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# GOVERNOR HARTRANFT, SCHWENKFELDIAN

By JAMES M. ANDERS, M.D., LL.D.

*An address by the long-time President of the Exile Society at the Spring meeting, May 27, 1933, in Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa.*

JOHN FREDERICK HARTRANFT (HERTERRANFT), was the sixth in descent from Tobias Hartranft of Lauterseiffen, Silesia, who was born about 1684. Tobias Hartranft and his wife, Barbara Jackel, of Ober Harpersdorf, came to Pennsylvania in 1734 with their children and settled in New Hanover Township, Montgomery County. Here successive generations pursued farming. John Frederick Hartranft, the subject of this sketch was born December 16, 1830, near Fagleysville, about four miles from Pottstown in New Hanover Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and died October 17, 1889; he was the only child of Samuel E. and Lydia (Bucher) Hartranft of Norristown, where they had lived since 1844; they were both of German descent. On January 26, 1854, John Hartranft was married to Sallie D. Sebring. They had seven children.

John Hartranft, as a youngster, was desirous of entering the profession of civil engineering; his aim was to apply his education and gifts to the promotion of the material progress of the country. When 17 years of age he entered the preparatory department of Marshall College, at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Here he qualified during the next two years to enter the sophomore class and was transferred to Union College, at Schenectady, New York. At the end of three years, when he was 23, he was graduated with honors and at once assumed the duties of a civil engineer.

Mr. Hartranft's first professional employment after leaving college, was in assisting "to run a line for a railroad from Chestnut Hill to New Hope, via Doylestown, and also a road between Mauch Chunk and White Haven." At the request of his father, he soon abandoned his chosen profession in order that he might assist the former in his own business, and about this time he also decided to pursue the law and politics. "In 1854 he was appointed Deputy Sheriff of Montgomery County by Sheriff Boyer, and again by Sheriff Rudy in 1855. While performing the duties of the office of Sheriff he read law under the tutelage of James Boyd, Esquire, of the Norristown Bar, and entered the office of the Honorable A. B. Longaker. He was duly admitted to the practice of law in 1859."

It would not be possible to give a detailed biographic account of this distinguished and highly honored son of Pennsylvania,

within the time limit of my address, but some of the leading experiences and triumphs of his brilliant military and political career cannot be omitted. In speaking of his services as soldier it should be made clear that with him the impelling motive was the winning of the Civil War and not any personal aggrandizement or promotion in military rank.

### *Led Early Volunteers*

When President Lincoln, who had quite recently been inaugurated, issued his call for 75,000 men for the defense of the Government, Colonel Hartranft of the 1st Regiment, Montgomery County Militia, tendered the services of his regiment to the President, through Governor Andrew G. Curtin, and was promptly accepted; this was the Fourth Regiment of Pennsylvania Militia, enlisted for ninety days. It consisted of seven companies rendezvoused at Harrisburg on April 20th, and in a day or two was on its way to Washington, where the regiment reported to General Butler and gave excellent service in keeping up our communication with the national capital.

On the day the Fourth Regiment was ordered to the rear to be mustered out, General Scott ordered a defence of Bull Run. A few expressed a willingness to go into the fight as volunteers. Among them was Colonel Hartranft, who was accepted as a volunteer aid to Colonel Franklin. The latter afterwards spoke of him in his report, in words of high commendation. Says, M. Auge:<sup>1</sup> "His gallantry and courage in the first encounter with the enemy pointed him out as a leader, and he had no difficulty in soon completing arrangements for the formation of the afterwards famous Fifty-first."

After being commissioned Colonel in the three years' service, July 27, 1861, he organized, in September of that year, the 51st Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry at Camp Curtin, Harrisburg, and on November 18th following, this regiment was assigned to the corp of General Burnside, who was then organizing the North Carolina expedition. This regiment saw active service in numerous important battles throughout the war. On February 10, 1862, Colonel Hartranft led his men into the first battle in the swamps and thickets of Roanoke Island. Whilst the rebels supposed their defences were impregnable, Foster's and Reno's troops, of which the Fifty-first, commanded by Hartranft, was part, carried the works on the first assault and secured nearly all of the garrison as prisoners.

It was shortly after this that Colonel Hartranft learned that two of his children were dying at home; he obtained leave of absence for a few days and returned home to find them already buried. During that enforced absence a battle took place at Camden, North Carolina, with Colonel Bell in command, the only

<sup>1</sup> Biographies of Men of Montgomery County, p. 499.

engagement of Hartranft's regiment from which he was absent. It should be pointed out, however, that during the marches of General Sherman against Jackson, Colonel Hartranft then in command of the brigade, "was prostrated by the enervating climate, and compelled to go to the hospital."

He participated in no less than twenty-four battles, including Cold Harbor, Spottsylvania Courthouse, second Bull Run, Vicksburg, South Mountain and Antietam. On May 12, 1864, he was promoted brigadier-general of volunteers for gallantry at Spottsylvania Courthouse. During the battle of Cold Harbor, General Hartranft was wounded in the arm by a bullet, while 65 officers and men out of a corp of 105 of his brigade, were lost. General Hartranft had more narrow escapes during this engagement than during any of the other battles in which he actively participated. For example, one of his orderlies, while sitting between his knees was mortally wounded; another was instantly killed while standing at his side. On March 25, 1865, he was brevetted major general of volunteers for conspicuous gallantry in driving back the enemy at Fort Stedman.

In the Genealogical Record of the Schwenkfelder Families, edited by Professor Samuel K. Brecht, we read: "The bravery of General Hartranft on the battle field won the admiration of all his men, as well as of his superior officers. His many narrow escapes are a tribute to his courage and leadership while under fire."

If gentleness, courage and integrity are the key to a commanding position of an individual among men, we have an explanation of Governor Hartranft's signal achievements as soldier, statesman and distinguished citizen. In 1875 a biography of General Hartranft was issued at Harrisburg by Singerly & Company; this summed up a sketch of him, as follows: "Of the many civilians who entered the army but few displayed an equal aptitude for military affairs; and for personal bravery in action, or skill in handling troops, none achieved a more splendid or a more enduring fame."

### *Elected Governor in 1873*

In 1865 the Republicans of Montgomery County urged General Hartranft's claims for Auditor General at the convention held at Harrisburg on September 17th; he was nominated and subsequently elected and, in 1868, was re-elected. In 1873 he was elected Governor and served two terms in this office. It should be pointed out that he was the only Governor of the State who was nominated without opposition. While occupying the Governor's chair, he manifested the same sort of fearless courage he had shown during the war of the rebellion, as a military hero. Governor Hartranft had an earnest desire to do constructive things, and he seemed to know the causative germs which produced the

social and business decadence which prevailed during his incumbency of that office. Unfortunately, the authentic remedial suggestions which he set forth in his many State papers, often went unheeded.

Following the Civil War there was a brief era of great prosperity, at which time large numbers of foreign workers came into Pennsylvania. This was followed, in 1873, by an epoch of severe industrial depression, resulting in wide-spread unemployment, the menace of starvation, kindling the flames of discontent. I readily recall that by 1877 disturbances and riots bordering on civil war took place in various parts of the State, notably Pittsburgh and Reading.

The State Militia was repeatedly employed to suppress these disorders by the Governor, and in 1877 he found it necessary to call on the Federal Government for soldiers, taking personal charge of the troops. He, however, held that frequent use of armed troops was ever distasteful to a free people. On the other hand, systematic violations of law and order by large groups of men could, he contended, "only be suppressed by armed force, and to be effectual, the administration of military power should be overwhelming."

It is interesting to note that later the Governor expressed serious doubt as to the wisdom of "hedging property with bayonets" for maintaining industrial peace. Of the Mollie Maguire killings as class murders, he said: "If some of the leading spirits of that class had been members of a board of arbitration, as representatives of labor with some of the employers, or their agents, as representatives of capital, it is not unreasonable to suppose that most of the disagreements that have kept the coal regions in a state of turmoil, might have been amicably adjusted."<sup>2</sup> He further expressed the view that the policy of repression must prove a failure in the United States. Then followed these wise and statesmanlike observations: "Under our political institutions, the best way to promote the spread of communistic ideas, is to hedge property with bayonets. In the long run the policy of elevation is safe and cheaper than the policy of repression."<sup>3</sup>

### *Stressed Education of Young*

Governor Hartranft's subsequent proposals included the recognition of organized workers and the adjustment of conflicting claims by arbitration. He also became convinced that "an essential part of the remedy must be a much more extensive and thorough system of compulsory education, with provision for technical training." He felt strongly that it was not despotic or destructive of the principles of free institutions to compel the attendance of children at school. It is not only a duty that the State owes

<sup>2</sup> M. Auge, *Biographies of Men of Montgomery County*, p. 518.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc cit.*

the child, but also to her own safety. He wisely held that "all ignorant men are not paupers or criminals, but from this class are recruited the greatest portion of those who fill our almshouses and jails."

There is a more urgent reason why the State should compel the education of all the children, namely, to prevent the ignorant and criminal classes from violating the laws regulating suffrage, the school being the most effective remedy for this pernicious form of evil. "The lesson of the common school is love of country and obedience to authority."

No Governor has shown a more watchful care over our public school system than he. No subject engaged his thoughts to a greater degree from the time he first occupied the Gubernatorial chair, as that part of the system of education which embraced the instruction of those who were made orphans by the war. He felt that the establishment of orphan schools, to provide for their education until they attained the age of sixteen (as was the custom), was not enough, and urged the State to maintain its guardianship of these children until their habits were settled. To this end, industrial schools were convincingly advocated by him with a view to teaching these orphans useful trades, and thus enable them to earn a livelihood. In this respect Governor Hartranft showed a wise and humane spirit, which indeed, he ever exemplified.

During successive sessions of the Pennsylvania Legislature, the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania urged the passage of a bill, authorizing the establishment of a State Board of Health. Governor Hartranft urged its passage at two different times, and among other things he wisely said: "Second only to its police duties, if not indeed a part of them, is the obligation of Government to enforce the sanitary regulations necessary for the healthfulness of society."

Governor Hartranft also showed a lively interest in the insane of this State. He counselled that the Asylum for the Insane at Warren, Pennsylvania, which was in the process of erection, be completed as rapidly as consistent with first-class construction. Before the expiration of his second term of Governor, he became much interested in promoting the new Asylum for the Insane for the Southeastern District of Pennsylvania at Norristown.

"In 1877 Governor Hartranft appointed Dr. Louis W. Read to the very responsible position of commissioner for the erection of an asylum for the insane of the southeastern counties of the State. This trust involved the selection of a site, choice of a plan and the construction of the buildings, all of which duties, at great sacrifice to his private business, has been patriotically performed to the satisfaction of the public."<sup>4</sup> After vacating the Governor's chair, he accepted the Presidency of the Board of Trustees of

<sup>4</sup> M. Auge, Biographies of Men of Montgomery County, p. 556.

this large and useful institution. It is not generally known that the plan of municipal reform, that was suggested by him in 1876, was adopted in 1885 by Philadelphia, the Mayor being elected under its provisions in 1887.

Here should be mentioned other events and policies of General Hartranft's administration as Governor of Pennsylvania. For example, in 1873 the work of revising the State Constitution was completed; in 1876 the Centennial Exposition was held; a more effective public regulation of banking and the reorganization of the State Militia as part of the National Guard.

Governor Hartranft devoted considerable space in his State papers to the "Centennial" and his arguments had much to do with enlisting the interest of all classes of citizens in this noble cause. The following sentence, it will be conceded, is pregnant with inspirational power: "The Centennial must be constructed out of material furnished from the whole union, or its beauty will be marred and its symmetry destroyed." Again, "We owe to ourselves, humanity and liberty to demonstrate that the full development of a country and its resources, the education of the masses, the grandest achievements of science, the most abundant fruits of industry, the blessings of religion, and the amplest protection to life and property, can all be secured by, and are consistent with, the largest share of freedom of men."

In his messages to the legislative bodies of the State he repeatedly deplored the wanton and indiscriminate destruction of the forests of the Commonwealth. Earnest attention was called by him, to the fact that "the regions where the timber is found are the natural reservoirs from which our streams are fed, and observation shows that the rainfall and supply of water therein have been materially diminished since stripped of their forests."

During the session of the Legislature in 1874, Governor Hartranft sent such a large number of vetoes of legislative acts to the two houses, as to give him the nickname of "Veto Jack," thus showing that the courage and fearlessness of the soldier manifested themselves also in civil life. He declared that it was his duty to execute the laws, rather than to make or criticize them, and this he did to use his own words "without fear or favor." Governor Hartranft's course seemed to indicate that he had had a long-held vision of many needed or desirable reforms which he revealed during the two successive terms as the chief magistrate of the State. On leaving the Governor's chair he commanded the Pennsylvania National Guard.

At this point, let us take a retrospective glance and present General Hartranft's views on a few subjects which are of special interest to the present generation. In view of the present-day chaotic, social and industrial conditions, it is highly significant to observe what Governor Hartranft said about the prolonged period of depression which began in 1873 and lasted four or more years. In speaking of the depression which prevailed during his incum-



bency of the office of Governor, he emphasized the fact that overproduction and not overconsumption was the cause of the stagnation in business. "When the war ceased there was in certain industries an enormous production which could not be absorbed by a peaceful community."

Difficulties in connection with the banking system during that prolonged period of depression were in part, at least, occasioned by the loose charters so freely granted in previous years. Upon his earnest appeal to the legislative bodies at Harrisburg a general act was passed on May 13, 1876, for the incorporation and regulation of banks of deposit and discount. The effect of that law was to keep banks in their "proper sphere as clearing houses for business transactions and for exchanges, and the instruments for collecting the temporarily unemployed capital of business men and distributing it by loans and discounts, according to the wants of trade." How strictly parallel this experience was with that of the present-day banking situation, as well as the factors operating to bring it about.

### *Was Founder of Savings Banks*

Governor Hartranft was the author and founder of the savings banks; he separated them wholly and definitely from the banks of discount, confining them to their proper objects—a safe keeping of the savings of the people.

In 1879 the position of Postmaster in Philadelphia was tendered to him presumably as a testimonial of his efficient services as Governor, and after some hesitation he concluded to accept. This occurred at a time when he was being considered by leading Pennsylvania Republicans to be in line for promotion to the Presidency. From 1881 to 1885 he was Collector of the Port of Philadelphia.

While Governor Hartranft was serving as Postmaster of Philadelphia I was requested by my friend, the late Dr. Hiram Corson, to call on him and present my claims for the position of Physician in Chief at the new Asylum for the Insane at Norristown, which had just been finished. I did so and vividly recall his quiet, modest, yet dignified, manner, and my only recollection of what he said to me was, after an expression of pleasure at meeting me, that he definitely encouraged me to apply for said position.

I also recall that as I entered his private office an impulse to see this hero of the Civil War, rather than an ex-Governor, was now about to find its fulfilment and be the beginning of a new interest and possibly a new friendship; but alas! upon learning from Dr. Corson subsequently, that the position would be divided and given to two heads, male and female, with an equal division of the remuneration, had been decided upon by him, I withdrew my name as a candidate, whereupon I received a courteous, although severe reprimand, from my sponsor. I subsequently was

assured, however, that I could count on his understanding and forgiveness. In this unexpected manner a bright spot in the ray of experience was suddenly lost and all my former fascination for the coveted position vanished. However, the query, Had I been actuated by mercenary motives? remained with me unanswered for a period of years. I might add that Governor Hartranft's father was a fast friend of my father's for many years.

But though a lineal descendant of one of the Schwenkfeldian Exiles (Tobias Hartranft), he was not a member of the Schwenkfelder Church. Upon learning that this ancestor was among the immigrant exiles, the Governor took a deep interest in tracing out his own genealogy, as well as that of the Hartranft family. This resulted in a number of papers written by the Governor, which are to be found in the Historical Library at Pennsburg. The correspondence between the Governor and Daniel Schultz, with reference to the former's ancestry, is also preserved in the Historical Library at Pennsburg.

Here it is fitting to quote from the Genealogical Record of the Schwenkfelder Families, edited by Dr. Samuel K. Brecht: "Having formed the acquaintanceship of Judge Christopher Heydrick of Franklin, a warm friendship sprang up between these two distinguished men, and Governor Hartranft furnished valuable data on the Hartranft family and assisted very materially in collecting genealogical data for the first edition of the Genealogical Record of the Schwenkfelders. It was also Governor Hartranft who brought to the attention of the Schwenkfelder denomination the eminent scholar, his distant cousin, Dr. Chester David Hartranft, the father of the 'Corpus Schwenkfeldianorum'. Governor Hartranft was also a member of the committee that arranged for the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary Memorial Day Services of the Schwenkfelders in 1884, and was the chief speaker of the day. The Governor also located in the archives at Harrisburg the ship list of the St. Andrew, dated September 12, 1734, containing the signatures of the Schwenkfelders to the oath of allegiance."

We the descendants of the Schwenkfeldian Exiles of the present generation may well feel proud of the fact that so distinguished a soldier, statesman and citizen was a descendant of one of the Schwenkfeldian Exiles, and that he manifested an exceptionally deep interest in his forebears and fellow descendants—in us. Justly, was General Hartranft entitled to admiration, to the marks of confidence of his fellowmen, to honor as a military hero, and last, but not least, to the highest respect for his unsurpassed integrity and remarkable civic record. He left a name and the memory of a life, through which he enriched the lives of many. A daughter, Marion, widow of the late Edward Villeroy Stockham of Perryville, Maryland, and the latter's son, Hartranft Stockham, a farmer in Maryland, survive; also Marion Anna, daughter of John F. Hartranft's son, Samuel, deceased.

# THE ETERNAL GOSPEL

By RUFUS JONES, Ph.D., D.D.

*Dr. Jones delivered an address to the Society in the Salford Meeting House at the Spring Meeting of the "Exiles," May 26, 1934, upon the eve of his departure for a trip around the world. He was Professor of Philosophy for 40 years in Haverford College, and is one of the outstanding leaders of the Society of Friends, and well versed in things Schwenkfeldian.*

IT WAS JOACHIM of Fiori in the twelfth century who first used the phrase, "The Eternal Gospel," to mean the reign of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. He was a saintly man with a remarkable spiritual experience of his own, and possessed with a profound knowledge of the Bible, especially of the prophets of the Old Testament, and the Book of Revelation in the New.

He foretold the coming of the new epoch, near at hand, which would inaugurate the reign of the Holy Spirit. The first age of the world was called the dispensation of the Father, by which he meant the Old Testament period with its discipline of the Law. The second was the dispensation of the Son, which included the founding of the church and its rule over the world. But like the first, it was external, legal and literal. The third dispensation which would supercede the other two would be inward and spiritual; and the Kingdom of God would be formed within man's soul. He compared the first to brass, the second to silver, and the third to gold. The first was starlight, the second, dawn and the third, full daylight. The first was water, the second, wine; and the third, oil. The church was only a moving tent like Abraham's. The new age will bring the spiritual house builded by God. The church was Hagar in the wilderness; the new age would be like Sarah, the true bride. The first age had for its flower the stinging nettle. The second had the rose with a stem of thorns. The third will be symbolized by the lily with a perfume like that of the day of Pentecost.

## *Efforts to Suppress Gospel of Spirit*

In the year 1254 there suddenly appeared in Paris a book with the title, "*The Eternal Gospel*." It was written by a scholar in the University of Paris, named Gerard, a disciple of Saint Francis of Assisi. It interpreted the new reign of the Spirit and predicted that it would begin in 1260. The book was burned and its author imprisoned for life. The Church set itself to suppress this new Gospel of the Spirit, but it was never suppressed; it was only driven underground. When Luther sounded his powerful, early message of salvation by faith, and the liberty of a Christian man, there was a powerful response to it all over Germany. Many of those who were awakened by Luther's heroic voice were resolved

that the new Church should be a Church of the Spirit, not a legal external system forced from the outside upon the human soul.

The Anabaptist Movement represents one of the attempts to bring about a root and branch reformation and transformation of the Church. Parallel with this attempt to build a new type of Church, there burst forth another movement by noble scholars and heroic men to inaugurate the reign of the Spirit of God in the lives of men. They were not interested in systems and dogmas or great ecclesiastical structures. They wanted to free the soul of man and bring it into direct relation with God. They were more interested in the Gospel of love and gentleness than they were in ways compelling men to conform. They wanted an invisible Church of the Spirit first of all, and they believed that the outward structure, as far as there was to be one, would come from the inward life. The Church would be the congregation of spiritual souls throughout the world.

### *Schwenckfeld Longed to See Church of the Spirit*

Your own noble founder, Caspar Schwenckfeld, was one of the finest of this group of spiritual interpreters of Christianity in the 16th century. He had the moral earnestness of a great prophet; he possessed the inward grasp and spiritual insight of a reformer; the depth and power of thought of a true scholar; and the purity and tenderness and the suffering love of a genuine saint. "*He never took the Cross at its softest spot.*" He interpreted the meaning of Salvation as profoundly as any of the reformers of the Church have done, and he saw the whole work of Christ in its most *vital* significance. He reached "the deep regions of the Spirit." He knew that salvation to be real, must be the work of God in the human soul. *He had an Eternal Gospel, and the Church that he longed to see, was a Church of the Spirit. We maintain that the Christian Church is the congregation of all who with heart and soul are believers in Christ, whose head is Christ, and who are born of God's word alone . . .*" As often as a new warrior comes to the heavenly army, as often as a poor sinner repents, the Body of Christ becomes larger; the King more splendid; His Kingdom, stronger; His might more perfect."

Schwenckfeld's idea of the "*Stillstand,*" or suspension of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper until the will of God should be more fully revealed, much influenced the formation of the movement known in Holland as the *Collegianto*; and in England as the "Waiters" or "Seekers." Sebastian Frank also took the same position, as did Coornhertz. Schwenckfeld's profoundest influence outside his body of disciples and followers was that exercised on the great German mystic, Jacob Boehme, who was born fourteen years after Schwenckfeld's peaceful home passage at Ulm in 1561. Boehme was not a scholar like Schwenckfeld. He was a great mystic. He tried to discover the inner secret of the universe in

ways that were quite foreign to your founder; but like Caspar, Boehme had much to suffer, and many hard experiences to endure. He also never took the cross at its softest spot. Boehme's way of salvation had much in common with Schwenckfeld's. He once more declared, as his forerunner did, that it is not enough to listen to sermons or to be baptized or partake of the Supper. "No person," he says, "can be a Christian unless Christ lives and works in him." The word of God in man's soul is the divine process of Salvation for this great mystic of Silesia. He too hoped for the Church that was no longer external or legal, but a Church of the Spirit.

*The foregoing notes of Dr. Jones' address do not include the closing remarks concerning the publication in England of a book expounding the ideas of Boehme and others. This book fell into the hands of George Fox, founder of the Friends. Many of the "Seekers" in England at once joined the new sect commonly known as Quakers.—EDITOR.*

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