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Courtesy Pennsylvania German Society

CONRAD WEISER

CONRAD WEISER—A PERPLEXED CHRISTIAN

By ARTHUR D. GRAEFF, M.S., ED.D.

Any history of the colonial period of the United States which does not accord a prominent place to Conrad Weiser is inadequate and incomplete. For a period of thirty years, from 1730 to 1760, this sturdy German immigrant served all of the provinces from New England to Georgia as ambassador, without portfolio, to the Indian Nations which then lay back of the white man's settlements along the seaboard. A contemporary writer declared that Weiser's services were so important that the provincial authorities could "neither declare war nor make peace without him."

WEISER AS COLONIAL AGENT

His house, near present day Womelsdorf, was the gathering place of the important personages of his day. It is marked on all of the early maps of Pennsylvania. When Lewis Evans was commissioned to draw a map of the province for the use of the Penn heirs, Weiser served as his guide through the forests. John Bartram, the great naturalist, was Weiser's pupil as together they explored the trackless woods of northern Pennsylvania and New York. With Benjamin Franklin, Gilbert Tennant, and Dr. William Smith, he served on the Board of Trustees of the Charity Schools inaugurated in 1754 for the purpose of Anglicizing the Germans of Pennsylvania. Weiser and Franklin were the commissioners who, in 1756, superintended the construction of a chain of forts along the mountains between the Susquehanna and the Delaware. During the French and Indian War he served as colonel of the Pennsylvania Regiment.

Through deep winter snows he trudged over the uncharted mountains, carrying to scattered Indian tribes messages from the governors of Maryland, Virginia, the two Carolinas, Pennsylvania, and New York, always bent on some mission of peace—a minister plenipotentiary, who usually succeeded in averting strife between the red men and the whites. The great tri-colony treaty of Lancaster, held in 1744, could never have gotten under way or ended successfully without his remarkable services.

As a magistrate of Lancaster County it became his unpleasant duty to evict such men as Simon Girty, the renegade, from cabins which had been built upon lands still belonging to the Indians. As first Judge of

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Berks County, after its separation from Lancaster, he upheld the authority of the governor as the deputy of the Penn heirs, in spite of the disfavor in which that party was held. To Weiser belongs most of the credit for the founding of Reading; the success of the Moravian missionaries among the Indians and, perhaps most important of all, the exploration and development of the west. He was the first white man to explore the Ohio country in the interests of British authority.

He numbered among his intimates all of the governors of New York and Pennsylvania during the thirty years of his service. Benjamin Franklin, Col. Bouquet, Col. Forbes, Zinzendorf, Christopher Gist, Frederick Post, David Zeisberger, James Logan, Richard Peters, Caspar Wistar, Christopher Weigner, Dr. Thomas Graeme, Bishop Spangenberg and many others were his active associates. An intimate correspondence between Weiser and Thomas Lee, founder of that great southern family, lasted until the death of Lee. Sir William Johnson of New York entertained him in his home on several occasions. William Parsons, altho anti-German in his prejudice, became Weiser's admiring servant and the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg became his son-in-law. In addition to these white men he was acquainted with every important Indian chieftan east of the Mississippi and south of the Great Lakes. In his boyhood he was adopted by the Mohawk tribe and given the name Ziguras. Later his adoption was extended to membership in the Six Nations under the name of Tarachawagon, meaning "one who holds the reins of the universe."

His wordly activities were such as would command all of the time, thought and energy of any ordinary man, and yet this leader in matters temporal, was a leader, albeit, a perplexed one, in matters of the soul.

It is our purpose here to look into the spiritual life of this unusual man. In order to furnish a background for the story a short sketch of his immigration and migration here is necessary for a full comprehension of his religious experiences.

EARLY LIFE OF WEISER

Weiser came to America as a member of that great exodus from Germany in the year 1709. From the devastated areas along the Rhine thousands of distressed Palatinates sought shelter in England. The gracious Queen Anne attempted to provide for them with funds from the royal treasury, but when the numbers swelled into the tens of thousands, as the hapless expatriates threw themselves upon her generosity, she was compelled to find other means of disposing of her charges. Several thousands were sent to Ireland where they have long since lost their identity as Germans. Other thousands were sent to New

York where it was planned to have them engage in the production of British naval stores.

For two years these Palatines attempted in vain to repay their debts to the British Crown. They were settled on opposite banks of the Hudson, on Robert Livingstone's manor, near present day Catskill, New York. There Conrad Weiser, Jr., at the age of fourteen, helped in the ill fated program to produce pitch and tar. The venture failed in 1711 because the pine trees of that area did not furnish the proper ingredients for naval stores.

The failure of the enterprise proved to be an advantage to the Germans. Despairing of the project, the Board of Trade and the New York authorities released the Palatines from their bondage. They were free to settle wherever they wished so long as they remained under the jurisdiction of Governor Hunter. Conrad Weiser, Sr., led his band of people from the east bank of the Hudson to the Schoharie Valley of New York where Weiserdorf, now named Middleberg, was settled. Schoharie was the seat of the Mohican tribe of Indians. The villages of the Mohawks were only a few miles away.

At this time the elder Weiser married a second wife and young Conrad, finding home conditions intolerable because of stepmother trouble, went to live with the Mohawks. He became one of them, was adopted into the tribe and given the Indian name *Ziguras*.

MIGRATION TO PENNSYLVANIA

Troubles followed the band of Palatines to the Schoharie. Dutch patroons claimed the land which the settlers had cleared. Governor Keith of Pennsylvania, learning of their plight, and appreciative of German virtues, invited the Palatines to settle in Pennsylvania. Then began that memorable exodus from Schoharie into Pennsylvania. They followed the headwaters of the Susquehanna to Swatara Creek and thence into the Tulpehocken Valley, peopling western Berks and Lebanon counties. Conrad Weiser did not arrive in 1723 with the original group, but came to Tulpehocken six years later. Within a year of his arrival he was closely identified with the affairs of state and church in the young province.

REED'S CHURCH

A few years before Weiser's arrival the Germans of Tulpehocken had built a union church on an eminence north east of Stouchsburg. The church was known as Reeds (Reith's). Weiser and his family joined the Lutheran congregation of this church and as early as 1730 he was a "Vorleser," leading services in divine worship. Rev. Theodore E. Schmauck, the historian of the Lutheran church, is convinced that

Weiser was fundamentally a Pietist, inclined to the philosophies advanced by Philip Spener and Augustus Franke from the halls of Halle University in Germany. There is no doubt that he subscribed to these views later in his life, but it is rather difficult to understand how a backwoodsman, who spent a great deal of his time with the Indians and who received no formal education, could have absorbed the abstract teachings of German philosophers at the early age of thirty-four. It is true that he had made the acquaintance of educated Lutheran clergymen such as Bernhard Van Duren while he still resided in Schoharie. In his autobiography, written in German and recently deposited in the Library of Congress, Weiser notes the names of the clergymen who baptised the four children born before his migration to Pennsylvania. Ordained clergymen he records as, "Reverend," while those who were not ordained are designated merely by name. Here we have evidence that he had profound respect for holy orders. Keeping that fact in mind, we can better understand his attitude toward the rather loose system of supplying clergymen in the early days on the Pennsylvania frontier.

The Lutheran clergyman who served Reed's church at this time was John Casper Stoever, a Lutheran of the old school who believed more in the outward signs of religion as it molds life and directs actions, than in the pietistic conception of the soul. If Weiser was already a Pietist it is easy to understand why he took an early dislike to Stoever and organized a movement in 1732 to oust him from the pulpit at Reeds.

A more likely cause of his action was his admiration of the brilliant young clergyman who served the Reformed congregation at Reeds. The Reverend Peter Miller preached inspiringly and stirred the emotions. The contrast between the two clergymen could result only unfavorably to Stoever. Miller and Weiser became intimate friends, a relationship which survived many trying situations and lasted until the death of Weiser.

Whatever the cause of dissatisfaction with Stoever, Weiser and others cast about for an educated clergyman to replace him. The fountain of Pietism was the University of Halle and a young preacher, fresh from that seat of learning became the object of Weiser's search. Among his acquaintances there was a tailor by the name of Casper Leutbecker who claimed to be on intimate terms with the Lutheran Court Preacher at London, ministering to the German families of the early Hanoverian Georges. Through this connection Leutbecker promised to secure a real preacher from Halle. After some time had passed the tailor announced that a young man, named Bagenkopf, was on his way to Pennsylvania to serve the Lutherans at Tulpehocken. Leutbecker suggested that while awaiting the arrival of the new pastor a parish house should be built.

In 1734 the parish house was built and Leutbecker moved into it. He busied himself organizing classes for confirmation and preached in the pulpit of Reed's church. The new preacher never arrived, Leutbecker, announcing that he had died at sea, installed himself as the pastor of the church.

"TULPEHOCKEN CONFUSION"

At this point Weiser became suspicious of the acts of Leutbecker. Rev. Mr. Stoever still preached to Lutherans in Tulpehocken holding services in barns and farmhouses. Weiser and his followers could not gracefully support Stoever whom they had attempted to depose and at the same time they were distrustful of the self-appointed Leutbecker. The controversy led to the period of colonial church history known as the Tulpehocken Confusion.

The religious difficulties presented by the situation at Reeds was not merely a local situation. It was more extensive than that. In the years prior to the arrival of Muhlenberg there was religious anarchy in the outlying German settlements generally, finding its expression in many quaint and queer cults such as the *New Born of Oley*, the *New Mooners*, the *Mystics* and the *Seventh Day Baptists* of Skippack and Ephrata.

In the absence of a regularly ordained and educated clergy many charlatans posed as men of God. Gottlieb Mittleberger, the diarist, records the disgusting case of a pseudo-clergyman who made a barroom wager that he could preach to a congregation causing one part of his audience to weep while the other part laughed. When the test came he stood in such position that one part of his audience faced him while another part was at his back. While he preached an impassioned sermon to those in front causing them to weep, he made disgusting gestures behind his back which caused his audience there to laugh hilariously.

Not all the false prophets were charlatans. Many misguided simple souls constituted themselves as new messiahs. While new heresies sprang up on every hand the simple, uneducated Germans, deeply pious by nature, were tossed about with every new wind which blew. Since nothing was orthodox, their emotions were pitched hither and yon like a cannon loose from its moorings on the deck of a ship listing in the troughs and upon the crests of turbulent waves.

The Confusion at Tulpehocken had reached its ridiculous stage at about the time when the Schwenkfelder exiles first landed in Pennsylvania (1734). In 1735 the Stoever and Leutbecker parties vied with each other in suits at law to obtain sole possession of the church keys.

EPHRATA CLOISTERS

Torn between the two opposing factions, Weiser became an easy victim of the proselyting agents of the Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata. The complete conversion of his friend, Rev. Peter Miller, the Reformed minister at Reeds, was a powerful influence in turning Weiser to the fellowship of the Brothers in Wisdom at Ephrata.

As is often true in rebellion, the first results of the conversion were a complete swing away from his Lutheran tenets. In May 1735 Weiser joined with other recent converts in burning the Catechism and other religious books as a public act of repudiation of Orthodox Christianity. In that same month Weiser and Miller were baptised and gathered in the Ephrata fold.

Once a member of this new sect, he gave himself over completely to its teachings. He gave liberally of his substance to construct the cloisters there; he deserted worldly life to don the white garb of a monk; he fasted until his body grew thin and his features pale and wan; he allowed his beard to grow, and in every way joined with the other zealots in attempting to simulate the appearance of Jesus. Rev. Mr. Acrelius, a Swedish missionary, records the fact that Weiser on one occasion submitted to severe punishment when, upon returning from a visit to his home in Tulpehocken, he confessed, under inquisition, that he had slept with his own wife. Since celibate rules meant that the Ephrata Brotherhood was not self-perpetuating, proselyting activities had to be carried on vigorously by the members of the order. Lay brothers travelled in groups to distant places attempting to gather new members into the fold. Weiser joined these crusades which led the bearded brethren as far as New Jersey. Several attempts were made to draw the Schwenkfelders into the cloisters at Ephrata. One of the expeditions led Weiser and some solitary brothers to Skippack where at the home of that Schwenkfelder pioneer, Christopher Weigner, he met the Moravian bishop, Spangenberg, as early as 1736.

WEISER AND THE SCHWENKFELDERS

There is a great deal of significance attached to the meeting of Spangenberg and Weiser. Either the latter's espousal of the cause of the Seventh Day Baptists was waning, or else the deep rooted nature of the man yearned for the re-establishment of some organized faith, because Weiser appealed to Spangenberg to obtain a Lutheran clergyman from Halle. Spangenberg symbolized organized Christianity to both Weiser and Weigner, and the Moravians were, at first, not distinguished from true Lutherans. Certainly the Schwenkfelders had occasion to be grateful to the Moravians for the paternal care which Count

Zinzendorf had shown them during their sojourn in Saxony. These facts must be kept in mind in order to understand the tremendous influence wielded by Zinzendorf during the year of 1742, when Weiser, as well as many others, took up his cause with inspired zeal.

SURVEY OF WEISER'S RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Here we may pause to attempt to understand the religious nature of Weiser, this remarkable German who was a very much perplexed Christian. Weiser's was an orderly mind. His correspondence, which has come down to us in volumes, proves him to have been a practical thinker, arriving at conclusions by almost severe logic. His occasional strays into abstruse figures of speech are not flaws in his mental processes but are manifestly naive efforts to imitate the styles and flourishes of his correspondents, among whom he numbered such masters of the pen as Rev. Richard Peters, James Logan, and Thomas Lee. In his provincial reports he never wanders from the simple statements of hard facts. His religious meanderings were certainly not the results of emotional instability.

He was, by nature, a respecter of constituted authority. A stoic sense of duty characterizes all of his public actions. His wavering loyalties in religious matters can be explained only on the basis of the lack of any recognized authority in church affairs, and his eagerness to follow new leaders is evidence of his hopes that they would find a way out of the prevalent condition of religious anarchy. When, at last, Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg did bring order out of chaos among the Germans of colonial Pennsylvania, Conrad Weiser returned to the faith of his fathers and joyfully wrote the hymn for the dedication of the Lutheran church at Reading.

Another cause of his perplexities in religious matters grew out of the limits of his educational experiences. Possessed of an alert intelligence he had learned many things without formal education. One of the great disadvantages of the process of self education is that it provides no anchors to fasten on while groping to learn the next lesson. The learner's feet are on the shifting sands of unrelated facts.

Weiser was an earnest reader. The contents of his library as we know them from the inventory of his estate astound us when we observe that he owned such works as the Writings of Voltaire; the life of Charles XII of Sweden; the Works of Arnholtz; the Wurtemberg Genealogy; the Nuremberg Calendar of Heraldry; the religious tracts of the *Unitas Fratrum*; together with many volumes on law and four Bibles — three in German and one in English.

Such a varied diet of reading matter suggests a wide scope of interests for a humble German settler in remote Pennsylvania, whose early

life, and much of his manhood was spent among savage tribes who worshipped the mysteries of nature. Certainly Voltaire and his Deistic conception of the supernatural could be understood by a man who had lived the life of an Indian. But how insecure in the tenets of orthodox Lutheranism would be any searcher after truth who was exposed to all these influences without the guidance of formal approaches to understanding.

Dissension at the Ephrata Cloister was frequent. Weiser objected to Beissel's transsubstantiation of himself as divine; he mistrusted the claims to chastity professed by the monks who lived in the Sisters' House; as a magistrate, it became his duty to investigate charges of the murder of bastards in the convent; he resented the reflection cast upon his own acts as a family man and finally he wrote tracts opposing the economy instituted along the Cocalico, pointing out that the Brethren had fastened upon themselves a bondage worse than that of Egypt because there was no earthly escape possible.

The Ephrata Brethren were quite tolerant and did not evict him from their midst in spite of his treasonable charges. His eminence as a public character gave prestige to their order. It was largely as a gesture to please Weiser that Governor Thomas in company with many dignitaries from Maryland and Virginia visited the Cloisters in June 1744, at the time of the great Lancaster Treaty. It was at this treaty that the Indians requested Governor Thomas to shave off Conrad's "Dumpler" beard because it frightened their children whenever he came to their villages on errands for the governor.

WEISER AND THE MORAVIANS

Although Weiser was connected with the Ephrata brethren as late as 1744 he was not closely identified with the order after 1739. Affairs of state took him on long journeys into the wilderness. The arrival of Zinzendorf in 1741 diverted his activities to the Moravians.

He acted as guide to Zinzendorf in the proselyting journey among the Delawares and Shawanese along the branches of the Susquehanna, and on one occasion saved the life of the Count by a providential arrival just before the preliminary tortures of savage execution. He interceded with New York authorities for the release of two Moravian missionaries who were held as suspected Jesuitical spies. His home in Tulpehocken, was the scene of that memorable covenant which Zinzendorf made with the representatives of the Six Nations, giving Moravians perpetual access to the Iroquois villages. At his home, Rauch, Pyrlaeus and Camerhoff, Moravian missionaries, tarried for months while they learned the Indian languages from Weiser before they set

out upon their missions into the wilderness. In 1745 he guided Spangenberg through the trackless wilderness to the Onondaga Council Fire.

With the arrival of Zinzendorf a new chapter in religious confusion developed in Pennsylvania. Peter Kalm, who travelled through Pennsylvania in 1748, states that in London, Zinzendorf was thought to be mentally unbalanced. Whether this be true or not, he did stir up a religious revival among the Germans of Pennsylvania, creating as much upheaval as Whitfield had created among the English inhabitants a year earlier.

Posing as a Lutheran, Zinzendorf held a series of religious conferences at various places in the province. Weiser attended the first and third of these conferences at Germantown and at Oley, respectively, in the hope that out of their deliberations would develop some unity of religious teaching. He became an enthusiastic supporter of the count. Zinzendorf had written to Governor Thomas, before his arrival, requesting that some outstanding German should be designated to be present at the first conference in order that false reports concerning its proceedings would not be circulated. While we have no positive evidence that Weiser was the man designated by Thomas, his presence at the first conference and the close alliance between him and Zinzendorf would seem to point to that conclusion.

Zinzendorf became interested in the situation at Reed's church in Tulpehocken and installed a Moravian clergyman there while the parishoners awaited a Halle student promised by Zinzendorf to Weiser. We know what Weiser could not have known, that Zinzendorf was not in the good graces of Halle and could not, nor would he, have engaged a Lutheran clergyman from that institution. The installation of a Moravian clergyman as a Lutheran preacher proved to be merely one more frustration for Weiser in his attempts to secure a real clergyman for the Germans of Tulpehocken. But as long as Zinzendorf lingered in Pennsylvania, throughout the year 1742, Weiser remained completely under his spell, going so far as to plead the cause of the Moravians before the provincial authorities.

ARRIVAL OF MUHLENBERG

On November 25, 1742, Zinzendorf climaxed his work in Pennsylvania when, with Conrad Weiser present, he dedicated the First Moravian Church of Philadelphia. On the same day, there arrived at the port of Philadelphia a young man who was destined to become the founder of organized Lutheranism in America; the progenitor of a remarkable dynasty of Pennsylvania German heroes; the Moses who led men like Weiser out of the wilderness of religious anarchy, and not less significantly to become the son-in-law of Weiser himself. Henry

Melchoir Muhlenberg was not only a student from Halle — he was Halle transplanted in the new world. In his wake came that brilliant coterie of learned scholars such as Kurtz, Brunholtz, Handschuh and others.

Meanwhile the confusion among the Lutherans at Tulpehocken did not end with Weiser's withdrawal from their ranks. Dissension continued unabated for almost two decades after 1732. In 1743 the Stoever party, antagonistic to the Moravian elements which had seized control at Reeds Church constructed a new church a few miles to the southwest of Reeds. Officially this church is known as Christ Lutheran but is better known today as "Longs Church." Soon after the laying of the cornerstone of the new church its supporters fell out among themselves and the Tulpehocken Confusion was worse than ever.

Rev. Mr. Muhlenberg was summoned to Tulpehocken to attempt to settle the new troubles. During his visit there he resided with Conrad Weiser. The aging interpreter was charmed by the graces and the words of wisdom which marked the conversation of this true representative of Halle. But Weiser was not the only member of that remarkable household to be charmed. The dulcet notes of Muhlenberg's hymn singing entranced Weiser's eldest daughter, Anna Maria, and a romance developed which in 1745 culminated in the marriage of the young Halle clergyman and Anna Maria Weiser, thus founding one of the most remarkable families in early Pennsylvania history.

The arrival of Muhlenberg did not end the controversies which disgraced the worshippers in Tulpehocken. His arrival did serve to alienate Weiser entirely from his Moravian associations, and the latter's duties as a magistrate plunged him into still greater difficulties in religious matters. Weiser was one of the magistrates whose duty it was to adjudicate the unseemly mess in Lancaster in 1745 when a Moravian preacher named Nyberg had fomented trouble in the Lutheran congregation of that young city, ending in a case in litigation for possession of the church.

In the same year a new church was built on the site of the old Reed Church in Tulpehocken and Moravian clergymen posing as Lutherans installed themselves there. The true Lutherans entered suits at law for the possession of the church keys. Weiser acting as magistrate aligned himself on the side opposed to the Moravians. That controversy became so bitter that Weiser once remarked to friends that the Moravians were praying for his death.

At the time when these controversies were at their height Muhlenberg introduced a new clergyman, just arrived from Halle, to serve the newly built Christ Church. The young bachelor, Rev. Nicholas Kurtz, made his home at Weiser's. With great tact and forbearance and aided

by the frequent visits of Muhlenberg to the Weiser homestead, Kurtz succeeded in restoring peace and order among the Lutherans in the Tulpehocken area. The stalwart converts to Moravian doctrines built themselves a new church, now known as the North Heidelberg Union Church, a few miles to the eastward.

Altho Weiser severed his connection with the Ephrata Cloister he did not abandon all of the tenets which he had professed while he was connected with the Brethren. Muhlenberg, his son-in-law, was much concerned about Weiser's soul, and on numerous occasions attempted to persuade him to return to the full communion of the Lutheran church. The old pioneer refused to partake of the Lord's Supper or to attend services, or to observe Sunday as the Sabbath. He continued the Ephrata observance of Saturday as the Seventh Day. He still abstained from eating foods which were proscribed under the dietary laws of the Ephrata order.

WEISER'S RETURN TO LUTHERANISM

Such obstinacy exasperated Muhlenberg. Admitting his own failure and in fear of losing his temper, Muhlenberg appealed to his colleague, Brunholtz, to attempt to show Weiser the error of his ways. With circuitous help from Providence Brunholtz succeeded where Muhlenberg had failed. During the conversation Weiser admitted to Brunholtz that the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church were dear and precious to him; that he considered them essential to salvation and that he had never found anything better in other religions even though he had tried them all. However, he declared he wished to wait a while longer before taking communion, until he was certain that strife among Lutherans had ended.

This partial conversion was completed during the same evening. After the evening meal Weiser became violently ill. A stomach disorder which was chronic during the last two decades of his life caused intense alarm. His family and all neighboring clergymen were summoned to his bedside. In agonizing pain he received absolution, after confession and in the presence of Muhlenberg, Brunholtz, and Kurtz he asked for the Lord's Supper. With great effort he climbed from his bed and on bended knees the sacrament was administered to him. Thus Conrad Weiser returned to and was steadfast in the faith of his fathers. He lived twelve years more after his conversion, but religious perplexity had vanished.

A second daughter also married a Lutheran clergyman named Heintzleman. The untimely death of this son-in-law in 1756 grieved Weiser intensely. A letter of his to a friend describing the untimely

end is touching as it reveals the tortured soul of the man, seeking and finding solace in his rediscovered faith.

“. . . but my good friend I must acquaint you now with another piece of news which gives me and my old woman a great deal of trouble. to witt my dear Sonilaw Mr. Heintselman the younger lutherian minister in this town departed this life last sunday and is very much lamented by his Congregation, neighbours and by all most everybody that knew him — yesterday he was Burrued, the day before yesterday his widow was delivered of a healthy and well Shaped Son, you can think how moving It was to me and my wife (She has ben here this 4 weeks) to see the poor orphan & his dead father and the mother the widow Shedding tears over both However all this and a great many more affliction comes from the hand of a Merciful god, and I will bear with it. I worship him and pray that he would be pleased for his great names Saik to grant our Bleeding Country peace again, and in the meantime Comfort the fatherless. the wounded the dieing and teach our hands to fight Such a Cruel and Enemy, & would the people of pensilvania obey him he would rout out Enemy Soon.”

The young widow later remarried and her second husband was a Catholic. The broad tolerance which had grown upon the old man was beautifully portrayed in the terms of his will which carefully stipulated that this daughter was not to be discriminated against on account of her Catholic marriage.

In the course of his lifetime Weiser had been in close contact with every religion represented in colonial America. Under Mohican mountain, in Mohawk castles and by the Onondaga Council Fires he had seen savages worship Gitchee Manitou, the Great Spirit; his Quaker friends in Philadelphia must have puzzled him altho he never entered directly into any controversy with them; the Dutch Calvinists of New York were similar to the Reformed Germans who were his neighbors. His intimate friend, Rev. Richard Peters was an Anglican clergyman and altho on several occasions Weiser asked Peters for advice in matters of Christian conduct he never showed any inclination to join the English church. Mennonites and Dunkards lived in his neighborhood and he had some of them serving under him as privates in his corps of volunteers.

He knew the Presbyterians well, having had many dealings with the Scotch Irish settlers at Paxtang. In all of his religious waverings he did not leave the German national groups, always identifying himself with sects which were wholly German in origin.

In dealing with Catholics during his active years he shared the traditional prejudices of his people against all Papists. He went so far as to sign his name to a remonstrance against the Catholics of Goshen-

happen in 1755. Together with other magistrates he charged that the Goshenhoppen church secreted arms and ammunition as well as French Indians, lurking in the cellars awaiting a chance to strike the defenseless settlers. Ignoring all other signatories to the document, the Provincial Assembly summoned Weiser to attend and explain the charges more fully. After his examination the assembly came to the conclusion that the alarm was unfounded.

Each new page of Weiser's autobiography is introduced by a quotation from the Bible aptly chosen to symbolize some phase of his own experiences. One of these quotations from Lamentations V:19-22 will serve to sum up his religious life.

"Thou O Lord remainest forever; thy throne from generation to generation. Turn thou us unto Thee O Lord and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

Thru the bitter trials of his experiences he had found peace and contentment for his soul after many years of perplexity and confusion. His last years found two great contrasts in his life. In temporal things most of his early life had been devoted to pacifying and protecting the Indians but death came while he was helping to crush them. In spiritual matters he had engaged in many battles thruout his early career but as the shadows lengthened toward the evening of life he found solace and contentment in the bosom of the Faith of his Fathers.

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