs, or else by denouncing them heartily as palpable corruptions of Bible truth; or better still, perhaps, had it played sycophant to both presumptions at once, distorting in one direction and denouncing in another; all would have been well, and the investigation might have proceeded with as much freedom as it pleased. The offence lay in this, that facts were allowed to speak for themselves, without being presented at every point through the refracting and discoloring medium of a theory created for the very purpose of placing them in an unfavorable light, and that a disposition was shown to treat them with respect rather than reproach in their own proper shape and form.

The whole case is plain enough. The Christianity of the second, third, and fourth centuries, we say, was progressively of the same general order, throughout the entire Christian world, and in this character it differed altogether from modern Protestantism, and led fairly and directly towards the Roman Catholic system of the Middle Ages. In proof of this simply historical assertion, we point to facts. It is purely a question of history in the first place, to be either granted or denied as the truth of facts may seem to require. Is the general proposition true as a historical fact, or is it not? If not, let this be shown by proper evidence. But if it be true, what then? Must it be ignored or overlooked? No honest Protestant certainly will say that. We are bound to look it firmly in the face; and when the question is then asked, *How is this fact to be construed over against the claims of Protestantism?* It should be felt to be one that is entitled to some open and manly answer. There are now but two general ways, in which to dispose of the matter consistently with these claims. We may treat the Church of the first ages, after the time of the Apos-

bles, as a wholesale falsification of Christianity in its proper Apostolical form, and so make the truth of Protestantism to consist in its being a new edition altogether of what was then so short-lived in the beginning; or we may allow a true continuation of the primitive life of Christianity in the early Church, according to the article in the Creed, and make Protestantism then to agree with it in some way of historical derivation, answerable to the law of growth in the natural world, by which all differences shall be resolved into outward accident and form merely, whilst the inward substance is taken to be always the same. One or the other of these methods we must adopt for the solution of the question in hand, or else fall into down right obscurantism of the most pitiful sort. The first method, however, is only another name for infidelity, denying as it does practically, the existence of the Church and the authority of the Creed. The case then shuts the cause of Protestantism up to the other view, as the only one by which its pretensions can be consistently maintained without treason to Christianity. This is the general conclusion of our argument, in the articles of the "Mercersburg Review" on the Early Church. The argument itself proposes no particular theory or scheme, for the construction of such a historical genesis as the case is shown to demand. It merely urges the necessity of some scheme of the sort, if Protestantism is to be upheld at all. That, however, is at once much. It implies, in the first place, a true succession of Christianity in the Catholic Church, in spite of all corruptions, not only from the first century to the sixth, but from the sixth century also to the sixteenth. This makes the Church an object of respect through all ages. And in the second place, it requires, that Protestantism shall not be taken to be such a rupture with the Catholic Church, as excludes the idea of a strictly historical continuity of being between what Christianity is now in the one form and what it was before in the other. When it comes to such wholesale negation and contradiction, the true idea of Protestantism is gone, and we have only unhistorical radicalism in its place. Protestantism *must* be historical, to be true. To say that it is not

the continuation of the previous life of the Church, of one substance though not of one form with what this was in all past ages, is at once to pronounce it antichristian and false.

But in any case, what has the orthodoxy of the German Reformed Church, as such, to do with these articles of the "Mercersburg Review?" The Synod has never made itself responsible in any way for all that might appear in this publication; and has never been called upon, so far as we know, to express any opinion upon the particular historical discussions which are here in question.\* Most probably this could not be done with any sort of unanimity. All that has had place thus far, is, that the discussion has been allowed to take its free course. This, in the circumstances, is indeed much; more, it seems, than many noisy advocates of free inquiry and free speech consider right; more a great deal, no doubt, than suits the humor of many of our affectedly liberal and independent sects; more in particular by far than could be made to square at all with the genius of the Reformed Dutch Church. But the German Reformed Church has now, and always has had, a very different genius.

#### CONCLUSION.

Altogether then as it appears, the controversy between the German Reformed Church and her Puritanic opponents involves very real issues of the highest significance and moment, which show it to be anything but an empty battle of words. Underneath all the sophistical pretences that are put forward

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\* Who thinks of holding the Presbyterian Church responsible, for all the views that appear in the Princeton "Repertory?" A succession of articles has been given to the world there lately on the Church Question, which, notwithstanding the most respectable paternity to which they are ascribed, we should be sorry indeed to regard as a fair exposition of the faith of Presbyterianism, or of its want of faith rather, on this important subject. We are glad to see too, that from within the denomination itself a disposition is shown to demur and protest against the doctrine of the articles, as being in truth subversive of the idea of the Church altogether. But no one feels it necessary, we presume, that the General Assembly should pass judgment in form on the Princeton publication, in order to "define its own position;" and the Dutch Church in particular would hardly think of breaking fellowship with that body for not doing so—even if the predilections of Young Amsterdam were not but too well satisfied, as they probably are, by the exceedingly low ground the "Repertory" has seen proper to take.

to conceal or caricature the true points at stake, lies the felt presence and force of the most interestingly solemn question that is before the Christian world at the present time. It is emphatically the question of questions for the whole cause of Protestantism; that which rests at the foundation, we may say, of its universal controversy with the Roman Catholic Church, and includes thus the validity of the very title or charter by which it claims the right of existing and being known as a part of true Christianity in the world. Is Protestantism built upon the only true sense of the Bible as we find this primarily settled in the Apostles' Creed, and in the faith of the universal Primitive Church? Can it assert in its own favor steadily the attributes of the Christian Church, as described in the Creed, one, holy, catholic, and historical, by showing in its constitution a continual want and endeavor at least after their full actualization? The Catholic Church of course maintains the negative, and sees in it the sure prognostic of dissolution for the whole interest. Our reigning sect system is disposed for the most part to acquiesce in the same denial, seeing in it, however, what it considers the glory of Protestantism and the best pledge of its prosperity in time to come. The idea of the Holy Catholic Church, we are told by it, is a mere superstitious "figment," having no necessary relation whatever to true Christianity; the notion of an apostolical ministry and of sacramental grace is absolutely unevangelical; we care for no history, and we want no unity; any sect, starting up anywhere and at any time, with the Bible in its hand, may have at once all the powers and prerogatives of Christ's kingdom, to a greater extent than they were ever possessed by the so-called Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. Should this extreme Puritanical view succeed, as it threatens to do, in making itself the only true sense of Protestantism, the cause will be changed into another thing altogether from what it pretended to be in the beginning; it will be clearly the negation of what has been considered Christianity in all past ages; and it is easy enough to see, how in these circumstances it must run itself out finally into sheer infidelity, justifying in

full the worst presages of the Roman Catholic Church. The grand question of the present time is then : Shall this Puritanic theory of Protestantism be allowed to prevail, and the scheme on which it pretended to start in the sixteenth century, be given up as one shown now by the course of events, to be hopeless and false ? Who will say that this is not a great and terribly solemn question ? It forms in truth the *Thermopylæ* of the whole Catholic controversy. This surrendered, all is lost. And now right in the midst of the critical pass, and at this time pre-eminent among its defenders, appears the small band of our German Reformed Church heroically contending for the original principles and maxims of the Reformation. She does not pretend to settle positively the form in which the claims of the Church question are to be set in harmony with the cause of Protestantism ; but she feels the claims themselves to be real, and cannot consent to have the Gordian knot of their adjustment hewn asunder by the rationalistic axe of a scepticism, which seeks to destroy both Church and Creed together with one and the same blow. She is not prepared yet to yield the point to Romanism, as so many sects around her seem ready to do, that Protestantism is constitutionally unchurchly ; that it runs necessarily into Puritanism ; that it *must* sooner or later break with the Creed, turn the sacraments into mere signs, resolve the idea of the Church into a figment or phantom, and renounce all part and lot in its past history. Very real, we say, in such view, is the matter of difference between her and the opposition which has arrayed itself against her in the present crusade ; and most important it is, not only for her own sake but for the interest also of Protestantism in general, that she should continue steadfast and immoveable in her position, “nothing terrified by her adversaries,” and faithful always to her trust. Should she fail to do so, by giving way to the anti-popery tide, it would be indeed a sad calamity for Protestantism ; for it would amount to the most humiliating practical confession, that this is in its essential nature at war with all that is comprised in the idea of the Church as it is made an article of faith by the ancient Creeds,

and that no effectual stand can be made within its bosom against the desolating flood of Puritanism under its most unchurchly form. When the Catholic controversy shall have come to this all round, it will be in truth fairly at an end. Protestantism, without faith in the sacraments, and in no historical union with the mystery of the Church, will soon be found another name only for universal unbelief.

The general position of the German Reformed Church, then, in the midst of the downward tendencies that surround her on all sides, speaks clearly enough for itself; and the significance of it is amply attested by the power of provocation it carries in it for the unchurchly and rationalistic spirit generally of the times. To stigmatize it as *Romanizing* means nothing. It is so, of course, for all who have no faith in the Creed, and for whom its article of the Church is only an empty figment. But it leads necessarily over to Romanism, we are told, and offers no ground to stand upon short of this system. The more pity if it be so, we reply, for Protestantism. For only see, to what the assumption amounts. It is not simply, that the views of her Professors on the Creed, the Church, the Sacraments, the relation of Protestantism historically to Catholicism, offer no secure standing-place for Protestant faith; but that the German Reformed Church, by merely suffering such views and owning the force of the principles on which they rest, though without pledging herself formally to them in any way, has virtually placed herself on like untenable ground. No position is safe for Protestantism, according to this view, which so much as tolerates any disposition or endeavor to set it in harmony with the claims of the Creed and of Christian antiquity, or to clothe it with a truly historical character in its relations to the Catholic Church. Alas, we say again, for the whole interest, if this be in truth the predicament in which it stands. Then the only tenable ground for it to occupy must be, not even the bald, bleak profession of the unsacramental Baptists, but the unbelieving platform of Unitarianism itself. As a body, certainly, the German Reformed Church has no difficulty whatever in maintaining her full Protestant consciousness; nor is she

likely to be smuggled soon into Popery, as some hypocritically affect to fear, without her own knowledge and consent.

It is said, however, that the general system here in consideration is likely to carry some actually over to the Catholic Church; and any such result, it is pretended, must convict it of being essentially at variance with Protestant principles. But this does not follow necessarily by any means. Suppose a conversion of such sort. It would be of no force as regards the system, unless it were found to flow with necessary logic from its premises. It is certain, too, that if any one should become a Catholic in this way, it would have to be in the end by giving up, not merely the general position of the German Reformed Church, but the whole so-called Mercersburg theology also, as being in reality Protestant only and not Catholic. The conversion would hinge on the abandonment of this standpoint, not as one less secure, but as one felt to be more secure and promising a great deal, than any other which Protestantism is able to offer. The possibility of such a conversion may be admitted, without any difficulty; and in this respect it may be allowed also, that the general position now in view is more exposed to it than any less churchly and less historical scheme of thinking; just because it forms in truth the last and strongest resort of all rational trust in Protestantism, so that to despair of this is necessarily to despair of the universal interest at the same time. No thoughtful and earnestly serious mind, having become awakened to the issues which are here at stake, and having them fully in view, can think of taking refuge from their claims in any order of thought which involves and requires a full rupture with the Creed and all that the mystery of Christianity has been taken to be in past ages. In such circumstances, to lose confidence in the historical and churchly character of Protestantism, to feel that it is hopelessly at war with the Christian life of previous ages, to be forced to the conclusion that no construction can show it to be derived from this in the way of organic and legitimate progress, must be indeed as a matter of course to bow to the claims of the Catholic Church. The alternative would be felt as being either

that or infidelity. But supposing such a case, what then? How could it affect at all the credit of the general position itself which might thus be given up in despair, any farther than it would be of such force against the cause of Protestantism as a whole. To all whose confidence in this remained unshaken, there could be no reason why it should not be defended and maintained from the churchly and historical position still, as well as from any other. Nay, it would continue just as certain as before, that if it is to be upheld at all, it can be on this ground only, and on no other; as here alone is to be found any show of real and sure *terra firma* for Protestant faith, as distinguished from Protestant unbelief. Whatever may come of this, there is no better or more available position certainly on which to fall back in its rear. On no other hypothesis, is it possible for an intelligent Protestantism, which still clings to the mysteries of the Christian faith as this stood in the beginning, to find any true rest for the sole of its foot. To say that the cause cannot stand here, is simply to say that it cannot stand anywhere; and to admit in fact, if not in so many words, that to keep out of the Catholic Church we must cast ourselves headlong into the cold embrace of infidelity. God forbid, that *we* should ever be willing to do that.

Nor need it be feared on the part of the German Reformed Church, that she will not be able to maintain herself in the general position she has taken, over against the noise and tumult of her enemies. If only she continue true to herself, calm, firm, united and resolute, in the prosecution of her own quiet course, as to a truly wonderful extent has been the case thus far, she has nothing to fear. The only hope of this late Dutch crusade has been, that its agitation might lead to serious strife and division in the Church itself. Having failed in that bad purpose, its impotency serves now but to show the inward force and power of the cause which it has been attempted to overthrow in such insidious style. It is much indeed, simply to have met this heavy onset from abroad without harm. The Church by means of it, knows herself better, and is stronger than before. It has become more plain than ever that she

feels and understands the true nature of her position, and is not to be forced out of it by foreign interference in any form. It may as well be understood all round; the German Reformed Church is neither Puritan, nor American Lutheran, nor American Dutch, and has no mind to become anything of the sort at present, but much mind rather to follow what she takes to be the truth in a different and more "excellent way." Her bent as a denomination, in this respect, is fixed. Revolution for her now here, would be as the collapse of death. The law of her prosperity within, and her whole significance without, are alike staked upon the constancy with which she may adhere to her own course. In this lies her only real strength; shorn of which, she must soon be known as one of the poorest and weakest among sects.

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#### ART. IV.—THE TRUE RELATION OF CHEMISTRY TO PHYSIOLOGY.

THE progress of science, in modern times, has been such as to astonish every one viewing it from a stand-point outside of itself, while those actively engaged in effecting this progressive movement, seem hardly aware of the great discoveries which attend their daily labors. If an argument were needed to prove the progressive character of the human mind,—an idea which indeed is implanted in that mind by the Creator and dimly foreshadowed in the law which provides for the development of all organic creation from the germ to full maturity,—if such an argument be needed, the wonderful progress of science would go far to supply the deficiency. The law of progress applies to all creation: with the animal it perishes with the death of the individual; with man it does not die, in two senses,—in the one, it continues in another world, (so far as the immortal part is concerned) though, with more rapidity,