

JACOB ALBRIGHT

The Evangelical Pioneer



JACOB ALBRIGHT



ROBERT SHERER WILSON, A.B., Th.B.

— 1940 —



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INTRODUCTION

"Jacob Albright, The Evangelical Pioneer," is a book which presents a comparatively brief but interesting record of the principal events in the life of Jacob Albright, founder of the original Evangelical Association, from which movement the present Evangelical Congregational Church has come. It is a record also of the particular time during which Albright went about proclaiming the message of the Gospel, the way of salvation through repentance and faith. It depicts some of the severe experiences of Albright and his co-laborers which they had to meet and endure from many who were so opposed to his ministry.

The book is an outgrowth of a series of articles which appeared in the columns of the United Evangelical, and which were written by Rev. Robert S. Wilson, A. B., Th. B., a minister in the Western Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church. He has given much time and effort to his study of the life and work of Jacob Albright. The Bibliography used in compiling the book includes all known books dealing with the life of Albright, as well as many articles, addresses and documents collected by himself and used in other libraries.

At the session of the General Conference of the church held in Bethany Church, Reading, Pa., in October, 1938, a resolution from the Western Conference was submitted in which attention was called to the "need for historical material of our Church for the Conference Course of Study," and suggesting the appointment of a committee to "prepare an up-to-date history of the Evangelical Congregational

Church, etc." The Committee on Publishing Interests recommended that the chairman of the Conference appoint a Committee of Three to read and examine the biographical material offered for publication by Rev. Wilson; and after doing so, may recommend said manuscript to the Board of Publication for publication in tract or book form with their endorsement. This was done; and the book is now presented as one that should find a place in the literature of the church, because of the information it contains about the man whose ministry in past years was so signally blessed of God.

In the hope that it will be given wide and careful reading by the members of our Church it is sincerely submitted.

REV. E. S. WOODRING,
REV. H. E. MESSERSMITH,
REV. G. A. MAUREY,
Committee.

Foreword and Acknowledgment

A curiosity to learn the history of the Evangelical Association has led the author to a study of the early days, from a mere personal interest. Finding that others were interested in this same subject, articles were submitted to the church periodical of the Evangelical Congregational Church, known as "THE UNITED EVANGELICAL." A request that this material be placed in a more permanent form has resulted in the attempt to write this book.

The author realizes his lack of ability to write as clearly as it may be desired, and trusts that the readers will bear with him as they read this work. If any good comes from the publication of this material, to God be the glory. The hope of the author is that some one may be helped spiritually as they read the devotion and consecration of the early preachers, especially the subject of this work—Jacob Albright.

Grateful acknowledgment is given to those who helped make this book possible. The fine interest of the Board of Publication and the Historical Committee has helped much to smooth out some of the difficulties involved. Their suggestions have improved this work.

In addition to the persons serving in an official capacity, the author desires to thank Rev. G. H. R. Dellecker, Rev. D. G. Reinhold, Rev. Thomas Knecht, Rev. W. K. Cassel, and Rev. E. S. Woodring, D. D., for information and constructive criticism of material from an historical standpoint. Professor Raymond Albright, of Reading, Pa., has furnished some

information which has not been previously published.

The author also desires to acknowledge the kindness of Mr. Roy H. Stetler, of the Evangelical Press, Harrisburg, Pa., for permission to use material from the following volumes:

- 1—History of the Evangelical Association, Vol. I, by W. W. Orwig (1858).
- 2—History of the Evangelical Association, Vol. I, II-R. Yeakel, 1894.
- 3—Landmarks of the Evangelical Association, S. C. Breyfogel, 1887.
- 4—Evangelical Annals, A. Stapleton, 1896.
- 5—Albright and His Co-Laborers, R. Yeakel, 1877.
- 6—Flashlights of Evangelical History, A. Stapleton, 1908.
- 7—Life of Bishop Seybert, S. P. Spreng, 1888.
- 8—History of Evangelical Church, S. P. Spreng, 1927.
- 9—Evangelical Missions, B. H. Neibel, 1919.
- 10—Evangelical Centennial Celebration, Kleinfeltersville, 1907.
- 11—Evangelical Centennial, New Berlin, Lewisburg, Pa., 1916.
- 12—Thumbnail Sketches of Evangelical Bishops, R. M. Veh, 1939.
- 13—Files of Evangelical, from 1887-1922.
- 14—Files of Evangelical-Messenger, 1936-1940.

In addition to the above mentioned bibliography used, by permission of the Evangelical Press, the following books have been used in research for this work:

- 15—Historic Manual of the Reformed Church, J. H. Dubbs, 1885.
- 16—Our Bishops, United Brethren in Christ, H. A. Thompson, 1903.
- 17—Landmark History of the United Brethren Church, Eberly, Albright and C. I. B. Brane, 1911.
- 18—The Evangelical Association, W. W. Orwig in Volume, "An Original History of the Religious Denominations, in the United States," edited by I. Daniel Rupp, 1844.
- 19—Files of United Evangelical, 1922-1940.
- 20—Notes from Church History Course in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, by Prof. Paul Wooley (Especially-Pietism).
- 21—History of the Christian Church, by Fisher.
- 22—Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, 1842.
- 23—Leben, Jacob Albrecht, Georg Miller, 1834 (German).

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE

The village cemetery at Kleinfeltersville, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, contains an old tombstone bearing an inscription in the German language, a translation reading as follows:

"To The Memory of the Evangelical Preacher,

Jacob Albright

Born May 1, 1759

Died May 18, 1808

Aged 49 years and 17 days

'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints.' Psalm 116:15."

This plain tombstone marks the earthly resting place of one of God's saints—an Evangelical Pioneer. Nearby is an old stone church erected in 1850 in memory of this same Jacob Albright.

Who is this man? What did he do?

The inscription tells us that he was born May 1, 1759. We learn that this event took place at Fox Hill, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, a community located four miles from Pottstown, in the direction of Boyertown. This place is so near the Berks County line, that some historians claim that county for his birth, but authentic records discovered recently by Professor Raymond Albright, of Albright College, (great-great-grandson of Jacob) indicate Montgomery County as the correct location.

John Albright, a respectable and industrious farmer was the father of Jacob. Records in the Lutheran Church of New Hanover, or sometimes called Faulkner Swamp indicate the family as mem-

bers of the congregation. John was born in Coburg Germany, but with thousands of other people of his native land emigrated to Pennsylvania. Passage was made on the sailship *JOHNSON*, from Rotterdam via Deal to Philadelphia, arriving on September 19, 1732. At least three hundred Germans were aboard, including his wife Anna, to whom he was wed in 1724, and younger brothers Jacob and Ludwig.

These people came to America to escape religious persecution in the fatherland. The Thirty Years war brought invaders into the Palatinate, making that area almost like a wilderness. The destitution was described as being so great, that the people were driven to eating the flesh of dogs, cats, rats, mice, frogs and carcasses. Starving people killed each other and ate up the slain; graves were even violated and bodies eaten. In addition to this a fearful pestilence broke out among the suffering people. French and Bavarian invasions destroyed harvests. By 1649 only about one fiftieth of the population remained.

In 1673, Louis XIV of France continued to ravage the country, and again in 1680, continuing until 1695, ruining the prosperity of the people for a generation.

In addition to these miseries imposed from without, there was a religious persecution and trouble within. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 recognized only three confessions of faith in the German empire—The Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed. Roman Catholic Prince Electors who took possession of the government in the Rhenish Provinces, were influenced by the Jesuits to persecute the Reformed people there. From 1690 to 1799, taxes were forced

upon the people to support a scandalous and extravagant government. The civil and ecclesiastical distress compelled thousands to leave their ancestral homes.

Those who did not have religious convictions according to one of the three recognized confessions of faith, were mercilessly persecuted. The Mennonites, Schwenkfelders and even the Pietists, who remained in the sphere of Lutheranism were regarded with suspicion and practically driven from Germany. These events caused many thousands of people to go to the new world—to America.

William Penn, the Quaker, though an Englishman, had traveled extensively in Germany, and invited the persecuted Germans to his colony in America, guaranteeing them political and religious freedom.

The first shipload of German immigrants arrived in Philadelphia on the British ship Concord (to the Germans what the Mayflower was to the English), October 6, 1683. Under the leadership of Franz Daniel Pastorius, a capable pioneer, a settlement was established at Germantown, north of the city of Philadelphia. At first it was referred to in ridicule as "poor man's town," for it consisted largely of small log cabins, the best these pioneers could build. But today Germantown which is now a part of Philadelphia has among its citizens many descendants of these early German pioneers, who are millionaires.

From this beginning, the immigration of the German people to America increased rapidly. Queen Anne, of England, in 1708 had invited many of the persecuted Palatinates to England, where she at-

tempted to quarter the twelve thousand that responded, in London. Seeing this was impossible she sent the first group of three thousand to America in 1710 where they were settled in New York State. This group laid the foundations for the towns of Newburg, Rhinebeck, New Palatine and others. But because of the attitude of the Provincial government of New York colony, they did not enjoy the same freedom as their fellow Germans in Pennsylvania. The New York colonists moved up the Hudson to the Mohawk and Canajoharie valleys of central New York, but there they were troubled by the Indians on the one hand, and the British officials on the other, so that a large number of them under the leadership of Conrad Weiser, went south into Berks County, Pennsylvania, where a settlement was made at the present Womelsdorf. Here these industrious people found their long desired peace, and decent treatment from the government of the Penn family.

Thousands of German people came to this colony of William Penn; so many that when Jacob Albright was born in 1759, the entire southeastern section of Pennsylvania with the exception of Chester County, was occupied principally by them. Their numbers were estimated at 280,000 by 1783.

Among these hardy pioneers, were the Albrights. Their life was simple, not encumbered with many of the luxuries of a later day. Educational facilities of that time were confined primarily to the home and church. Jacob Albright received catechetical instruction in the Lutheran Church of his community. Though no public schools were available to him, a private school gave him the opportu-

ity to learn to speak and read the German as well as the English language.

"These German settlers continued to speak their own German dialect, chiefly the Palatine, in the New World, but contacts with English-speaking people resulted in a modification of the original dialect into what is now generally, but erroneously, termed Pennsylvania Dutch.

"Looked upon by many as uncouth, scholars today look upon it as an historically interesting dialect, possessing force, freshness and compactness, and with a literature not devoid of beauty." writes Professor Preston Barba, of the German Language Department, of Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.

CHAPTER II.

ALBRIGHT IN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

By the time Jacob Albright had reached seventeen years of age, the colonies were engaged in a revolt against the mother country—England. To the settlement of Fox Hill, came not only news of the conflict, but even the sound of cannon could be heard from the battles of Crooked Billet, Chadd's Ford, Brandywine and Germantown. With the eye could be seen the bleeding patriot army as they came to camp in the Perkiomen valley and at Valley Forge.

Our records do not indicate the effect of this war upon young Albright, but we can imagine how his patriotism was probably stirred in the midst of such a conflict. Careful research of the war records by Rev. A. Stapleton, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, do reveal Jacob Albright as a member of the Pennsylvania Militia. This group of men was organized and equipped by the state for emergencies. Some of these men fought side by side with the continental soldiers in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania campaigns. Valiant service is credited to them at Germantown and Brandywine. However, the records first indicate Jacob Albright as a member of the company of Capt. John Witz, which was organized at Pottstown, in 1781. In this company Jacob Albright was the drummer, and his brother John, the fifer.

In 1782, we find Jacob Albright listed in the active service of a small detachment of Berks County militia, who were placed in the command of Sgt. Geo. Eisenbis, to guard the Hessian prisoners in Reading, Pa.

CHAPTER III.

ALBRIGHT'S HOME LIFE

When Jacob Albright reached the age of twenty-six, he was united in marriage with Catherine Cope. Soon after the marriage he moved with his bride to a farm in West Cocalico Township in northeastern Lancaster County (near Ephrata). There he farmed, and also engaged in the manufacture of tile. Buildings of that day were roofed with tile, and a proficient tilemaker could find a very lucrative business in this trade. Albright became a proficient tilemaker and was known as a very industrious and methodical business man. His strict honesty and punctuality commanded the respect of his neighbors and customers, among whom he was known as "the honest tiler." It is believed that he would have become a wealthy man, through his business, had he not entered the ministry. Even after he started to preach, he returned home at intervals to make enough tile to support his family while he was gone. When he died, he left an estate valued at about four thousand dollars, which was considered a fortune for that day.

Nine children were born in this home, all but three dying before the father. Two sons and a daughter survived him. It was at the funeral services for some of his children, that Jacob Albright was awakened to his spiritual needs.

CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS OF ALBRIGHT'S DAY

In order to understand the spiritual experience of Albright, we must learn more about the general spiritual conditions of his day. These German immigrants were poor people, some so poor they had to work as servants to Englishmen, in order to pay their passage across the Atlantic ocean. Others were sold into service by brokers, who often swindled these people out of their few personal possessions. This poverty of the people, seemed to prevent the building of churches and the support of pastors. Only a few qualified preachers were in their colonies. Some who attempted to serve as pastors were ex-convicts who had escaped from Europe, and merely preached to cover up their past life. The churches these men established had a low spiritual life. Of course there were a few exceptions to this among the pastors.

In 1754 Rev. Henry M. Muhlenberg, of the Lutheran Church, wrote from America to the Lutherans of Halle, Germany, describing the conditions in this country which made his work difficult. He quoted Jeremiah 5:30, 31, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Muhlenberg tells of the "Newlanders" or "soul-sellers" who brought German colonists to America, sending with them what Muhlenberg calls "some so-called preachers whom they have picked up, such as have been either deposed from office in Germany,

or committed some villainy, or have never been in office, or have been only riotous students. Now, when these outlaws arrive, some disorderly Lutherans purchase them by paying their fare. For this consideration they must then act for some time as ministers of the gospel and administer the sacraments, whether they have been ordained to the holy office or not. Afterwards they are dismissed and new ones are similarly brought. These vagabonds then perambulate through the country to seek their bread, and in order to accomplish their object the more easily they join themselves to those restless spirits aforementioned (wicked men who disregard all order and defame the teachers and regular ways of worship), and sneak about in the congregations of the regular ministers and stir up members against the preachers; they unite in defaming that of which they know nothing, but call themselves the genuine Evangelical preachers, and their followers, the only orthodox Lutherans."

This description of conditions in the churches will easily explain the drift from better morals, and high religious convictions. We will let some of the other Lutheran clergymen of that day describe the conditions in their own words. A godly Lutheran pastor of Hagerstown, Md., named Rev. J. G. Schmucker, D.D., writes in 1794, "the state of things in the German churches were a gloomy aspect, and that only a small number of the ministers composing the Synod (to which he belonged), were in his opinion converted men." Sunday Schools, bible classes, and prayer meetings were then unknown. Night meetings in the churches were regarded as tending to

the night for dancing, playing cards and affairs of fanaticism, though no one thought it unusual to use that nature. The cock-pit, the race course, the long bullet-lane, the dog and bear fights were more numerous attended than the house of God. The word 'conversion' was practically unknown, and one heard of few revivals among these German people. Their spiritual life was indeed dark.

Pastor Helmuth, of Lancaster, Pa., writes in April, 1771, that a few souls had been awakened by the grace of God, but he comments, "How small is this number in comparison with the great mass. True conversion is to the majority such an unknown and strange thing that when Jesus calls, stirs up and awakens, they will not admit, at least not from the heart, that it is He, but, on the contrary, declare it to be imagination, morbid fancy, yea even the work of the devil who intended to rob one of his faith, not knowing that one has no faith, but is submerged in the deepest unbelief."

In the following year 1772, the same pastor writes, "Iniquity reveals itself among old and young only too plainly. What is most deplorable in this matter is the fact that such wretched people notwithstanding their levity call themselves 'Christians,' even LUTHERAN Christians. They even believe that they belong to the best class of Christians. The blessing of the divine Word drops upon hot stones and cannot demonstrate its power as far as they are concerned. They run only to the church and demand permission to come to the table of the Lord, although this does not belong to such swine (as the Word of God calls them). That such subjects yet boast the

name of 'Christian' is only possible because Church discipline is being so utterly neglected."

John Seybert (who later became a Bishop of Evan. Assoc.) writes of conditions in his home community near Manheim, Pa. He says, "About the year 1800 the German population of Pennsylvania consisted chiefly of Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, Mennonites, Old School and New School Baptists (Dunkers), Schwenkfelders, etc. The majority of Catholics, Lutherans and partly also the Reformed were guilty of gross violation of God's law; profanity, Sabbath desecration, drunkenness, etc., being quite common among them. Baptism, confirmation, with an occasional reception of the Lord's Supper constituted the essentials of their religion. The preachers themselves, with but few exceptions, were wicked and hostile toward converted people. The Mennonites and Dunkers in general had a more pious exterior; in reality they were nevertheless, enemies to the true experimental religion, which manifested itself among them and also among the Schwenkfelders when persons were converted to God."

Concerning Seybert's own community of Manheim he says, "The Roman Catholics, Lutheran and German Reformed Churches had their children baptised in infancy. When they reached the age of 12 to 20 years, they attended catechetical instruction, and were afterward confirmed on which occasion the minister demanded of them, in the presence of God and all the people to renounce Satan and sin and to serve God faithfully until death; then they were consecrated by the laying on of hands and declared to

be Christians. This usually took place on Easter Sunday, but on Easter Monday these Christians could be seen in the ball room, at the drinking places, at gambling tables, as also on Christmas, New Year and Pentecost. The majority of these pretended Christians, thus manufactured, were a rough and wicked set—swearers, Sabbath breakers, and inebriates. Even some Church officials were drunkards, liars, and guilty of dishonesty and other sins, so that the saying became current: 'No one is fit to be a Church officer, unless he has an illegitimate child.'

This picture from the time of Seybert differs little if any, from the earlier days of Albright. The profession of Christianity had degenerated to a mere form, rather than a faith which worked. It was not because the churches of the day had unorthodox creeds, but the orthodox creeds were not applied to Christian experience and life.

But in the midst of this dark, formal and lifeless religion, a gleam of light shone forth, among the German speaking churches of Eastern Pennsylvania. This gleam of light received much of its power from the Pietist movement of Germany. It was in Germany that Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses, which started the Protestant reformation. Through his leadership, as well as other contemporaries, the church was purged of much false doctrine. The creeds exalted faith instead of works as the means to salvation. But the emphasis went no farther than the creeds, and the lives of the people were not transformed. Head belief was emphasized instead of heart belief. A definite experience of re-

lationship to God, was not generally known though small groups here and there sought to have a definite Christian experience. Some of these groups became mystical and strayed away from the foundations of true Christianity. But another group called the Pietists did valuable work in presenting true Christianity to the people.

One of the leaders in this movement was Dr. Jacob Spener, a Lutheran preacher in Germany, who felt that something was lacking in his spiritual life. He was born in 1635, and entered the ministry of the church, without experiencing conversion. His ministry was spiritually impoverished, until God touched his heart, giving his ministry a new spiritual impetus. He saw the need for more spiritual power in the churches, and realized that the Sunday services were not sufficient to remedy the situation. Meetings were established in the homes of the people, which he called 'schools of piety.' In these gatherings, the Bible was studied to ascertain what God wanted of his children, and how they could be more pious. For this reason the people became known as pietists. These services were very similar to some prayer meetings or Bible study classes of the twentieth century church. Larger groups met somewhat in the manner of our Bible conferences. Spener discovered that when the people began to pray together, their spiritual life developed. He wrote a book in which he set forth the idea that ministers needed moral and spiritual training as well as theological. Evangelism was emphasized in his services. The Lutheran Church of that day taught that the new birth took place at the time of baptism. Spener dis-

agreed with this and taught that the new birth could take place only at conscious conversion. He believed in the necessity of an early conversion, rather than putting it off until it would be no longer possible. In addition to the experimental conversion, he believed in living a pious life afterwards. He forbade his followers from engaging in the amusements of his day.

Because of his method and teaching, the Lutheran Council of Erfurt expelled him from the church. though he was orthodox in the faith. His difference in practice, which was responsible for his exclusion, opened up the way for him to be taken to the realm of Frederick I, the pious Elector of Brandenburg, where he was made a court preacher, the highest ecclesiastical position in the realm. There he preached for many years, until he became pastor of St. Nicolai Church in Berlin, where he served until his death in 1705.

One of his prominent followers was August Heriman Francke. This man had a more dominant personality and excelled Spener in leadership. Francke was converted while studying the Bible with another minister. In Leipsig, where he lived, he soon after formed Bible study groups. He was also a Lutheran pastor, and as a result of his pietistic efforts, was expelled from the Lutheran Church. In 1694 when Frederick I established the University of Halle at Erfurt, Francke was called to be one of the teachers. In his classes he emphasized the spiritual life, more than the theological content. This seemed necessary because of the great lack of spiritual life at the time. He taught the necessity of conversion

coupled with a spiritual experience, and resulting in sanctification. He would also forbid the outward indulgence in sinful amusements, and the wearing of worldly dress.

It was from the University of Halle, controlled by these Pietists that the first foreign missionaries of the Protestant Church went forth. These people believed that the heathen were lost and needed salvation, and that God wanted his own followers to carry on this work of evangelization. From Denmark was contributed the first funds to send missionaries to India, but the workers went from Halle University. This Danish-Halle mission as it was called became the pioneer of all modern missionary enterprise. Through this same movement Zinzendorf led the Moravian Church on its extensive missionary work. The Church had formerly been evangelical in doctrine, but this group was evangelistic, putting the doctrine into practice.

This movement swept throughout Germany. The German Reformed Church of the Palatinate section was greatly influenced by the movement but is not entirely the result of it. This Reformed Church differed from the Reformed Churches in other sections. This difference was felt in the United States, and can be traced even in this day. Samuel Guldin, the first German Reformed preacher to come to America, had been expelled in 1710 from the Reformed Council of Berne, Switzerland, because he was a Pietist. Some historians even claim that the Heidelberg Catechism, written in 1563 was a result of the Pietistic movement. This group in the Reformed

Church started the University of Herborn, another stronghold of evangelical learning.

Muhlenberg, the founder of the Lutheran Church in America, was a graduate of Halle University, and was greatly influenced by the Pietists. German Pietism, as a movement is the source of practically all of the evangelistic and missionary efforts for a long period.

When Francke died in 1727, the movement lacked a spiritual leader, and rationalism crept in, causing the influence of the movement to be destroyed in the swing away from sound doctrine, to a mystical emphasis. But the evangelistic and missionary fervor which came as a fruit of the movement did not die, but continues today to send forth its influence.

In England, Pietism greatly influenced the Wesleys and Whitfield. The Wesleys had been brought up under religious conditions very similar to those of Germany. The Anglican Church had thrown off the domination of Rome, and had adopted an evangelical creed. But the church put forth no evangelistic efforts, and failed to touch most of the unsaved. The Wesleyan revival in England sought to bring about a more spiritual and evangelistic life in the church, and was not intended as the formation of a new denomination.

The story of the Wesleyan revival is well known, and needs no repetition here, except to point out certain facts. The Wesleys and George Whitfield met together while students at Oxford University, to read the Bible and other religious writings and to pray and discuss how they might live an orderly, methodical Christian life. Their fellow students

dubbed them "methodists." John and Charles Wesley went to the new American colony in Georgia, as ministers of the Anglican Church, but as the work did not succeed as they expected, they returned to England. They had contact with Moravian missionaries in this country, as well as on the ship. Comparing the peace of heart and zeal which these Moravians had with their own religious life, they found something lacking. Back in England John Wesley began to attend Moravian services, and in one of these meetings, Martin Luther's "Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans" was read. This served to bring light to John Wesley's heart, and caused him to realize the true meaning of justification by faith. This was the experience which started the Wesleyan revival. Note how it came through the Moravians who had in turn been influenced by the German Pietists.

An old college friend named George Whitfield, was also an Anglican priest. His great passion for souls is traced to the reading of books written by Francke. Whitfield discovered that he could not reach the unevangelized through the regular Sunday services, so he went out into the fields to preach to the people. Through the efforts of the Wesleys and Whitfield, thousands were converted to God, and the evangelistic work spread through England, and the colonies. The Wesleys were Arminian in theology and Whitfield was Calvinistic, thus preventing the two from continuing together for very long, but both groups brought an evangelistic emphasis in addition to the orthodoxy of the Anglican Church.

It is important that we mention the origin of the

Methodist class meeting, because of the similarity of Albright's class meetings. After Wesley's preaching brought many conversions to the Lord, he found it necessary to give the converts some spiritual nourishment. The people were urged to go to the Anglican churches for regular services; but in addition they were to attend class meetings, composed of small groups under lay leadership, in which meeting they found spiritual food, enabling them to grow as Christians. These class meetings led to the separation of the Methodists from the Anglican Church.

In the latter part of 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley in London, asking him to spend time with them in prayer as they were deeply convicted of sin. Wesley appointed Thursday as the day when such persons might come together for prayer. These Thursday evening meetings became known as "The United Society." They were formed as "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

The division of these people into small groups came as the result of a financial drive in Bristol, England, in 1742. A meeting house had been erected there, but funds were not forthcoming for the payment of construction. Captain Foy of a sea-going ship suggested that if every member of the society would give a penny a week, the debt could be met easily. Some objected that all the members could not pay this much. The Captain was a member of the society, and suggested that ten or twelve

members be assigned to him, and after giving what they could each week, he would make up the difference. Other leaders made the same offer, and the result was that all the members of the society (for it was not yet a church) were grouped together in classes of ten or twelve members each, and a class leader appointed over each.

As the leaders visited the members of their class to receive the contributions, they began to report the moral and spiritual life of the people to the preachers. One was found in drink, another quarrelled with his wife. When Wesley heard of this, he said, "This is the very thing I wanted. The leaders are the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls of the brethren." All of the societies were then organized into classes with leaders.

In the beginning the leaders were to visit the homes, in order to obtain a spiritual insight into the lives of those under their care. It was often difficult to find the members at home, or to talk freely with them when found there. Sometimes the whole household was together and all spiritual matters could not be openly discussed. Sometimes it was necessary to bring neighbors together because of quarreling, as well as to overcome misunderstandings of various kinds. It was then agreed that each class should meet together, giving each member an equal advantage. Advice or reproof was given as the need required, and quarrels were made up, misunderstandings removed, and after an hour or so spent thus the classes concluded with prayer and thanksgiving. Wesley testifies, "It can scarce be

conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to 'bear one another's burdens,' and naturally to 'care for each other.'"

When the English colonists came to America, Methodist converts were among their number. Whitfield preached in America on several visits with great success. John Wesley never visited America after the Wesleyan revival started, but sent Asbury in 1771. In 1784 Coke was ordained Bishop to superintend the work in this country. After the Revolutionary war the church organization had to be separated from the Methodists in England.

Both the German Pietist and Wesleyan influences were felt in America, and especially in Eastern Pennsylvania where Jacob Albright lived. The Pietist trained Muhlenberg organized the Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania in 1748. Here and there were Lutheran pastors who conducted revivals, and preached conversion, but these churches were in the minority. One of these pietists named Anthony J. Henkel was pastor of the New Hanover Church in Montgomery County where the Albright parents were members, when Jacob was born.

The German Reformed Church felt the Pietist influence, even more than the Evangelical Lutherans. A Coetus or Synod was organized in this country, in 1746 by Rev. Michael Schlatter, who was sent by the orthodox Synod of Holland for this purpose. Had it not been for the new rationalism of Germany which

crept into the Reformed Church in America, the story might have been different.

One of the pastors who came with Schlatter in 1752, was Philip William Otterbein, a native of Dillenbourg, Nassau, Germany (b. June 3, 1726). Otterbein was educated at the University of Herborn, under the influence of Pietism, and ordained to the ministry in 1749. His outstanding ability placed him in charge of the second largest German Reformed congregation in America, which was located at Lancaster, Pa. During his six year pastorate there, he experienced the witness of the spirit, giving him a greater zeal to preach conversion and a spiritual experience. This pastorate was followed by two years at Tulpehocken, five years at Frederick, Md., and nine years at York, Pa. During these years he led a strong evangelistic movement in the Reformed Church. His activities also took him outside of his own denomination, where he met others who were like minded. About the year 1767, he attended a "Big Meeting" at Isaac Long's barn, near Neffsville, Pa. (Lancaster County), where he heard a converted Mennonite preacher named Martin Boehm. After listening to the message of this 'plain preacher,' Otterbein arose and publicly embraced Boehm, saying "We are brethren." From that time, the two groups worked together in proclaiming the gospel. The Reformed group was cultured, educated and dressed in the fashion of the day. The Mennonite group though expelled from the Mennonite church, dressed plainly, disregarded education and organization. Yet the movement continued to reach the German speaking people for Christ.

This work was considered irregular by some of the Reformed pastors and forced the leaders to carry on much of the evangelistic work outside of the churches. Otterbein was called to serve a congregation in Baltimore, which had withdrawn from the Reformed Church of that city. Though the Reformed denomination claims the congregation, the local church was practically independent, and organized somewhat after the fashion of Methodist churches, following a visit from Asbury. This church was the nucleus for an evangelistic brotherhood formed in Otterbein's home in 1789 which was the beginning of the "United Brethren in Christ," a group which recognized Otterbein as their head until his death in 1813.

This movement was not intended to be a new denomination, but merely an evangelistic movement which went beyond the denominational circles. Otterbein maintained his membership in the Reformed Church until his death, though he acted somewhat irregularly. Martin Boehm consented to have his name on the records of a Methodist Church near his home, in order to be able to attend the Methodist class meetings. But Boehm did not believe in recording names on membership records.

All of the evangelistic preachers of the Reformed Church were not identified with the Otterbein movement, as some remained active in the denomination, or became independent of denominations. It was through the preaching of Rev. Anthony Hautz, a 'converted' preacher who had been trained by Rev. William Hendel, the Reformed pastor at Lancaster,

Pa., that Jacob Albright was converted. There is where this whole story fits into the life of Jacob Albright.

CHAPTER V.

CONVERSION OF JACOB ALBRIGHT

Though baptised, confirmed and instructed in the Lutheran Church Albright describes his spiritual life, "I walked frivolously in the path of a carnal life, rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and thought little about the object of human life, regarding not the duty of man, much less that of a Christian. I lived as though this little span of duration would last eternally, and committed many sins, for which God threatened severe punishment." He claims that his conscience condemned him daily, and an accusing voice was heard to admonish him. As the days went on, this became even more forceful. Though he realized his sinful state, his efforts to reform were powerless.

In 1790, several of his children died of dysentery. Though evidence indicates that both Jacob Albright and his wife were members of the Bergstrasse Lutheran Church as late as 1791, some think that Mrs. Albright adhered to the Reformed Church of the community. The pastor of the Reformed Church was Rev. Anthony Hautz, a 'converted' preacher. He had been licensed about 1786 by the Coetus, as the assembly of the Church was called, on the recommendation of the congregations at Cocalico, Muddy Creek, Reyers, and Seltenreich, where he had been serving as an assistant pastor. Along with the recommendation for licensing, the congregation requested him for their regular pastor. This man Hautz was called upon to preach the funeral sermon for these children who died, in the Albright home.

To indicate the type of preacher this man was, we

need but tell the often repeated story in various forms, which is told about Hautz when he preached at a place called Lansing. He frequently preached on the subject of repentance. One member thought that he should change to another subject, and said, "You have preached a good while on repentance. Preach something else." And Hautz replied, "As soon as you repent." His strong evangelistic efforts required him to change pastorates frequently in his church.

As a result of this funeral sermon Albright was converted. Softened by grief, his heart was open to hear the comfort of the gospel. He realized his need more and more, and came to understand that Christ could meet that need.

To know one's need is the first step in conversion. Everything that happened in Albright's life, seemed to impress this need on him more and more. In regard to this experience he says, "On several occasions I was in great danger of losing my life, but was so suddenly and remarkably rescued that I was filled with astonishment. Involuntarily I felt strong emotions of gratitude to God for his merciful providence, so that my heart was constrained to praise the Lord. However, as often as I lifted up my eyes to heaven, I heard the voice of conscience saying, 'You are not worthy of salvation; the only offering which pleases God is the pure heart.'" His catechetical instruction had instilled in him a profound reverence for God, and the things pertaining to God, but yet he had not realized the forgiveness of his sins.

The second step in his conversion came when Al-

bright repented. He realized that he was a miserable sinner, an enemy and an offender against a righteous God—a righteous judge who will judge every good deed, and also punish every sinful act; yes even every sinful thought. He was struck with fear and the judgment of God loomed before him. He wanted to cry to the hills to fall on him and cover him from the presence of a holy God. With such a realization of need, he resolved to forsake his evil ways and order his life so he could quiet his conscience. He felt the need of prayer and the pouring out of his heart before God. He says that he fell on his knees and tears of bitter sorrow flowed down his cheeks, and a lengthy and fervent prayer ascended to the throne of God for grace and the remission of sins. This was repentance. A man must feel his need to repent before he really feels his need of a Saviour.

But repentance was not enough. Merely weeping and crying about one's sins will not help a person. The scripture says, we must bring forth "fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). Man must not only be sorry for what he has done, but go farther, to a change of heart and a radical reformation of the life. Albright continued to pray until he could submit his will entirely to God. He did not find peace of heart, until he talked to a neighbor by name of Adam Reigel who helped him realize the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Reigel was an independent preacher, though not in charge of a church. He served to Albright, as Annanias served to Saul (Acts 9:10-19).

Albright describes the blessing that he enjoyed, "In the place of carnality came a holy love to God,

his Word, and all his true children. Gradually every anguish of heart was removed, and comfort and the blessed peace of God pervaded my soul. God's spirit bore witness with my spirit, that I was a child of God: one joyful experience following another, and such a sweet peace now filled my soul as no pen can describe, or mortal tongue can express, in comparison with which the greatest earthly happiness I previously enjoyed, was only wretchedness and deceit. Now my prayer was not mere supplication but praise and heart thanksgiving were also brought as an offering, accompanied with tears of joy, to the Giver of every good gift."

Albright's conversion was genuine according to Biblical standards. He was convicted of sin, repented for his sins, and then trusted Christ as his Saviour, and received a great blessing. These three steps are necessary in every conversion, though they may take different forms.

CHAPTER VI.

SAVED TO SERVE

The same day when Albright found peace of soul in Reigel's home, he immediately wanted to win others to Christ. On his way home, he spoke to the first person he met, who happened to be a Dunkard preacher of the community who did not believe in conversion. Albright said to him, "You must be born again or you will be damned." Such a statement made the Dunkard very angry. He protested to Reigel, but Reigel could only reply, "There is no other way, ye must be born again." The Dunkard preacher was later converted.

A lasting friendship continued between Albright and Reigel. Many times they met together to read the Bible, pray and speak of spiritual things. Through this spiritual communion, Albright gained in spiritual power.

Albright's new experience showed him that something was lacking in the Lutheran church of his community. They called him a fanatic, because of his belief in conversion. Very little spiritual fellowship or spiritual nourishment for growth was found in his own church.

The United Brethren movement did not seem to reach into his particular community. Then too, the lack of definite organization and discipline did not appeal to Albright. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ was not organized at that time, and the followers were but loosely associated together.

In 1780 a Methodist evangelist by name of Benjamin Abbot had come through that section, preaching with extraordinary power. Though he preached

English, friends exhorted in German, and many Germans were converted. Along with Bishop Asbury, they organized several English class meetings. One of these was in Albright's neighborhood, and his neighbor, Isaac Davies was the class leader of the group. Albright began to attend their services, and took a great interest in them. He found the Methodists to be zealous and well disciplined. Realizing his need for the Christian fellowship which such a group offered, he became identified with the Methodist class. One handicap was the fact that the Methodist services were conducted in the English language, but with careful study and effort, Albright learned the language sufficiently to become acquainted with their doctrine and discipline.

He speaks of his Methodist connections in this way, "In the class and prayer meetings of the Methodists my joy in God increased continually, and I received power to pray impressively in public to the edification of myself and others. Thus I obtained more and more strength, and occasionally at the request of my fellow Christians, I delivered an exhortation, which did not remain fruitless."

He was later licensed to be an exhorter, which permitted him to speak in services more frequently. He was gifted in the ability to teach the Word of God, and became a frequent speaker at the services in his community as well as in nearby places. This license was never revoked or surrendered, and in a sense, Albright remained a Methodist until his death, though not in full communion.

CHAPTER VII.

ALBRIGHT ON SANCTIFICATION

In the Methodist church, Albright heard much about the Wesleyan doctrine of Sanctification. John Wesley taught that the heart and life needed to be cleansed as well as the external side of man. Important texts used were I Corinthians 7:1 and I Thessalonians 5:23, 24. Albright learned the need to be cleansed spiritually. He believed that he must not merely have the Holy Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit must have all of him. His spiritual struggles brought forth strong testimony.

He says, "I strove to be temperate, and exercised myself much in fasting and prayer, which I always found to be the best means in the hour of trial, for I had very severe temptations, and inward struggles, and when in a strait whether or not to heed the counsel of others, I continued more earnestly and constantly in prayer, which always helped me to overcome my enemies. However, I also found that the encouragement and advice of true, pious and experienced servants of God were a strong support. In this manner I became more mature in the knowledge of God: and by means of my struggles in trials, and the victory which the grace of God afforded me, my faith and determination to do good became firmer; and through persevering and fervent prayer I realized constantly greater trust."

The blessing which filled his life is described, "I attained to a state in which my heart was almost continually lifted up to God, and realized the ability to be temperate in all things, to love God supremely and my neighbor as myself; for God, and Christ

through his Spirit, quickened my soul, so that I did not live unto myself, but to the glory of God, and the welfare of humanity." This is what he called sanctification, and his life, according to all indications, corresponded to his profession. Albright never made any claim that he was so perfect, he could not make any mistakes, or that he never disobeyed the Lord. But Albright was so consecrated to the Lord, that he was set apart for service through the Sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

Father Dreisbach, who knew Albright personally, many years later told Reuben Yeakel, who was writing the story of Albright's life, "Albright did not merely make a profession, but he lived in the fullness of entire sanctification. He had complete victory over his passions. Everything about him seemed to be under the control of the Holy Spirit, and he lived in perfect love to God and man."

Though such a condition seems impossible, from the human standpoint, we find it all promised in the scriptures. This condition came as a result of an experience, four years after his conversion.

An incident from his later ministry may illustrate Albright's belief in regard to this doctrine. One of his co-laborers, Rev. Geo. Miller was sorely tempted to give up the ministry. Albright asked him if he had experienced the grace of sanctification. Miller replied that he could not answer in the affirmative. "Then," said Albright, "you cannot preach sanctification with power." He exhorted Miller to earnestly seek this grace without delay, or he would not be able to endure the severe trials he was passing

through. He called sanctification a grace. The Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." II Cor. 12:9. There are many blessings of grace, and we should seek them.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALBRIGHT'S CALL TO PREACH

Jacob Albright's use of his Methodist license as exhorter, led him to greater realms of service. This was a stepping stone to his entrance into the ministry. He became a minister not to have a job, or to enter a profession, but because he felt a definite call to preach.

We will hear his own testimony as to why he preached. He says, "I spent several years in a state of grace, and served God with joy and gladness, and realized his blessing in the bestowment of increased knowledge of Him. A burning love to God and all his children, and towards my fellow-men generally, pervaded my being. Through this love which the peace of God shed abroad in my heart, I came to see the great decline of true religion among the Germans of America, and felt their sad condition very keenly. I saw in all men, even in the deeply depraved, the creative hand of the Almighty. I recognized them as my brethren, and heartily desired that they might be as happy as I was. In this state of mind I frequently cast myself upon my knees, and implored God with burning tears, that he might lead my German brethren into a knowledge of the truth, that he would send them true and exemplary teachers, who would preach the gospel in its power to awaken the dead and slumbering religious professors out of their sleep of sin, and bring them again to the true life of godliness so that they, too, might become partakers of the blessed peace with God and the fellowship of the saints in light. In this way I prayed daily for the welfare of my brethren.

And while I thus held intercourse with God, *all at once it seemed to become light in my soul*; I heard as it were, a voice within, saying: 'Was it mere chance that the wretched condition of your brethren affected your heart so much? Was it chance, that your heart was so overwhelmed with sympathy for the salvation of your brethren? Is not the hand of Him visible here, whose wisdom guides the destiny of individuals, as well as that of nations? What, if his infinite love, which desires to lead each soul into Abraham's bosom, had chosen you, to lead your brethren into the path of life, and to prepare them to share in the mercy of God.' I now began to realize more peace and more assurance. I felt a holy confidence that my prayers were acceptable, and I heard as it were, the voice of God: 'Go work in my vineyard; proclaim to my people the Gospel in its primitive purity, with energy and power, trusting in my fatherly love, that all those who hear and believe shall have part in my grace.'

"Though these things were very clear in my mind," Albright continues, "yes nature suggested many doubts. Though this call did not seem to me to be in conflict with God and His Word, yet I argued, I am an uneducated and very ordinary man; how many persons of great gifts and learning there are, who would be much better instruments than I am, persons who possess a better presence, and would make a better impression. During such reflections my courage failed me, and then I prayed earnestly, that God might give this commission to someone else, better qualified and worthier than I was.

"To such excuses the voice of my conscience constantly answered that on my part there must be a confiding obedience, without murmuring. God's grace would be sufficient; would qualify those whom the Lord had chosen as instruments of his all comprehensive love, with power from on high, and give great blessings and success to their efforts. Conscience also glowingly pictured the joy and the reward which were awaiting me, if I were obedient to the divine call, and on the other hand, showed me the injury and ruin which would result to me if I refused to obey the voice of God, and submit to his will. In the distant future I saw the glittering crown that awaited me if I obeyed, as I was often clearly convinced that I should, the call of the Lord, to proclaim his Kingdom through the Gospel, and to build up the Church in united fellowship, upon Christ the Rock and Foundation Stone of believers, according to the command of Christ and his apostles.

"Thus the ebb and tide passed through my soul. Notwithstanding the full conviction of a Divine Call, my flesh and blood would still raise many objections, so that I often became distressed and cast down. A great weight seemed to rest upon me; I had no enjoyment by day, nor rest by night. I became so low-spirited that nothing was able to cheer me—my inward peace fled, and the idea that it would be almost impossible without the assistance of others, without any ecclesiastical connection, only increased my anxiety. All the external dangers and difficulties that would, under circumstances, come upon me, were vividly placed before my imagination. I trembled in these hours of temptation, not-

withstanding that I had God's promises on my side. This was especially the case when I considered that I should be compelled to stand alone, without any support upon which I could rely, knowing God would prove me through trials. However, notwithstanding these doubts, the consciousness was wrought within me by the grace of God, that God was mighty in the weak, that He would ask no more than we are able to perform, that the courage He imparted, and the grace He bestowed would be sufficient to achieve victory and success, if his honor and glory were the end kept in view. I was also conscious of His power, and that all sufficiency came from Him, and that He would qualify those who acted in accordance with His good pleasure, as I have often realized, when I fully submitted myself to His will."

Finally Albright answered the call, believing that he could not longer refuse. His obedience was postponed, and he believed that he suffered because of that indecision. Pain penetrated his every nerve, and almost intolerable torment coursed through the members of his body, his form becoming so emaciated that he became a mere shadow. He says, "My muscular system became so weakened, that I could not do work of any kind, and still worse than all bodily suffering, was the terrible feeling which at times overcame my soul as though I was entirely forsaken of God. What I endured during this sickness in body and in mind is indescribable. Sometimes, in the feeling of being forsaken of God, I screamed so terribly that all who saw and heard me, turned away from me with horror."

Under such chastisement, he resolved that if he

was restored to health, he would immediately travel through the country preaching wherever opportunity was given to him. The result was a peaceful mind, and health for his body. Weeks of fasting were practiced in order to crucify his bodily affections and lusts, so that the Spirit of God might reign within him. God blessed this fasting and filled Him with the power of the Spirit. After such a struggle, Albright believed he was called to preach the gospel, and went forth to proclaim its precious truths.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PREACHER MEETS PERSECUTION

Wherever opportunity presented itself, Jacob Albright was willing to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Especially was this true among the German speaking people of his state.

One of his preaching attempts was made on the streets of Schaefferstown, Lebanon County, where on October 8, 1797, a Church was being dedicated. This church seems to have been built as a union church for all denominations. Bishop Newcomer, of the United Brethren Church reports that sermons were preached on Sunday and Monday, by two Lutheran preachers, two Reformed preachers and two followers of Otterbein (The United Brethren Church not being organized until later). Great crowds of people filled the town, so that many could not get into the church. Albright saw an opportunity to preach the gospel to those outside. On a pile of lumber in the market house he found a place to stand and preach to the people. This was not in opposition to the regular church services, but supplementary to them. His message brought conviction to many hearts, but some were antagonized and said that Albright was beside himself. Some of the crowd pushed him off of the pile of lumber and made attempts to abuse him. But a strong man by name of Maize took Albright into his arms and carried him out of the crowd to the home of Peter Mohr where he was sheltered.

This incident indicates the great need for the preaching of the gospel in the community. Instead of making Albright afraid to preach in the town, he

had a greater desire to again make the gospel known to those who persecuted him. Two years later in 1799, Albright visited the town at the time of the "Cherry Fair." On this occasion he preached along the roadside, and was again set upon by a cruel mob. This time he was shamefully treated before he could escape, in a partially unconscious condition, to Father Zentmayers, two miles distant, where he knew he could find shelter. One of the sons, tells of seeing the preacher coming down the road from town, late in the afternoon. Seeing that something was wrong, he hurried to open the gate for the preacher. Albright's face was covered with blood, his clothing soiled and torn, and he was so much injured that he could scarcely sit on his horse. By that time the father reached home, and helped assist Albright into the house, and summoned a doctor. For two weeks he remained under the doctor's care in his home. The physician was so impressed with the devotion of Albright, and his willingness to preach in the face of persecution, that he refused to charge for his services. But in spite of the persecution, there were conversions in this section.

Another place visited in his early ministry was the Schwenkfelder section of Montgomery County. The story is told of how he made his first visit to Upper Hanover Township and stopped at a home where a funeral was about to be conducted. He introduced himself to the Schwenkfelder preacher whose name was George Kriebel and asked permission to speak at the services. His plain dress, and general appearance recommended him to the people, and his request was granted. When the people

reached the church, they saw a stranger sitting with the minister behind the table, which served as a pulpit in the plain log church. The inquisitive audience whispered to each other, as to who the stranger might be, but no one knew him. After the sermon was ended, the people were surprised in seeing the stranger arise and deliver a powerful exhortation. The result was that Albright was given permission to preach there, on the following Saturday. Many came to hear him preach on the subject of the judgment as recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel. The great day was portrayed so powerfully and pathetically that many of the hearers shed tears. A second opportunity was given for him to preach in the church, of which he availed himself, and the third time, the service was to be held in a meeting house in Hosensack. Even with this welcome reception on the part of some, others criticised him, and circulated false stories in regard to his character. The preaching houses were soon closed against him, and a private home of David Schultz, known as 'Berg David' was opened for his preaching, and the Lord blessed the efforts with the conversion of precious souls.

This meeting was remembered thirty years afterward, by one of the men of the community who tried to dissuade his brother from attending the services. His criticism of Albright was that the preacher "stood proudly on his tiptoes." Peculiar indeed that such a slight move would be a criticism of the preacher. The brother did not stay away from the meetings, however, and was converted.

The Schwenkfelders were so named, because of

their leader, Caspar Schwenkfeld, a nobleman of Silesia, born in 1490, and a contemporary of Martin Luther. These people were orthodox in most points of theology, disagreeing with the Lutherans concerning the Lord's Supper and other means of grace. They held to a spiritual view of the Lord's Supper, and rejected literal baptism. The means of grace was principally the living, mystical Christ. These people were persecuted in Germany by the Lutherans and Catholics, and some were even imprisoned. They felt compelled for the sake of their conscience and religious liberty to come to Pennsylvania where they established ecclesiastical communities of their own. When Albright visited them he found them pious, but later they degenerated spiritually, and became persecutors of praying people. (W. W. Orwig used their catechism when he compiled the second catechism of the Evangelical Association in 1846). This sect still maintains a few churches in Eastern Pennsylvania, and some of their people are spiritual, though they have not grown as a church.

CHAPTER X.

ALBRIGHT'S METHODS OF EVANGELISM

Albright was known as a powerful preacher. He did not confine his preaching to churches or special groups, but went wherever he could find an opening. Sometimes his audience would consist of a single family, sometimes the neighbors would attend, and occasionally the gathering was larger. Most of his work was done in private homes, as community halls were not available to him in many communities. He did not remain in one locality long enough to organize a church but felt that his work was to save sinners, and let them find their own church home. His work was not in antagonism to the organized churches. He was seeking to have the people of that day know Christ as their Saviour in an experimental way. Our records indicate that his travels were confined mainly to the eastern counties of Pennsylvania, namely Lancaster, Berks, Bucks, and Northampton. A few trips were made into the region west of the Susquehanna to York, Cumberland and Northumberland counties, in these early years. Records indicate that he made at least one trip into the German settlements of Maryland and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. His only means of travel was on horseback, or on foot. The weather was not always pleasant, but the gospel needed to be preached.

Such a widespread ministry, though attended with fine results, resulted in a scattered following. The first attempt made to bring any of them together is reported to have been about 1796. There were only five present at this conference. But these were lead-

ers from different communities, who met together to form a closer union with God, and pray together for the power of the Holy Spirit. This meeting is sometimes called the forerunner of the annual conference, but it is plain from our meager records, that this meeting was more for spiritual aid, than for organization. The Lord blessed the gathering in a remarkable way, and Albright took new courage as a result of this meeting. Charles Bissey, of Quakertown, was one of the group present, and reports that it was held at the home of Peter Walter in Bucks County. This was really the nucleus of the Evangelical Association.

The work continued as before, without any outward form of organization. Albright would preach a couple times at one place, then go on to another. His aim was to reach as many people as possible with the gospel, in the shortest period of time.

His manner of preaching was to point out the sins of the people, and the corruption within visible churches. He respected the ministers of the day, but denounced the practices in which they sinfully engaged. He believed that 'Judgment must begin at the house of God' (I Peter 4:17). He had no fault to find with the catechisms and creeds of the churches. They were orthodox, but not applied to the lives of the people. The creed was something which they would repeat, but not counted as applicable to the life. Albright was merely trying to put into action what the churches professed to believe. Sinners were greatly moved under his denunciations, and many repented and were led to Christ as their Saviour. Because of his methods, he

was called a sensualist. Some ministers warned their people, "to beware of this false prophet who came in sheep's clothing, but inwardly was a ravenous wolf." These accusations greatly grieved him, but he bore them lovingly.

A typical example of his preaching and his attitude toward other churches, is indicated in the extract preserved from a sermon delivered in Lebanon, Pa., at the market place. His text was Isaiah 58:1, "Cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." In this message he said, "You Lutherans, of course you think you have Luther, and that he was a converted man, that you have the catechism, etc. But your sinful lives prove that you are not Lutherans, for you live contrary to God's word and Luther's teaching. And you, German Reformed—what does it mean to be reformed? It means to be restored, to be converted from sin and the world to God; but your lives prove that you have turned from God and towards the world. You Dunkards and Mennonites with your peculiar dress and outward plainness, by which you comfort yourselves, you will be lost without the new birth, notwithstanding you have large farms and earthly possessions. Be not astonished that I said unto you, 'Ye must be born again' for these are the words of our Saviour and Judge.'"

One of his listeners is reported to have been so affected by this message that he felt as if the whole earth opened up to swallow the audience in all their wickedness.

About 1802, a message was preached in West

Penn Township, Schuylkill County, on the text of Malachi 3:2—"But who may abide the day of his coming?" In this message he described the judgment with such power, that a strong young man, by the name of Leonard Zimmerman, was so wrought upon, that he believed he saw the judge coming in the clouds of heaven, and seen it open to him as it did to Saul, and he became blind for a short time. This led to his seeking the Lord, a thorough conversion, and later on, entrance into the gospel ministry.

About this time, Albright met a young man by name of George Miller, who was later to become one of his most useful collaborators. Miller was born in Pottstown, and raised in Alsace, Berks County. His profession was that of a millwright as well as a miller. He heard Albright preach and was impressed with his humble appearance, his pious and cheerful countenance, which seemed to glow with love toward God and man. His look was mild and penetrating, and Miller was captivated as he listened to him preach on Jeremiah 21:8, "Behold I place before you the way of life and the way of death." The message greatly affected Miller so that he said, "I was touched in such a manner through his powerful sermon, that if I had not taken hold of a table, I should have sunk to the floor." A personal conversation between the two, after the message brought the advice from Albright, that he should pray earnestly and humble himself, take the cross of Christ upon him and believe with all his heart, then he would find peace. Miller followed him the next day to another appointment and heard him preach again.

The two separated with Miller requesting the preacher's prayers on his behalf. This incident took place in Brunswick Township of Schuylkill County.

CHAPTER XI. ORGANIZATION OF CLASSES

After four years of circuit riding, from 1796-1800, Albright was concerned about the spiritual future of his converts. He says, "Having preached about four years, and having made special efforts to preach the gospel where vital godliness and Christian discipline were unknown I endeavored, through the grace of God which had been given me, to give these awakened and converted persons such instructions as they needed in order to work out their soul's salvation, and edify each other in the bonds of Christian fellowship, and in the unity of faith, in accordance with the teachings of Christ and his apostles. God also granted his blessing upon the undertaking. Many who had previously lived in darkness and ignorance, received the light of truth through the instrumentality and assistance of this union; and God, my Helper and Protector, also strengthened my own heart and mind with his grace, so that I was not only enabled to preach pure doctrine to those whom he had entrusted to me, but also endeavored to establish them by my own example."

Albright had no thought of starting a new denomination. He never withdrew from the Methodist church, though because of the lack of support and encouragement from them, his membership was not active in the Methodist class. He did not connect himself with the so-called "Impartial People", "General People", or "Freedom People", as some independent groups were called, because of the lack of discipline. These groups later became the United Brethren in Christ. The organized Lutheran and

Reformed Churches persecuted him, and his own organization seemed to be the only way out, in solving his problems.

His first class was formed when his followers numbered only twenty. The first organization took place in Bucks County, at a community known as the Ridge or Rock Hill, three miles east of Quakertown. This class consisted of Charles Bissey and wife, Peter Walter the leader, his wife and family. The class was organized on the plan learned by Albright in the Methodist church. The organization took place after a meeting, attended by five brethren, brought them to their knees in prayer for divine guidance in this new step.

In the same year another class was formed in the vicinity of the Colebrookdale Iron Works, in Berks County, Pa., east of Boyertown. This was about twenty miles from the first class organized, so did not conflict. It was known as Liesser's class, and consisted of Samuel Liesser, the leader, his wife, and several children, Abraham and Joseph Buckwalter and their wives. The Liessers had been converted under Albright's ministry, but the Buckwalters were Mennonites who became dissatisfied with the cold and formal worship of their people. Other converts soon joined this group, prominent among which were daughters and sons of Michael Brobst, an ironmaster and owner of a furnace and two forges in Albany Township, as well as ten thousand acres of land.

The third class was formed in the same year, along the Blue Mountains in Hamilton Township, records disagreeing whether this was located in Northamp-

ton County or Monroe County, being so near the county line. Conrad Phillips led this class which consisted of his wife, his father George, his brother Jacob and their wives, Jacob Reedy and wife, Philip Miller and wife and Barbara Hecht.

Thus the work was organized and continued to spread. Of course this preaching of Albright continued to meet opposition. For example, in 1801, when he came to Hamburg, Pa., and asked permission to preach at Diehl's General Store, the owner decided that it was not convenient, because of a frolic in progress in the hotel across the road. Albright contended that the frolic would be no obstacle to him, and perhaps the presence of these people would give him an opportunity to point out the danger of a sinful life. With continual refusal by the storekeeper, permission was secured to hold a service in front of the mill, a little distance down the road. There Albright mounted on a millstone and preached with such great power, and condemned sin and vice so strongly that many attending the frolic became alarmed and left the festivities. This enraged the innkeeper so much that he came after Albright with a whip and threatened to drive him out of town. Albright was not to give up so easily, and held his ground. Albright preached several times in a small schoolhouse in the community but the results were so meager at the time, that no class could be organized here.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIG MEETINGS

From the class meeting and the ordinary preaching service, the work developed into the next stage, when "Big Meetings" were held, which people from various classes would attend. The first of these was held at the home of Samuel Liesser in Berks County in 1802. There was no stated time for the holding of these meetings, but they served as a forerunner for the Quarterly Meeting. The services usually lasted over Saturday and Sunday, with services all day, in charge of the preachers and class leaders of that section. These meetings proved a great blessing to the former converts, and at the first 'Big Meeting' several sinners were saved and believers were edified.

The second of these meetings was held in the same year, after the harvest season at the home of John Thomas, in Mifflin County, Pa. There under some stately cherry trees, one thousand people gathered from far and near. The meeting opened on Saturday noon and continued until Monday noon. The great crowds were attracted more because of the novelty of the meeting, than for the desire of spiritual help, but they also received some of the latter. The Sunday morning message was preached by Albright from the text, John 8:12—"I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

A report of the message tells us that, "Albright described Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. As in the spring time the Sun ascends higher and its

beams exert a powerful influence upon the earth, so that the ice melts, the frozen earth becomes thawed and warmed, the vegetation revives and thus causes spring, summer and harvest, so Christ operates spiritually upon every heart that yields itself to him. The rays of this sun are the truths of God's Word accompanied by the operations of the Holy Spirit. He also pointed out how this light, through the preached gospel penetrates into spiritually dark neighborhoods, and how darkness is greatest before the break of day—but that this light penetrates and enlightens men, and whosoever follows after the light shall not walk in darkness, that is, not live in sin and doubt, but shall have the light of life, and the witness of the Holy Spirit that he is a child of God."

This message made such an impression upon the people, that many shed tears and were deeply convicted of the truth. It was a simple proclamation of the Word of God, aided by the unction of the Holy Spirit, and this always bears fruit. Some claimed, that as Albright preached, he was filled with such power, that he appeared as if a halo of glory shown around his head, and his person appeared especially graceful. This caused great influence to be felt by the people. Satan was also troubled, and a man at the edge of the crowd was heard to say, "If I only had powder that would make no report, I would soon shoot that Albright down."

Another preacher at this meeting was John Walter, one of Albright's first converts, who became a powerful preacher of the Word. He preached with

great effect, and was greatly blessed in the proclamation of the Word.

While in this vicinity, Albright visited a number of homes, among which was that of the Wonder family. As a token of hospitality, Albright was offered a drink of whiskey, before he left. But Albright refused to follow the custom of the time, and said, "Dear people, I drink no liquor, I don't need it, and can do without it right well. You must not be offended on account of my refusal to drink."

The family was very much astonished, as their own pastor sometimes became so drunk during his pastoral visits, that he would have to be carried to bed. The father of the family was impressed with Albright, and wanted to hear more from him. The mother said, however, that she would follow her own pastor. The children noted the difference between the two men, and would frequently taunt their mother by saying, "Father's pastor sings and prays and talks about religion, and drinks no liquor when he visits us, but mother's pastor does not pray, but curses and gets drunk. We will stick to father's pastor." The whole family was converted shortly afterward.

In the following spring, another big meeting was held in the same orchard. This time a stand was erected for the preachers, and a large crowd assembled to see what was going on there. John Walter preached a powerful sermon, which resulted in a number of conversions. A society was formed, but its members did not withdraw from their own churches even though they considered Albright and Walter as their spiritual advisers.

In 1802 Albright again visited with George Miller and prayed with him, and his family. Miller became convinced that Albright's power in preaching was due to the assistance of the grace of God, and he arranged for a service in his home. With all his heart, Miller sought God, and on June 3, 1802, he wept and prayed all day, while engaged at his work. He called upon God, and vowed to serve him only, whatever the cost might be. In the evening, he had a glimpse of saving grace. By faith he saw God's favor bestowed upon him. He was so glad that he could sleep that night, without any cares, and he awoke in the morning to a new life. Everything around him seemed to be new. In his struggle he had searched the scriptures and found them to be a power in his life. The fifth class was formed in his home in 1803, of which he became class leader. Soon afterward he heard the call to preach and entered into the evangelistic labors with Albright.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It was not until 1803, that the first General Assembly of the followers of Albright, was convened. This may properly be called the first annual conference. The place is not exactly known, but the date is November 3. Some claim it was held at Muehlbach, but other records indicate that Albright did not preach there until two years later. John Dreisbach is quoted in "Evangelical Annals" by Stapleton as claiming that it was held at Samuel Liessers, in Berks County. We do know that the following were present in addition to Albright—John Walter, Abraham Liesser as ministers attended and the following laymen—Jacob Phillips, George Miller, Charles Bissey, Conrad Phillips, John Brobst, Solomon W. Friderici, Christian Brobst, George Phillips, Michael Brobst, Samuel Liesser, Peter Walter, Adam Miller, Jacob Reidy and Solomon Miller. This represented five classes, the three mentioned previously, the fourth located in Schuylkill County, and led by Leonard Zimmerman, and the fifth in charge of George Miller, mentioned in previous chapter.

It is plain that this conference was not merely for ministers, but included adequate representation of laymen. The laity were given full rights in the organization of this conference. This principle is thoroughly evangelical.

The most important business transacted was the recognition of Jacob Albright as a regular preacher. Though he held an exhorters license from the Methodist Church, he had never been ordained as a preacher. The conference proceeded to draw up the

following license or commission which was given to Albright:

"From the Elders and Brethren of His Society of Evangelical Friends.

"We, the undersigned Evangelical and Christian friends, declare and recognize Jacob Albright as a genuine Evangelical preacher, in word and in deed, and a believer in the Universal Christian Church and the communion of saints. This testify we as brethren and elders of his society. Given in the State of Pennsylvania, November 5, 1803."

This document was then signed by the two collaborators and the fourteen laymen present, and given to Albright. By the laying on of hands by Walter and Liesser, and prayer by the others, he was solemnly consecrated to the office of a preacher. The Assembly drew up a statement declaring the Holy Scriptures, of both Old and New Testaments as their rule of faith and practice.

We do not know whether Albright asked for this ordination, or that it was given to him by his followers in order to check certain criticism which said that Albright was not a regular preacher. Even after this ceremony was performed, many in other churches refused to recognize this ordination, because it did not follow the rule of "Apostolic Succession" which would require ordination from the hands of an ordained minister. Other churches refused to receive ministers from Albright's conference, unless they would be reordained. Yet, this ordination follows closely the pattern of Acts 13:1-3, where we are told of prophets and teachers together on an equal standing, who wanted to send forth preachers

of the gospel. They laid their hands on the selected ones, and prayed God's blessing upon their work, and then sent them forth.

Now, ministers who have been ordained by the followers of Albright, are received into practically any Protestant denomination without reordination, with the possible exception of the Episcopal Church. This has changed the attitude of former years, when the Reformed church, for example, refused to receive an Evangelical minister, because they thought the Albright organization was merely a mushroom organization and would soon disappear.

Albright was a born again Christian, a member of the Holy Priesthood, in which all believers are united. These men, according to the Evangelical historian Yeakel, "have at any time and at any place upon earth, whenever and wherever the outward successive ordination has become impossible, through the spiritual decline of the Church and ministry, and the rejection and persecution of godly men, the unquestionable right, through Christ, formally to ordain and consecrate to the office of the ministry any one whom Divine Providence and the Spirit of Christ calls into this office, as was without any doubt, the case with Jacob Albright, the continuation of a true ministry being an absolute necessity . . . Everything depends upon the sanction and confirmation of the great Head of the Church. And it is an undeniable fact that Christ has recognized, sealed and blessed the ministry of the Evangelical Association in the labors of Albright, and in hundreds of his followers, with the impartation of the Holy Spirit according to His will, unto the awaken-

ing, conversion and the sanctification of thousands who, in accordance with Paul's teaching, are 'sealed' to their ministry."

This seemed to be the only way in which Albright could be ordained. The older German churches from which the people came, were not willing to ordain him, because his work was a protest against the activities of their churches. The Otterbein movement up until this time used lay evangelists and did not ordain. Otterbein had been ordained in Germany, and would have met the requirements of the "Apostolic Succession" principle, but his first ordination did not take place until 1813, when Christian Newcomer was ordained, after being a preacher for twenty years, and already being elected Bishop, in the preceding May. Doctrinal differences also existed at this time, between Otterbein and Albright. The Otterbein group held their first conference in 1789, when they adopted a creed of five articles in which the sacraments were practically ignored. At the end of their creed was a simple addenda, recommending the practice of baptism as a sign, the Lord's Supper as commemorative, and feet washing as an example. These differences made ordination from Otterbein impractical.

What about ordination from the Methodists? Albright agreed with them in doctrine and polity, but nativism stood in the way. Bishop Asbury, of the Methodist Church, opposed the use of the German language by the Methodists. He believed that the language would soon die out, and the church would be better for not recognizing its use in worship. Albright believed that preaching in German was need-

ed, because of the great number living in spiritual darkness, who could not understand much English, or at least would not attend English services for gospel preaching. Albright believed he was called to preach to the German-speaking people, and so he did not consider it wise to request ordination from the Methodists. His Exhorters license was never returned so that much authority remained his.

This conference believed that it was acting according to the will of God, when by this act, Albright was considered a fully ordained Elder, following the order of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They had followed one of the important characteristics of all reform churches, in that the spirit of authority was democratic and coming from the people, rather than autocratic and coming from the Pope, or some high ecclesiastical ruler.

An organization was now effected, with Albright as the only ordained minister. He was authorized to appoint co-laborers to aid in the work. John Walter was continued as a minister, and Abraham Liesser was newly appointed to serve. No articles of faith were adopted at this time, as the Methodist doctrines were considered as theirs. Yet from this time, the preachers became known as Evangelical preachers.

Abraham Liesser, came from Berks County, as the second helper in this work. Because of ill health, he was able to preach for only two years, dying in 1805. His mild and quiet disposition was an asset to the work, but his lack of physical strength prevented him from accomplishing very much. His place in the ministerial ranks was filled in 1805, by young

George Miller, who was used greatly by the Lord in the work.

The deliberations of this assembly carried the work forward so satisfactorily that another assembly was not called until some time between 1805 and 1807. Albright assigned the preachers to the circuits himself, changing whenever advisable, sometimes at the end of the year, and at other times before the year was completed. Alexander Jameson entered the ranks during 1804, thus providing additional forces for the work. Regular circuits had now been established, and the preachers visited the various classes periodically. This type of work was confined principally to Berks and Northampton Counties, with missionary work in Northumberland and Centre Counties. The total membership in 1804 was only sixty, most of whom were converted under Albright's ministry. But this does not include all of the followers, who attended the meetings of the various classes, and listened to the preachers when visits were made to the various communities. The region around Sunbury, and westward was formed into a circuit in charge of two of the colaborsers—Walter and Liesser, in 1804. This was called the Shamokin circuit, later being changed to the Northumberland circuit.

Before we consider the next conference, we may look at the financial plan followed in this movement. There was no missionary organization with funds to support them. The men were required to live by faith. Albright, like the apostle Paul, had a trade to follow, in order to help meet his needs. After preaching for a time, he would return to his

home and manufacture enough tile to support his family until he could return to make more. The people of that day were very hospitable and provided him with food for himself and his horse, as well as lodging for the night. Gifts of clothing, books, and other necessities were received from the people where he visited, and especially from his own converts. This same provision was made for other laborers in the work. Offerings or collections did not have a regular place in those services. No one could accuse Albright and his followers of pecuniary motives in their ministry.

In 1804, the ministers met together and decided to receive voluntary contributions for the support of the ministers. These contributions were to be divided equally among all the workers. The results indicate that these preachers were not good money beggers, as the amount divided among the three men preaching that year, gave each one only fifteen dollars and thirty cents. John Walter needed a horse for his travels and permission was given to him to collect funds for this purchase. It required two years before sufficient money was given to meet the cost of the horse.

The following year, 1805, Alexander Jameson received his portion which was then \$66.67. In addition to this he received \$69.33 for the purchase of a horse. The denomination of only seventy-five members had given an average of approximately \$4.50 each. Many of the members were poor, but the total compares favorably with church giving today. Jameson did not think he received sufficient compensation, and complained until he was given

more than the others. Even then, he was not contented, and the brethren excused him from the ministry believing that he should return to his old employment. The ministers then decided that no minister would be received into their ranks, unless they would be satisfied with an equal share of the general fund.

What a spirit of self denial is found in these early preachers. Like the church at Jerusalem in the first century, they were willing to share equally. Each man was paid according to what was received, and according to his needs. As years passed, and the needs of the men varied more than at the beginning, the funds were divided according to the rank held in the ministry as well as the size of a man's family. But even then, their work was greatly based on faith. How we need such faith today!

During the year 1805, the membership increased to 120. In this year, a new offering was added, to be known as the "subsidiary collection." This money was to be collected at the end of the year, and taken to conference by the preachers. At the conference, it would be divided as needed to meet deficiencies in the ministerial salaries and to aid the poor. There were usually two preachers on each circuit, one known as the senior preacher and the other known as the junior preacher. One of the tasks of the junior preachers was to collect this fund.

CHAPTER XIV.

SPIRITUAL WORK AT MUEHLBACH

Before we discuss the next annual conference, we need to think of the spiritual revival which opened the home in Muehlbach where this conference convened. The Muehlbach was a section of country in the eastern end of what is now Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. It was located between the present-day towns of Schaefferstown and Newmantown. Though Albright had preached at Schaefferstown, under persecution, and his home was in Lancaster County, a few miles southeast of this place, yet the Albright preachers did not visit this section until 1805, when George Miller came to preach the gospel.

Miller tells the story in his own words, "One evening I stopped with a man in Lancaster County named Leshner, and was lovingly received. In the evening and morning I prayed with them, and as I was about to take my departure, he asked me whether I was not a Methodist preacher. I replied that I was no Methodist. 'But', said he, 'you are a preacher, and in what connection do you stand?' I replied, 'I am an Evangelical preacher, and preach the gospel to all who receive and hear me'. 'Tell me the truth', said he, 'are you not a Methodist preacher?' 'You can depend upon it', said I. 'I would like to hear you preach, but the Methodists I would not receive, because they are too boisterous. Or are you loud, too? At any rate I will give out an appointment for you and then we will see'.

"An appointment was given out, and the house was filled with people. The Lord gave me grace to

preach His Word with feeling and power so that nearly all were melted. Leshner desired another appointment and as I preached again others desired it also, and the Lord so wrought that in a short time sinners began to seek for pardon. As Leshner heard the noise he left the assembly, but God worked powerfully so that many sinners were converted, and also this old man with nearly his entire family were converted."

Among the converts were people from the Muehlbach, three miles farther north. Catherine Becker was an early convert and later her husband Frederick. Becker's sister Julianna who was married to John Leffler also attended the meetings and heard the evangelical preaching. When Frederick was converted he wanted to see his brethren also brought to the light of the gospel. After much persuasion he was able to have George and Samuel, his brothers, attend the meetings. Albright was the preacher on this occasion, and a deep impression was made upon these brothers. The Becker's decided to invite Albright to preach in their community. Samuel Becker was a prominent officer in the Lutheran Church and because of his position, he did not think it advisable to hold the service in his home. George was urged to open his house for the service, but it required quite a bit of persuasion before his wife would consent to it.

After her consent was secured, Albright came to fill the appointment, and the service created great interest in the community. It was desired to have a second service, which the wife opposed, until Albright tactfully overcame her objections, and her

consent was secured. John Walter, George Miller and another preacher whose name is unknown assisted Albright at this meeting. (Historian Orwig tells of a young man, under legal age who was making fine progress in preaching, until his guardian took him away from the society, and sent him to work in a section where he could find no Christian friends. Perhaps this young man, whom Orwig calls C. B. was the fourth minister present at this meeting).

The large stone house was filled with people, both friends and foes. Some had come because of their interest in the work of the Lord, and others because they opposed it and wanted to find fault, if not make trouble of greater consequence. The premises were damaged by the opposition to the meeting, but George Becker was led to conversion. Then it was discovered that he had heard Albright preach at the Schaefferstown fair, five years before when the preacher was shamefully mistreated. The seed sown at that time, was now bearing fruit.

Another evidence of the Holy Spirit's convicting power was shown in the life of Julianna Leffler, who attended the services with her husband. She would not yield to the Lord, but left the service before it was concluded and walked alone several miles to her home. When her husband returned home later, he found her locked in her room. Though he called to her, he received no answer. He believed that God was working with her soul. He knelt outside of the bedroom door and began to pray for her. When she heard him praying, her heart was softened sufficiently to cause her to open the door. She return-

ed to bed and then bitterly accused him of leaving the faith of their fathers. She tried to make him turn from his Saviour, but was unsuccessful. He continued to pray for her, kneeling at the bedside. It seemed that Satan was making a last struggle with her, knowing that the forces of sin were defeated in her life. Suddenly, in the midst of his prayers, she cried out, "the devil must flee." The two joined together in prayer, wrestling with God, until the joy of sins forgiven came to her heart. The house was filled with shouts of praise, which came from these new born souls, knowing that their sins were washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ.

A prayer meeting was arranged for the Leffler home, shortly after their conversion. At this meeting through the efforts of his wife, Samuel Becker was converted. She persuaded him to attend the meeting, saying, "Come, get ready, and let us go over to Lefflers to the prayer meeting." He replied, "No I must go to church today, or they will throw me out of office, as I have missed church pretty often of late." But Mrs. Becker succeeded in getting him to the prayer service, and there the power of God came upon him in such a way, that he sought salvation for his soul. Others prayed with him, until the assurance came. He sprang to his feet and with his streaming eyes turned to heaven, he repeated the first verse of the German hymn of Rothe (which according to Wesley's translation is as follows):

"Now I have found the ground wherein
 Sure, my soul's anchor may remain;
 The wounds of Jesus for my sin,
 Before the world's foundation slain;

Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away."

Assurance strong as an anchor will come to those who repent of their sin and turn to Christ for salvation as this man did.

But this was not the end of this man's temptations, for even though Satan was defeated, he did not give up. Friends in the Lutheran church said, that Samuel Becker had fallen away from the faith. Meetings held in his home were disturbed by enemies of righteousness. His father-in-law a man of considerable means, for that day, expressed his hostility to the conversions by disinheriting Samuel Becker and his wife. But the daughter remained firm in the faith, telling her father, "You may do me all the harm you can. You may throw me out of my inheritance if you will, but you cannot take from me my inheritance above, which rests in God's hands, and is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away." Though her father remained at her home, and under her care, he would leave the house whenever services were held, and at his death, the will left them without a cent of his money.

Though it was not easy for people to link themselves in this work with Albright, yet the number of converts and followers steadily increased. The Beckers became pillars in the church at that place, as well as an important influence in denominational work. The Beckers had been religious for many generations. Peter Becker, the grandfather of George and Samuel, was a German Baptist immigrant to this country. He was the official baptizer of the society at Muehlbach. He had baptized Conrad Bis-

sel, who withdrew from the German Baptists to form the communal Seventh Day Baptist cloisters at Ephrata, Pa. The German Baptists in this section are now known as the Church of the Brethren or the Dunkards. The church at that place can trace its organization back to 1724. Peter's son, John George Becker inherited the estate, and lived to the age of 92 years, dying before 1800. He is never known to have heard Albright preach, but his companion, who was his third wife, lived to become a member of the Muehlbach Evangelical class. Nearly all of the fifteen children were converted and became Evangelicals, Christina becoming the wife of Rev. John Walter.

A contemptible term applied to followers of Albright, was the Dutch expression—"Strawvelers." The exact meaning cannot be found in any of the German dictionaries, but the term was used to deride any one who repented of sin, in the Methodist or Evangelical meetings. Historian Orwig thinks the term is derived from the German verb *Strampeln*, which means to struggle with the feet. When hearers in the Evangelical meetings became convicted of sin, they often were seized with such fear that they sometimes fell to the ground, or would wring their hands, and make violent gestures crying, 'what must I do to be saved?' Some who found salvation assurance, would praise God by leaping with joy and clapping their hands. These gestures seemed foolish to the ones not spiritually enlightened. Some preachers and doctors declared the phenomena were due to hypnotical powers, magic or even demon possession.

The praying people were also called, "these miserable people." Others were called Knierutscher (knee sliders), Kopfhangers (head hangers), Schwarmers (fanatics), Krachzers (Groaners), Heuchlers (hypocrites).

CHAPTER XV. REVIVALS OF 1806

The annual conference of 1807, would not have been convened, according to some opinions, if it were not for the great revival of 1806 which brought a large number of converts into the church on the Northumberland circuit. This circuit covered a large territory, mostly located west of the Susquehanna river, opposite Sunbury.

The revival traces its origin back to 1792 when a Reformed minister by the name of J. G. Phreemer was pastor of the Dreisbach church in Buffalo Valley. He differed from other Reformed pastors of that day, because of his strong evangelistic emphasis. This necessitated his withdrawal from the denomination, a few years later. He was associated with Christian Newcomer (who later became a Bishop of the United Brethren Church). A big meeting was held on October 18, 1800 in the home of Michael Maize, a prominent resident of the community. This meeting was held two years before Albright conducted any of his "big meetings." These evangelistic efforts provided a splendid foundation for Albright's work when he came to visit the community.

In 1804, Albright went as far west as Millheim where he preached in the home of Henry Smith. In 1806, he preached in the home of Paul Bachman. This man saw in Albright "another spirit" than he saw in his own unregenerated minister. The spiritual life of Albright witnessed for Christ as well as his preaching of the gospel. Christopher Spangler, of Brush Valley, heard Albright preach at Bachman's and in turn invited the preacher to his home.

When Albright again visited the section, he directed his path to the Spangler home, which was a large stone house, just being completed. As Albright entered the house, he said, "You are building a fine house, but if you would be converted, it would be still more so to you." Albright preached in his home, and made such an impression that Spangler was converted to the Lord, and became leader of a class established there that year. Spangler was also licensed as a local preacher at the 1807 conference but never entered the active ranks). This man remained faithful to his death in 1855, when he was eighty-eight years of age. His life was filled with severe persecution because of his faith.

These names are mentioned not because of their great importance but to point out the type of evangelism followed. Much of it was personal evangelism. A conversion in one home would lead to conversions and preaching services in other homes and communities. The work gradually spread until in 1806 the revival became more widespread.

George Miller was the preacher on this circuit in that year. He arranged for a "Big Meeting" at the home of Martin Dreisbach, Sr., in Buffalo Valley, Union County. Miller earnestly prayed that God might use this meeting, and the people and ministers came. On October 25, Miller delivered the opening sermon. The power of the Lord came upon the congregation with such force that many fell on their knees, and with tears in their eyes, besought the Lord to save them. Albright and John Walter also preached at this meeting "with great power and plainness" as Miller himself describes their work.

The whole countryside was moved as many were converted to God. This meeting with its fine fruit gave Albright and his co-laborers much needed courage to continue. Despair had come to their ministry, but this encouraging sign gave them a desire to consecrate themselves anew to lead as many souls to Christ as they possibly could. The three preachers made a written covenant to prosecute the work of the Lord still more earnestly.

Practically all of Dreisbach's family were converted in this meeting, and the first class in Buffalo Valley was organized with Dreisbach as the leader. Other classes were also organized in the territory between Lewisburg and Millheim. In two months there were eighty new converts, a large number for that day. All three of the preachers spent some time delivering the Word of God in that section. On one occasion Albright preached with such power, that a great commotion resulted with many falling on their knees and crying aloud for mercy, while others were of a contrary mind, and declared that Albright was mad, and foaming at the mouth. John Walter was scheduled to preach at a school house in New Berlin, but found the doors locked against him. As the group gathered outside, the doors opened suddenly as if a miracle had taken place, and the services could be held inside in comfort. This opened the door for the work in New Berlin, where the church headquarters was later established, and remained for several years. In New Berlin was erected the first church in 1816, and the first publishing house was located in this town from 1815 until 1854.

Of course, the work in this section had its oppo-

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

With the followers of Albright gradually increasing, new classes being formed, and more pastors needed, it became necessary to call an Annual Conference, to convene on November 15, 1807. Up until this time the business was largely in charge of Albright. Most of the ministers attended the General Meetings, and at these gatherings Albright would consult with the ministers, and class leaders in regard to certain policies to be pursued. Ministers were changed frequently by Albright with the consent of those concerned. But now, it was believed that an Annual Conference was necessary. The call for this meeting included, "the foremost members of our Evangelical Association, but more especially of our preachers, who are to be concerned to promote the general welfare of the Association by their counsel and united action." (Breyfogel-Landmarks, Pg. 16).

The place of the meeting was the stone home of Samuel Becker, at Muehlbach. In order to reach this place, John Dreisbach and members from the Northumberland circuit left home on November 6th. During the next week, others left their homes to attend this important meeting. When the roll was called, the following ministers answered to their names—Jacob Albright, John Walter, George Miller, John Dreisbach and Jacob Fry. Three local preachers, twenty class leaders and exhorters were also present, bringing the membership of the conference to twenty-eight.

It was natural, that their spiritual father, Jacob

sition as well as its blessings. One outstanding instance of this was when Albright preached in the Michael Maize home in 1807. Near the close of the sermon, a man named Adam Christ asked Albright to step outside that he might speak to him privately. Albright urged him to say what he desired in the house, but as the man insisted, Albright finally agreed to do as requested. John Dreisbach, a young licentiate to preach, whispered in Albright's ear, that he should beware of this man, so the preacher again asked what was wanted. Dreisbach then warned the man that he should not harm Albright, and the annoyance ended. It was discovered that this man Adam Christ, had a crowd of roughs outside to manhandle the preacher, but the Lord spared him from this ill treatment. Despite the opposition the work of the Lord went forward.

Albright should be selected as chairman of the conference. Some records indicate that he was elected as Bishop, but we never learned that he claimed that title for himself. The conference, it is true, followed the general plan of the Methodist Church, but Albright never regarded himself as more than an overseer.

George Miller was elected to the office of Elder, but for some reason or other was not ordained until 1809 when John Walter and John Dreisbach were ordained to the same ministerial rank. Dreisbach and Jacob Fry were received as ministers on probation at this session. The licensing and ordaining of ministers was usually done at General Meetings, Dreisbach being licensed at the meeting held on the day of Pentecost in that year, in Penns Valley. But the license was not written and given unto him, until he arrived at the Muehlbach conference. It is the only document in Albright's handwriting that we have preserved. A translation of the paper reads as follows: (Translated by R. Yeakel).

"Upon the authority of the Newly-Formed Methodist Conference, which has given John Dreisbach a good testimony, and is willing to receive him as a minister into our Communion; so I, the undersigned, give him the permission to serve in the office according to our regulation, and is also appointed thereto, as a preacher for one year, on trial, if he conducts himself as is meet according to the Word of God.

The 14th of November, 1807.

Jacob Albright."

It is indicated on this license, that the followers

of Albright had not yet adopted a name, but considered themselves as a Methodist conference, though not officially connected with any of the Methodist bodies. It is true that the Methodist government and doctrines were used, and Albright never claimed to have withdrawn from the Methodists. He possibly expected that his converts, which he was now organizing into a conference, could be received into the Methodist Church at some future time. The language difference prevented this from taking place.

It is also noted, that the conference decided for the annual renewal of all local and traveling preachers licenses, to be signed each year by the President and Secretary of the conference. Exhorters were to be given written certificates by the circuit preachers.

The conference authorized Jacob Albright to formulate Articles of Faith and rules of government, for the use of the society. This was not done because of the poor health of Albright, resulting in his death a year later. He realized the need for a discipline and shortly before he died, said to John Dreisbach, "If it is the will of God that you should be and remain a church, then he will also provide for you in this respect; men will appear among you who will be able to accomplish that which I shall not be able to do. It is the work of God, and it is in his hands, he will also provide for it."

The devotional part of the conference occupied most of the time. The session opened with fervent prayer imploring divine blessing upon the transactions. During the session, the ministers believed they were under Divine guidance, and every effort

was made to please God. The session closed with a season of prayer.

The statistical report indicated that two circuits comprised the conference. The Old Circuit (Lancaster-Schuylkill) consisted of appointments in Lancaster, Lebanon, Dauphin, Berks and Schuylkill counties. There were forty preaching places where stated services were held, as well as a number of homes and other places open to occasional preaching. Some of the appointments were from thirty to forty miles apart, and required some time to travel by horse to reach them. The New Circuit or Northumberland circuit consisted of territory west of the Susquehanna River, mostly in the region of Lewisburg and Millheim. The total membership of the conference was 220, of whom it was said, that nearly all professed conversion. This may mean that some were received into classes, who were still seeking and were not completely satisfied with their spiritual experience. Even today in our ritual of admitting members, we say, "We rejoice with you that through the grace of God, you have been brought or *desire to become*, partakers of his great salvation." Many others adhered to the Albrights, though not directly belonging to any particular class.

The stationing at this conference was done by Jacob Albright. He assigned George Miller and John Dreisbach to the Lancaster-Schuylkill circuit, and John Walter and Jacob Fry to the Northumberland Circuit. Jacob Albright/agreed to travel over the entire territory assisting where needed, and endeavoring to open up new preaching appointments as his health would permit. No moving vans were

needed after this stationing committee's report, as each man lived at home, and traveled over his field without his family.

Albright's health was failing rapidly though he was only forty-eight years of age. His constant exposure to all kinds of weather and accommodations in his travels, brought consumption to his body. Yet he kept on preaching as long as his health permitted. During the following year he accompanied John Dreisbach on a number of his visits on the circuit. This circuit covered the territory near Albright's home, and assistance in this work was easy for the ailing preacher. Albright also took a deep interest in Dreisbach because of his youth, their relationship taking practically the same form as a father to a son.

On one occasion the two were traveling in Lancaster county, and stopped at a farm home for the night. At the supper table the aged farmer asked Albright, in a harsh tone of voice, "What kind of a young man is this whom you have brought with you?" Albright informed him that he was a young minister, whose home had been in the Buffalo Valley, west of Lewisburg. This impressed the farmer as a good joke, and brought forth the comment, "He a minister? If it will not happen to him as it did to a young Methodist minister, who came into this neighborhood and made quite a stir, until he became too intimately acquainted with a young girl, and was compelled to flee."

This brought cutting sarcasm from Albright, as he said, "Such things have even already happened to old men." This served to quiet the old man, for

he who was not without sin, had no right to cast a stone.

On the following day, as the two preachers continued their journey, the incident was discussed. The younger minister when asked why he did not make reply, declared that he thought it best for him to keep quiet. Albright then advised, "I appreciate your modest bearing, however, Christ also says, 'Have salt in yourselves.'"

Albright believed in prayer, and would often be seen taking his Bible into a grove or quiet place, where he would read God's Word, and pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Dreisbach met Albright at one of these periods of prayer, and watched the older preacher as he walked back and forth singing softly in deep meditation, manifesting by gestures and movements that the joy of the Lord had filled his soul. Albright found his source of power in God. His public and private prayers gave every evidence that they came from the heart. He did not avoid using the Lord's Prayer, which some regarded as a mere form. He often used the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to close his own prayers. Sometimes his praying was accompanied by regular periods of fasting.

Though Albright had never attended any college or theological seminary, he believed that ministers should prepare their sermons. He instructed Dreisbach to properly divide texts, and to be careful in the use of language, especially Pennsylvania German dialect. Albright's sermons were carefully arranged, and the language well chosen, considering his limited education. His messages were not pre-

pared on the spur of the moment, and delivered in a slipshod manner. He is known to have used a large commentary. Books were scarce in those days. He believed he had a message from God, and should deliver it in the best manner possible. He did not feel that the preacher need to apologize. On one occasion, when he heard Dreisbach apologizing for his deficiencies, he spoke privately to the young man saying, "When you feel your wants again, then tell it to Jesus, but do not complain of it to your hearers; it will not help them, or you either."

Albright filled his sermons with illustrations. Like Christ he found them in the everyday experiences of life. For example, one day he was busy greasing his shoes, as was the custom in those days. He accidentally spilled the vessel of oil. Seeing the blackness of its contents, he said, "The sinner's heart is just as black." Such common circumstances of life, he applied to the truths of God's Word.

On another occasion he was passing a garden where some people were working. He stopped and said, "My good people, do you also consider that Jesus agonized and struggled in the garden of Gethsemane, until his sweat became drops of blood, for the purpose of making your hearts gardens of God?"

In his preaching, he frequently quoted from the catechisms, and the hymnals as well as the Bible, in order to convince the people of what he was preaching.

He believed that public services should be spiritual, but he did not believe that they should be boisterous. One day during the service, he whispered

to Dreisbach, "It is so cold and dead. Oh pray! Pray!" But on another occasion when the service was quite lively, some shouting in a rather unbecoming and boisterous way, he called out, "Can you not dance more gracefully?" He tried to avoid the coldness and formality prevalent in many of the church services of his day, but at the same time, he did not want wild-fire.

Albright could not be criticized for the mis-use of money. His salary was very small, and if it were not for his tile-making he would have been unable to provide for himself and his family. His money had to reach as far as possible, in his work. One day he found Dreisbach exchanging horses' bridles with another man who demanded twenty-five cents to boot. Dreisbach willingly gave the money because the bridle he received included a bit. Albright declared that Dreisbach's bridle was as good as the other, and the additional money should not have been paid. Then he said, "We should be economical with money, and not be extravagant with it. We can often use it, and to do so is not avarice!" With salaries less than fifty dollars per year, wise spending was necessary.

Dreisbach testifies to Albright's attitude toward the ministry in this way, "His excellent instructions, and his pious example were very useful to me, as well as his earnest prayers, his childlike trust in God, and his humble submission to his holy will. These things made deep impressions upon my mind, and were a great help to me in my calling and work as a Christian minister. Oh, what a blessing to a

young preacher to have such a leader and counselor. Albright was a man of whom we have no occasion to be ashamed in any respect."

CHAPTER XVII.

CLOSING DAYS OF ALBRIGHT'S LIFE

The last itinerary of Albright, took him into Dauphin county, where he had preached on previous occasions. In the vicinity of Dauphin and Lingles-town, he found eager hearers. During a snowstorm in the winter of 1808, he stopped at the home of Peter Raidabach, about ten miles from Harrisburg, near Linglestown. Though a stranger to the family, his request for lodging was granted. Albright informed the host, that he was a minister seeking the lost sheep of his Master, and requested opportunity to preach in the home. Raidabach was a deacon and chorister in a nearby Lutheran Church, and because of his interest in Christianity, consented that Albright might preach.

The storm abated by evening, and clearing skies made it possible to invite the neighbors to the service. It was unusual to hear a strange preacher in this "good" Lutheran home, and quite a few came together out of curiosity to hear what he would have to say. The room was filled with people, by the time Albright was ready to preach.

He selected his text from I John 1:9—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The theme of the message was, "Salvation From Sin." With great power, he preached the doctrine of the new birth and purity of heart. This was new to these people, yet it was preached with such clearness that they could not help but understand. The statements were abundantly backed up with quotations from the Bible.

During the message, one man interrupted by saying, "This is preaching too sharply." At another point, a man asked, "Do you mean me? You have preached at me." To which Albright replied, "Yes, my friend, if it fits you, then I mean you." The host requested that Albright be permitted to finish his sermon, and out of respect for Raidabach this was permitted.

After the message, the people discussed among themselves whether this preacher was not too severe, and whether what he said was truth or error. Most of the people thought that he was too severe. Raidabach's brother remained after others went home and talked with Albright. He said, "You have preached a strange doctrine—that we can and must be made free from sin—our ministers do not teach thus. I have attended divine services from my youth up, but have never heard anything like it."

Albright pointed him to the scriptures, and told him to read that he might know which preaching was the truth. In the presence of Albright, he read the chapter from which the text of the evening's message was taken. Then they referred to the Lutheran catechism, which convinced the man that Albright's teaching was true. Yet, he could not fully comprehend it. Albright urged the brother and his host to continue searching the scriptures. Peter Raidabach admitted that something was wrong with the lives of the people in their community. Perhaps the church was keeping them in blindness and Albright was preaching the truth. This so angered Peter's brother that he exclaimed, "Yes, if this man was not a 'Knierutscher' (one who kneels in prayer), it

might be true; but our minister has never preached thus."

An appointment was made at the home for another service, on the next Sunday morning. A large audience again attended to hear Albright explain the scriptures. A group of loyal members of the local church, assembled for their regular service, but because of Albright's presence in the community, the people were so wrought up, that they could not hold their service. They could do nothing else, in their anger, than to talk about this man Albright, and call him names such as "Strawveleer" and similar epithets. They decided to go to the Raidabach home and rescue their chorister from Albright's influence, but when they arrived the service was concluded, and the Raidabach family had gone with Albright to the Michael Becker home near Hanover for an afternoon service.

This Michael Becker was a brother of the Kleinsville Beckers. A class was organized in the Hanover section, and many spiritual meetings were held in this community. At one service, a blind man became under such conviction that he cried out, "Fire, Fire." He believed the world was on fire. Another man dashed away on horseback to tell his family that the world was coming to an end, and was already beginning to burn. The Spirit of God brought conviction to many lost souls.

At another meeting held in Raidabach's home, the people tried to abuse Albright. They rushed into the house at the close of the service, and sought to lay hold on the preacher, as well as Peter Raidabach. They did not get Albright into their hands, but suc-

ceeded in dragging Raidabach outside. This so enraged the strong, fearless sons in the home, that they started to attack the assailants. But before using their fists, they asked their father, if it would be the right thing to do. When the father replied, "No," peace was restored.

A short time later, a two day meeting was held at this home, with John Walter and George Miller assisting Albright in the services. A great multitude assembled, though most of them came to criticize, and to persecute the worshippers. The power of darkness hung over the services until Sunday morning, when John Walter was preaching. Then the power of God seemed to come upon them, so that sinners literally fell to the ground, calling aloud for mercy. This caused consternation among the people, and the persecutors were seemingly bound with fetters. Some wonderful conversions took place. One husband sought to force his wife away from the place, because she was seeking peace of heart. In doing so, he was filled with terror, and fled allowing the wife to return to the service where she found the Lord as her Saviour.

A strong class was organized in this community, shortly after this and despite the persecution, the group gave real testimony to the forgiveness of sins, something seldom heard in the organized churches of that day. The churches taught that forgiveness came only at death, and not before. To live in sin, was not a disgrace, but an ordinary experience of church members. They thought there was no escape.

Eight days after Easter, Albright attended his

last service in this same home. He was so weak that he could not participate, remaining in bed most of the time, able only to be led to the barn for the service, for only a few minutes. Dreisbach and Miller did the preaching. From here he gave farewell to his fellow workers, and went toward home, on his last journey.

On Easter day he had conducted a General Meeting at the home of John Brobst in Albany Township, Berks County. The business of the group was transacted at this meeting, rather than holding an Annual Conference. John Erb, of the vicinity of Millersville, Lancaster County, had been converted the previous fall, and was now received as a preacher on trial. The preachers were stationed as follows: John Walter and Jacob Frey to the Lancaster-Schuylkill circuit; George Miller and John Dreisbach to the Northumberland circuit. Erb was to assist where needed.

One of Albright's parting exhortations to his workers, were the lines of a familiar hymn of that day, which translated reads as follows:

"Struggle even unto blood,
Press into the kingdom of God."

Another parting message is recorded, where he said, "In all that you do, or think of doing, let your object be to enhance God's glory, and advance the work of his grace in your own hearts, as well as among your brethren and sisters; and be diligent co-workers in the way which God has pointed out to you, to which he will grant you his blessing."

Among his papers was found a statement of his faith, during these last days. "And now, I thank

God, the Most High; and to him be eternal praise for his grace which he has given unto me—that he has kept me steadfast in the faith and pure in life, through trials, persecutions and sufferings, which have befallen me in this life, permitting me to see that his grace was not bestowed upon me in vain. The seals of my ministry are the converted brethren and sisters, whom I have begotten through the gospel, and whom I am certain to meet again in heaven, if they remain steadfast in faith, love and hope. And I trust firmly in God, that unto me will be given the inheritance of the saints in light—an incorruptible crown."

Jacob Gleim and Abraham Walter went with Albright from Linglestown as far as George Beckers, at Muehlbach. As he approached the home, he swayed in his saddle, with weakness. His glassy eyes, wore an imploring look, yet his emaciated hand was stretched forth in fatherly greeting to his friends. With low and husky voice, he asked, "Have you my bed ready? I have come to die." Though only eleven miles additional journey remained for him to travel to reach his own home, he was too weak to travel farther. Realizing that he was in good care at the Becker home, he went to bed, where a few days later, the body was so filled with consumption that it could no longer contain the soul of this man of God.

Christian friends gathered around his death bed, and prayed with him and for him. His own voice was often lifted in prayer in these last moments. Those who witnessed this time were so touched, they believed they were near the gates of heaven. Calmly

and righteously he fell asleep on the bosom of the Saviour. When he was asked, how he felt, shortly before passing away, he replied, "Happy and heavenly, soon I shall be in heaven." A smile came upon his face as he spoke.

His wife was sent for, but did not arrive in time to speak with him. Coming into the house, Mrs. Albright asked, "How is he?" Mrs. Becker replied, "He rests well." Even in death he rested.

May 20, 1808, the people gathered for the funeral service. Many of his converts came from a distance to attend the last rites. John Walter, who had labored with Albright the longest, preached the sermon from the text of Daniel 12:3. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." The power of God came upon the assembled people, and even though it was a time of sadness, there was shouting and joy. This was not because the people were glad that Albright died, but because he died happy, triumphant in the faith. God blessed the preached Word at this service and conviction came upon many hearts. As a result of this service, Walter received several invitations to preach the gospel in new places.

The body was laid away in the family burial plot of the Beckers. There a simple tombstone, inscribed in German marks the spot, where the bones of this sainted man rest. But Albright is not there. His soul is in the presence of the Lord, and his influence lives on. He has joined the ranks of those who stand in the presence of God, saved by grace. He had only been spared to labor for about twelve

years, yet in spite of persecution and suffering, he remained steadfast in the faith, and many souls were won to the Lord in his ministry.

Since that date the cemetery has been made a public burial ground for Kleinfeltersville, and a slab has been placed over the grave, bearing an English inscription. A stone memorial church was erected along the highway in 1850, known as the Albright Memorial Church. In front of the church is another monument erected to his memory, from which place one can look across the field and see where Albright died. The church is only used for special historical gatherings, as a more convenient and modern church is located in the village.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EFFECT OF ALBRIGHT'S DEATH ON THE MOVEMENT

Now that the leader of this evangelistic work was dead, would the movement stop? Would the workers and followers become discouraged without a leader?

Real discouragement came to the preachers and members, when they found themselves without their spiritual shepherd. At times they gave vent to their feelings with sorrowful weeping. Their grief would have become intolerable if their love to him had not wished him the enjoyment of sweet rest, after his days of hardship, and if God's promises had not been their strength and comfort. Even the membership who were practically all converted under Albright's ministry deeply mourned the loss of their spiritual father.

The world thought that the movement would end with the death of its founder. The established churches in many communities believed that their formal religion could now continue without the criticism of an Albright preacher. The members believed there would be no traveling preachers to condemn them of their sins. If the work was that of man, it might have stopped with the death of Albright. But it was the work of God. When one prophet leaves, another takes up the task. Elijah departs but there is an Elisha to carry on with the work. Other lips took up the story of the gospel. The ministers who remained were more deeply consecrated. The people applied themselves more diligently to the spread of the gospel in their own communities.

Even the funeral sermon preached by John Walter led to the conversion of a prominent Lebanon County farmer named Philip Breitenstein. This man became a prominent lay leader in the church, and was also active as a local preacher. The funeral sermon brought requests from other homes, for Walter to come and preach. A revival swept through the church, and many were brought to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Along with the advancement and gain in members, there was increased persecution. People continued to refer to the Albrights in derisive terms. Rufians would often break up the meetings. The preachers and faithful hearers were oftentimes abused and even injured. The organized churches of that day with few exceptions approved and urged this persecution. Worldliness prevailed in the churches, and the clergy had little sense of sin. Officials were selected who would condone sins of their pastors. Spiritual people were turned away from the churches. The loss of members, and their gifts, incensed the worldly mind. Propaganda was invented in press and pulpit, to oppose the Albrights. Some carnally minded people were so wrought up, as to be willing to attempt to kill the Albright preachers.

At Jonestown, Pa., a historic effort was made to break up the service, when John Dreisbach was preaching. A dangerous mob collected outside, and after some effort succeeded in breaking through the closed door into the building where the service was held. They seized the minister, then extinguished the lights, but in the darkness the preacher es-

caped from his captors. The fight that followed resulted in several people being bruised and injured. This event was historical, because the Albright people deemed themselves justified to take the matter to court, in order to learn their rights as American citizens. Seven of the ruffians were arrested and given a trial at the county court house in Harrisburg. They were convicted of breaking up a religious service, and fined accordingly. The Albrights remitted the fines, as they did not want to retaliate for the crime done to them, their only desire being to secure vindication of the right to hold religious assembly without interference. From this time on, the interruptions were not so frequent. These people were protected by law to hold services.

New recruits joined the ranks of the ministry. Matthew Betz of Millheim and John Erb of Conestoga were admitted into the Itinerancy in the autumn of 1808. George Miller though ill, supervised the work, but now an Annual Conference was held. Some may think that John Walter should have been the logical leader for the furtherance of this work; but it is well known that seniority does not always furnish the most capable leadership, nor that preaching ability is necessarily the best indication of executive ability. John Walter was the oldest preacher in point of years served, and an outstanding orator. But John Walter was not a leader.

Jacob Frey was sent into York County to open up a new circuit, and Erb took his place on the Lancaster circuit. Due to an indiscretion Frey was forced to retire at the conference in 1810, though he was reinstated later and employed in Ohio. Henry

Neibel, from New Berlin, entered the ranks as a ministerial supply during the winter of 1809. George Miller was forced to retire because of ill health, spending most of his time in writing a discipline for the church, and preaching occasionally.

A second annual conference was convened in April, 1809, at the home of George Miller, at Alle-mangle Corners, Albany Township, Berks County. This session opened with earnest prayer, after which the conference was organized. Difficulties in parliamentary procedure marked the session, as none of the ministers were as well versed in this, as Albright had been. They had no rules to follow, as the discipline was not yet completed, so they did what they thought best. They voted ordination as Elders to John Walter and John Dreisbach, but the ceremony was not performed until later at a Big Meeting held on the Henry Eby farm near Lebanon. Henry Neibel was received on probation. Five new classes were reported, making an increase of two hundred and six members for the entire church, since the last regular conference, two years before. This brought the total membership to four hundred and twenty-six. Many converts were reported for this period.

George Miller was authorized to continue his work on the much needed discipline, and to publish the same when completed, at his own expense. After much time spent in preparation, including many hours on his knees in prayer, Miller completed and printed the discipline in 1809. It was printed in the German language, but a translation of the title page as given in Yeakel's History of the Evangelical

Association, will serve to indicate something of its nature.

"Doctrines of Faith and General Rules of Christian Church Discipline and Order of The So-Called Albright People, intending to show the purpose of their union with God, and among themselves, in order to work out their soul's salvation, through the Grace of God, and in the unity of faith and chaste obedience to such rules, to live and walk according to the Word of God. Upon the advice of the Elders of this Evangelical community, and the instruction of the Conference. Published by George Miller, Reading. Printed for the author by John Ritter and Co. 1809."

The first edition of the Discipline, consisted of 75 pages, with Articles of Faith, taken largely from a German translation of the Methodist discipline made by Dr. Ignatius Roemer, of that church. The Discipline also contained articles on doctrine by Wesley and Fletcher, who discussed the subjects of Christian Perfection, Predestination and Antinomianism.

About the same time, John Dreisbach issued a catechism translated from the English. This catechism became very useful for the doctrinal instruction of the people. The name used by this conference was that of "The So-Called Albright People."

An increase in the contributions from the people, helped the work greatly. A bequest of one hundred dollars was received from Catherine Hecht, at her death, to be used in the support of ministers. Ministers could be reappointed to their charges, with more certainty of support.

The next year, 1810, another conference met and transacted its business. From that time until the present the work has been continuing. Even though Albright was not with them in the flesh, he was with them in the spirit, and his followers continued to proclaim the gospel, so greatly needed in the Pennsylvania German communities of Eastern Pennsylvania. After George Miller could not lead the work, John Dreisbach and others took charge. About this time, a young man was converted near Manheim, whose name was John Seybert. This humble bachelor, entered the ministry of the church, and in 1839 became the first one to bear the title of Bishop. It is not the purpose of this volume to describe the story of the movement after Albright's death, but merely to attempt a picture of his life, and his immediate effect upon the work. Other hands have adequately described the church from that day to the present.

CHAPTER XIX.

EFFECT OF ALBRIGHT'S DEATH ON HIS FAMILY.

When Albright died, not one of his own family were converted. While winning others to the Lord Jesus Christ, he was unable to win his own family. Like the Master himself, his own earthly brethren opposed his work. His wife was a member of the Reformed Church and seemed totally indifferent to Albright's attempts to bring people to a saving knowledge of the Christ as their Saviour. Albright was grieved at her attitude, yet was pleased that she was willing to manage the farm with care, while he was away preaching. If it had not been for her industry and frugality, the family could not have been kept from poverty, while Albright preached.

An indication of Albright's concern for his family, is found in a remark which he made to John Dreisbach, on one occasion when the two left Albright's home to travel to a preaching appointment. "It gives one pain to go out into the world to preach repentance and salvation to the people, and one's own people are still unconverted. Still for my Sarah, I have hopes."

By Sarah, he meant his daughter who was married to Noah Rank and lived in Tioga County. After her father's death, her entire family was converted at their new home in the northern county, and all but one joined the Evangelical Association. Two sons in this family became ministers in the church, namely Jacob and Richard. Jacob entered the Eastern Conference in 1837 and spent forty years in the itinerancy, several of these years as Presiding Elder.

Of the other two children who survived the father,

the oldest bore his father's name—Jacob. He died soon after his father, and left no family. The other son David lived at home until 1826 when he was married to Maria Raidabaugh. He had lived a very intemperate life, and was a constant worry to his mother, but before his death he answered the gospel invitation.

Catherine Albright, the widow, was converted shortly after her husband's death, and joined the Evangelical Association. She lived with David, until her death in 1828. The words, prayers and godly life of Jacob Albright had their effect, in God's own way and time. Reaping came, because he did not faint.

Nine of David's children who lived in 1890 were members of the church, and many of the family descendants are still active in the Evangelical churches, at this writing.

The two brothers of Jacob Albright, did not recognize a prophet in their family. Daniel was strongly opposed to the preaching of his brother, until later life. On a visit of Jacob to his brother's home, he left the following lines written in the fly leaf of Daniel's Bible:

"'Tis better never to be born,
Than Be forever lost."

In 1830, Daniel moved to Bucyrus, Ohio, and twenty-one years later, God spoke peace to his heart, after a deep and earnest penitence on the part of Daniel Albright. Then he could testify of the good counsel of his brother Jacob.

The other brother, George, was fifteen years younger than Jacob. In 1800 he moved to Snyder

County. He was a member of the Lutheran Church, but was considered a devoted Christian and allowed his brother to preach in his home. He died in 1852 and is buried in Yeagertown, near Lewistown, Pa.

It is interesting to note the opposition and indifference to Albright's ministry in his own home. He did not live to see any fruit of the gospel in his own family. But the good seed that was sown, brought forth fruit in its own good time and manner. Jacob Albright, today is revered and honored by his family as a sincere Christian preacher.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ALBRIGHT

Rev. John Dreisbach knew Albright very intimately, and his description of Albright should serve to help us form a mental picture of this pioneer preacher.

Dreisbach says, "He had a high forehead, blue, clear and somewhat deeply set and penetrating eyes, a well-formed, slightly Roman nose; mouth and chin in good proportion; his face was somewhat narrow and oblong, hair black, complexion fair, and body symmetrically formed. In him the sanguine and choleric temperaments blended, his movements were quick, but always graceful. When in later years, he became a minister of the gospel, his personal appearance made such a favorable impression that the remark was sometimes made: "Why he looks like an angel." This expression was the more emphatic because the outcry raised against him by persecutors had impressed many that this man must be a sort of a monster."

"His personal habits were of excellent order. He kept himself and his dress very clean and neat. He was punctual in all things. In his writing he was careful not to soil anything with ink. He would leave his bedroom in good order in the morning after rising. He abstained from the use of strong drink, though most people drank for health's sake in that day. He was industrious, economical and radically honest. He recommended economy to his preachers.

"He possessed clear, sound judgment, coupled with plenty of wit. His mind was meditative but not to the extent of being melancholy. He had a gift of

speaking, which demonstrated itself in his messages and even astonished his adversaries. He could preach in German or English, when he desired.

"He was methodical, and believed that the church should have good order. He did not approve of those who rejected Church Discipline.

"He was modest and unassuming. He certainly did not start a denomination to achieve notoriety, or to assume personal leadership. He regarded his work as the work of God, and not of man.

"Yet he was firm and decided after he clearly ascertained what was right and good. He submitted to what he believed to be the will of God, without hesitation. No difficulties, hardships, persecutions, or inner trials could move him from the path of right. He hearkened to the voice of God, and not to unconverted men.

"The sole purpose in his work was to seek the glory of God, and the salvation of men.

"When he spoke to men, he conducted himself in a friendly way, condescending to meet them. He loved the children. His enemies never heard him speak, harshly or insultingly. He was very patient with those whom he thought were ignorant. He was like a tender father to the young preachers. To hypocrites and Pharisees he applied his wit in an effective way."

He touched hearts because he was moved from within. His work was filled with zeal. It was always a delight and joy for him to carry on his labors. His sufferings were considered as nothing compared to the grace of God that Blessed him.

A TRIBUTE ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER

How Albright appeared to his followers a hundred years afterward is well summed up in the words of Rev. S. L. Wiest, who spoke at the Centennial services held in 1907, in Kleinfeltersville.

"Jacob Albright was a truly great man. Men of the world who are called great, become so by mounting up over the bodies, souls and welfare of others; but this man became great because he sacrificed himself to lift up his fellows. His was an exalted heroism. He was alone, humanly speaking, when he went forth to save his countrymen. He failed even to have the sympathies of his own family, and not a man as far as we know stood by him at first. There was no church, no society behind him to cheer him and pray for him, and no open doors before him to welcome him, even though he brought a message of peace. He had to make his opportunities and open his doors. But God was with him. He traveled much and far—amidst deprivations, cold, heat, and stony persecution, and all manner of hardships; but he never despaired and never faltered. In twelve short but full years he reached Kleinfeltersville, laid down and died, a martyr to his love for God and his fellow Pennsylvania Germans. The same spirit of courage, of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of unselfishness among us who are the after fruit of his labors, would mean blessings for us and the world which are almost inconceivable. May his mantle fall on all of us with a double portion of his spirit."