

NEWS LETTER

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 3

NOVEMBER 1966

*Published for
The Congregational
Christian Historical Society
and the Evangelical
and Reformed
Historical Society*

CONGREGATIONALISM AS AN ECUMENICAL PRINCIPLE

by DR. NORMAN GOODALL

I recognize that my title may only illustrate the fond assumption of all sectarians that they alone possess the key to true catholicity. At least I have stopped short of saying THE ecumenical principle and have contented myself with a modest AN. What is it, in this Congregationalism which we have inherited, which may prove to be congenial to the nature of a Christian society as this is portrayed in the structures of the Church universal?

I begin with the word "Grace", and with our conception of its nature and mode of operations. What is grace? It is the self-communication of God. It is the heart of the mystery of the Godhead disclosing itself in personal terms to persons. The word GOD will always point to the mystery of mysteries. No man hath seen God at any time . . . He dwelleth in light unapproachable whom no man hath seen or can see. Nevertheless, in the light of the Christian revelation the awful mystery of the Godhead is a mystery with a luminous centre. We have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Un-fathomable deeps lie hidden in the mystery, dimensions beyond our apprehension even though we master the physical dimensions of outer space. Yet we know that the heart of the mystery is personal — caring, knowing, identifying, communicating, saving. Grace is the communication of this personal heart of the Godhead. It is not just an attribute of God — his graciousness. It is not an impersonal essence which can be mechanically transmitted and drawn upon at will. It is God's presence and his very self — self-giving, self-disclosing, self-communicating. Grace is free-ranging in the freedom of a divine love, always going beyond the heights and depths of human love at its noblest.

This is the grace that has made us "Free" Churches; free in times past from "the tyranny of crown and mitre"; free from legally imposed forms of worship; free from all coercive authority, except the coercion of conscience. It is the grace that would free us from much else today if we had the courage to live in its freedom. This grace is the constituent principle of our life as Congregational Churches.

To conceive grace in this fashion is also to perceive it in the manifold generosity of its self-giving. We have known it as an authentic gift within the ordering of Congregational Churches, but we dare not contend that it is only given to men through this ordering. Grace being what it is, it always has the primacy over order. We deny that a particular, historic ordering of the Church, whether episcopal or non-episcopal, can be finally determinative of the gift and presence of grace. We dare not deny that through divers orders the grace of God has appeared bringing



salvation to men. It is not a careless latitudinarianism which has made it easy for Congregationalists to offer the freedom of pulpit and table to those of other communions. It is the recognition of that over-arching grace of God which transcends the divisions which history has occasioned amongst Christ's people.

I believe that the new and deepening relationships now being experienced within the ecumenical movement are an outworking of this same principle. These relationships have become possible, not because other denominations are becoming congregational in their polity and structure, but because there is a growing apprehension of the primacy of grace over order, and therefore a greater readiness to perceive and accept the marks of the presence of grace within differing orderings of the Church. This may not be the reason given for participation in the ecumenical movement. It is certainly not the only reason. Concern over the scandal of division, recognition of the pragmatic value of cooperation, desire to grow in understanding of one another and of the nature of our common calling and mission — all these are considerations which have prompted churches to commit themselves to the ecumenical movement. But no one who has participated in this movement in depth can fail to perceive that involvement in these things again and again leads to recognitions, commitments and loyalties which begin to possess a compulsion and tenacity which are the work of grace. We call the result a "given" unity, a unity that is the gift of grace. Despite our unresolved differences in Order, we perceive beyond the differences a work of grace which we dare not deny and in which we put our trust for the leading of this movement to its God-intended goal. Again, this does not mean that other denominations are becoming "Congregational." It is that a conception of grace which for the Congregationalist is a dominating principle proves to have ecumenical implications.

I turn to another illustration of my main claim. It is the fact that ecumenical experience heightens rather than diminishes the significance of the local congregation or parish. There is a paradox here which springs out of the nature of the Church itself. Through participation in the ecumenical movement churches have begun to see themselves in a new way within the world scene. They recognize themselves to be members one of another within the *oikumene*; they apprehend their mission as being to the *oikumene*, to the whole inhabited earth. Yet in the same process they have begun to ask themselves: "Is this, in fact, what we are?" Is this what the local Anglican parish portrays? Is this what that local Lutheran Church, or Congregational Church, or United Church, understands itself to be? Is it a centre upon which the ends of the earth converge, a point at which the manifold riches of grace may be perceived and appropriated? Is the local congregation the place from which the servants of Christ go into all the world, not only into an ecclesiastical *oikumene* but into that *oikumene* which is the total life of mankind in all its ranges? It is significant, I believe, that of the many studies initiated by the World Council of Churches during the eighteen years of its existence, none has commanded a more widespread interest than that which is concerned with the missionary structure of the congregation. This study takes the form of a radical re-examination of the extent to which the local congregation, whatever its denomination, is structured and acting as a focal point of the Church universal in its missionary obedience and ecumenical character. Again, it is relevant to note that within the Faith and Order movement it is urged that the next step needs to be taken at the local level where "all in each place" display the marks of a Church united in its ministry of the Word and Sacraments, in its nurture of Christ's flock and in its service and witness to the world.

Again, these symptoms within the ecumenical movement have not appeared because other churches say: "Go to, let us all become Congregationalists." It is certainly not, I fear, because other churches, seeing the perfect example of Congregationalists, have resolved to become like us. It is that within the liberating spirit of the ecumenical movement the relation of the particular to the universal and of the universal to the particular has become more vividly realized. The heart of the Gospel lies in the localization of grace in the Incarnation. The truth that we live in a universe in which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alive is anchored in particular Easter events. The universality of grace is proved where two or three are met together in the name. The Church universal appears where Christ is with his gathered people — "a free congregation of visible Christians", to use a phrase of Henry Jacob. It is on this ground that a Congregational principle has sustained a Congregational polity which makes high claims for the autonomy of the local Church. In defence of this polity, autonomy has been interpreted as a *right* to be fought for. Meeting as an Historical Association and in a Church with the history of this West Barnstable Meeting House, we are not likely to treat this claim lightly or to be unaware of circumstances which have given it a Gospel importance and which may do so again. Nevertheless, the word "autonomy" can be misleading, for any term which begins with "self" has serious limitations in Christian discourse. What has lain at the heart of this Congregational principle is not primarily a right but a calling, an obligation and a privilege. It is the calling of the local to be a chosen instrument of the universal. It is the privilege of the local to mirror in its worship and fellowship the fulness of the life of the Church catholic. It is the obligation of the local to embrace all the world in its thought and prayer, in its witness and service, and to give concreteness to the ecumenical. Thus today the future of the ecumenical movement does not turn primarily on what may happen in a world-wide organization called the World Council of Churches, under a new regime. It depends on what will happen in Madras, in Bulawayo, in Colombo, in a London suburb, in an English village, on Fifth Avenue, on a street in Harlem, in this ancient Church in West Barnstable, through a deeper apprehension of a Congregational principle that is new in its challenge and potency because, far from justifying the permanent existence of a sect, it is a dynamic capable of creating, re-creating and sustaining the Church catholic, the one People of Christ gathered in Him.

Further excerpts from address by Dr. Robert Paul on

HENRY JACOB AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PURITANISM

III

Jacob and Robinson

Let us turn now to the relationship between Henry Jacob and John Robinson. Who influenced whom? Did Robinson persuade Henry Jacob to become a Separatist as revered Congregational tradition has it, or was Robinson himself influenced by Jacob, Parker and Ames to become a non-Separatist Congregationalist, as our twentieth-century 'revisionists' would claim. I would emphasize that this is not a matter of polity. Both the Separatists and the non-Separatists of whom we are speaking maintained a 'congregational' form of church government and based their claim on the authority of the apostolic church in the New Testament. Their sole material

difference hinges on their respective attitudes to the Church of England as by law it was established.

The questions I have posed above are of great importance to those who are interested in early Congregational history, for if the traditional view is correct, then Henry Jacob, far from being the first to establish a 'Congregational' church on English soil, can claim very little distinction for having founded yet another Separatist church, of which there had been quite a number ever since Richard Fitz's church in the 1560s if not before. Furthermore, the traditional view not only makes Separatism a germinating influence (which it certainly was) in bringing Congregationalism to birth, but it makes Separatist Independency the original, authentic mainstream of the movement — and hence later Congregationalism, as it was expressed in the New England Way or in the Apologists of the Westminster Assembly, can be regarded only as deviations. These are some of the issues, and we are very well aware that historic prejudices about the nature of Congregationalism no less than ecumenical prejudices about it can blind us to the facts and cause us to misuse the evidence.

The development of the traditional view

What support is there for the traditional view that Robinson converted Jacob, and how did it arise?

In the first place, there is the undisputed fact that in 1616 Henry Jacob did consult Robinson. Further, he did gather a covenanted church in Southwark, and this church existed side by side with the parish churches of England. It is clear that Separatists were included in its membership, that other Separatist congregations arose out of it, and that Jacob tried to establish friendly relations with the 'Antient Church' of Separatists which continued in London. This certainly represents a change in Jacob, for up to the time of his return to England he could represent his membership and ministry as being essentially within the structure of the Established Church, since even the congregations in Holland, with all their Puritan vagaries, were regarded simply as extensions of the Church of England abroad. The question is not *whether* there was a development in Jacob's thought on the Church, but how far it went.

Furthermore, the theory of his having been influenced by Robinson is given some support by the ambiguity of one of the few documents of the period. In the Jessey Memoranda we have an account of the steps by which Jacob was moved to establish it in London.

"He haveing had much conference about these things here; after that in the low Countries he had converse & discoursed much with Mr. Jn. Robinson late Pastor of the Church in Leyden & with others about them. . . ."

It then goes on to say that after he returned to London Jacob discussed the matter with some of his Puritan friends.

There is just enough in the statement to support a suggestion that Jacob's decision to found the church was due to Robinson, and that is clearly the way in which Daniel Neal, who knew of the document and used it, interpreted it. Neal points out that Jacob's earlier writings had been in a Puritan non-Separatist vein, and adds, "but going to *Leyden*, and conversing with Mr. *Robinson*, he embraced his Sentiments of Discipline and Government, and transplanted it into *England* in the Year 1616."

I believe that Champlin Burrage is quite right in suggesting that the 'tradition' that Robinson converted Jacob is to be traced to Neal. Indeed, given the struggle

of Nonconformity in nineteenth-century England, and Congregationalism's need to adapt herself to the conditions of the new Republic in America, there was a good deal in Separatism that made it congenial to nineteenth-century Congregationalism on both sides of the Atlantic: there can be no doubt about Separatism's uncompromising opposition to Anglicanism, the support it gave to a theory of the separation of Church and State, and the reliance it seemed to place on 'rugged individualism' and local autonomy.

With the tradition established and sufficient reasons for maintaining it, it is not to be wondered that historians accepted it. Hanbury, Dale and Clark in England, and Dexter, Young and Bacon in America (to cite but a few) all accepted the view that Robinson converted Henry Jacob to 'Congregationalism' (=Separatism). The same view seems to have been taken by his biographer Gordon Goodwin in the *D.N.B.*, and by such recent writers as Albert Peel and R. Tudor Jones.

The 'revisionist' theory, that Johnson had been converted more or less to the non-Separatist position by Henry Jacob and his friends, was fully expounded by the Baptist scholar Champlin Burrage in *The Early English Dissenters* in 1912, but such was the strength of the entrenched tradition that Burrage's book has not been given the consideration that it deserved until comparatively recently. Burrage was certainly not modest in what he claimed for his researches and he was entirely forthright in what he felt they proved. Among the sixty-four points at which he claimed the historical understanding of early Dissent needed revision, he listed (Nos. 56 and 57):

"The beginnings of Independency or Congregationalism are not as heretofore, traced to the Brownists or Barrowists but to the Congregational Puritanism advocated by Henry Jacob and William Bradshaw about 1604 and 1605, and later put in practice by various Puritan congregations on the Continent, whence it was brought to America and back into England. Puritan Congregationalism accordingly did not have its source in separatism, nor was it separatist in spirit, but was constantly declared by its upholders as involving separation only from the world, and not from the Church of England."

"Through the agency of the Congregational Puritans and especially Henry Jacob, John Robinson was won back from the ways of separatism before 1616 (certainly before 1618) while Jacob instead of being influenced by Robinson towards separatism according to tradition, can readily be shown never to have been a separatist from the Church of England."

In noting the appearance of the book, the Editor of the *Transactions* of the Congregational Historical Society (England) commented that "Mr. Burrage's views on this point and some others may not meet with universal acceptance; but the evidence by which he supports them can never be altogether disregarded." Nevertheless, church historians did their best!

Burrage supported his thesis with manuscript evidence that certainly showed not only a close relationship between Jacob's congregation and Robinson, but also that if anyone had made a shift it was John Robinson in his willingness to support members of Jacob's mixed congregation against the more rigid Separatists, and particularly in his *Letter to the Church of Christ in London*, and in *A Treatise of the Lawfulness of Hearing of the Ministers in the church of England*, which were written at the end of his life. In the former he had said this of Jacob's congregation, in reply to the London Separatists' question "Whether Mr. Jacob's congregation be a true church or no. We have so judged, and the elders of the church at Amsterdam, and the body of the church with them as we conceive; and so we judge still. . . ." This, together with his more moderate attitude on the question of attending services in the Church of England certainly shows that Robinson had shifted from the rigidity of his previous Separatism.

I would point out that the issue is not whether Jacob and Robinson were ready to accept each other — that is undeniable — but to determine which one moved and how far.

The clue which Champlin Burrage revealed about the importance of non-Separatist Puritanism was first taken seriously not by the church historians, but by the secular historian, Perry Miller, who virtually made it the basis of his treatment of *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts*. Miller's thesis is that non-Separatist Puritanism developed a Congregational wing and that the tenets were worked out by a very tight-knit group of men in Holland that included Ames, Jacob, Parker and Bradshaw together with the later men who governed New England and those who became Independent leaders in the Westminster Assembly.

From the point of view of church historians Burrage's researches have yet to be incorporated into a full-scale treatment of Congregationalism. Recently, under the influence perhaps of the revived interest in the beginnings of Congregationalism caused by the merger, there have appeared several monographs that have used them — yea, even rejoiced in them! Perhaps the most important of these was that of Verne D. Morey, 'History Corrects Itself', which appeared in 1954, and which held to the full-fledged thesis that Robinson "finally went full-circle, by concluding that members of his church could, without censure, participate in public worship in the church of England."

IV

Assessment

Well, what are we to make of it?

1. In attempting some assessment of the relations between Jacob and Robinson, let me take Verne Morey's article as a starting-point. In his treatment of John Robinson's position he quotes this passage from John Cotton's *The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared* (1648), where Cotton says that Robinson

"resorted to many judicious divines in England for the clearing of his scruples which inclined him to separation . . . he addressed himself to Dr. Ames and Mr. Parker. . . . The fruit of which was . . . that the disswader himself confesses: 'He came back, indeed, the one half of the way, acknowledging the lawfulness of communicating with the church of England. . . .'"

But I think, if we are to do justice to Robinson, and incidentally to Cotton and the 'disswader' (Robert Ballie), we should quote rather more of that passage. It reads like this:

"when hee came into Holland, hee addressed himself to Doctor Ames, and Mr. Parker: rather preventing them with seeking counsell and satisfaction, then waiting for their compassion. But as they excelled in learning and godlinesse, so in compassion and brotherly love also; and therefore as they discerned his weanednesse from selfe-fulnesse, so did they more freely communicate light to him, and received also some things from him. The fruit of which was (through the Grace of Christ) 'that the Disswader himselfe confesseth, hee came backe indeed the one halfe of the way: Acknowledging the lawfulnessse of communicating with the Church of England, in the Word and Prayer: but not in the Sacraments and Discipline, which was (saith hee) a faire Bridge, at least a faire Arch of a Bridge for union. But when he saith, hee came on to communicate with the Church of England in the Word and Prayer, it must not bee understood of the Common-Prayer-Book, but of Prayers conceived by the Preacher before and after Sermon.'"

Cotton thought that this represented "more than halfe way of any just distance," but I suggest it represents somewhat less than that. If the passage proves anything, it is that John Robinson, even at the end, was not prepared to accept the Book of

Common Prayer, not prepared to recognize the discipline of the Church of England, and not prepared to join in its Sacraments. Yet he had *moved*, for he was not the rigid Separatist that he had been previously. Both the fact that he shifted his position and the clear limits that he set to his recognition of the Church of England must be equally recognized.

2. Henry Jacob had also moved, for in 1616 he was not the fixed Puritan that he had been earlier. He had moved at least to the position where he was prepared to set up a gathered church in London side by side with the parish churches. It is true that he did not regard these churches as false churches nor is there any evidence that he ever came to that position. But neither did he regard the Separatist churches at this stage of his career as false churches, and he seems to have tried to develop a closer relationship between his own congregation and the London Separatists — an attempt at *rapprochement* that was largely frustrated by the exclusive and intransigent attitude of the Separatists. But his congregation included both those who were non-Separatists like himself, and Separatists.

These things represent no less a shift of position than we see in Robinson, and we do no dishonour to Jacob to suggest that he too may have been influenced by Robinson. Indeed, John Cotton gives us a clue that the influence of Robinson and the Puritans in Holland was mutual, for they [i.e., the Puritans] “received also some things from him.”

3. If indeed Henry Jacob’s congregation in 1616 included in the Covenant those who were Separatist and those who were non-Separatist, then we must say that it was not a Separatist church, for no Separatist church would have tolerated such a mixed membership.

Perhaps this is the reason why there is a persistent tradition that Jacob was the true founder of Independency in England. We know that his son said that he was the first Independent in England, and it seems that there was a time when those who accepted his form of churchmanship were known as ‘Jacobites’. In a Ms. quoted by Burrage describing various sects, we read:

- “1. Some are Iacobites who require a new Covenant for members of a church to make before they can be Communicants,
2. Condemne the Decisive & Iudging power of all Classes & Synods; & that they have only a power of Counsailing & advising, because every particular Congregation is a church; and that a Compleat church, and that it is Immediately given vnto every congregation from Christ to be a single & vncompounded policy. (These are the words of Mr. Iacob, & Parker, & Baynes. . . .)”

Burrage makes the comment, which I would regard as just, that “the reader will notice that the Independent Puritans are not here called Robinsonians, as they probably would have if, according to tradition, Robinson had taught Jacob the views of congregational Puritanism.” Certainly the views represented in this passage were precisely the views of later Independency, and in particular the Independency of the Apologists of the Westminster Assembly. We must also recognize that there may well have been variations within the non-Separatist Congregationalists in Holland. There is at least a hint of this as between Robert Parker and Henry Jacob and the power to be granted to synods — a difference of opinion that is recorded in John Paget’s *Defence of Church Government*. Paget says:

“When he (Parker) came from Leyden, where he and Mr. Jacob sojourned together for some time, he professed at his first coming to Amsterdam, that the use of synods was for counsel and advice only, but had no authority to give a definitive sentence. After much conference with him when he had more seriously and maturely considered this question, he plainly changed his opin-

ion, as he professed, not only to me, but to others; so that some of Mr. Jacob's opinion were offended at him and expostulated, not only with him, but also with me for having occasioned the alteration of his judgment."

Surely within this period when the group was searching for its distinctive position, we can expect that members would shift their position as new light came to them.

At the same time we must point out that if Jacob's mixed congregation is evidence that he was not a Separatist, Robinson's readiness to defend and even to accept members from that congregation is an equally clear indication that Robinson had gone far in that direction. Both men were saying similar things but from different positions and with differing emphases, for as John von Rohr remarks, although "Jacob refused to be 'of so rigid and severe an opinion' as to hold that those outside of right and visible church order were damned, he remained convinced that 'by a true Visible Church (and not otherwise ordinarily) we come to learne the way of life.'"

Perhaps we shall do most justice to both men if we think not so much of which one won the debate, but of two kindred spirits reaching out across the divide to make a bridge. Robinson probably stands a little to the Separatist side, and Jacob stands a little to the non-Separatist side, but they were probably beginning to understand that it didn't matter very much, because their hands touched. They shared the same spirit of charity. And if you want to make that kind of ecumenical concern the foundation principle of the earliest Congregationalism, I for one will not grumble. For the coming together of these two men is perhaps ultimately far more significant than for the 'victory' of either of them.

New Constitution for The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society

Several constitutional changes have been adopted by the Society to help streamline their work as part of the Historical Commission of the United Church of Christ. The name has been officially changed to "The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society." The work of the Society will be directed by an Executive Council composed of official representatives of Conferences, Associations, Regional Chapters, and twenty-five members-at-large elected annually by the Society, together with the officers of the Society.

An Administrative Committee which will consist of the officers and three members-at-large will have direct responsibility for the administration of the Society and its archives and libraries.

The provisions of the new constitution will be implemented at the coming Annual Meeting.

Central Archives To Move

Plans are under way for the moving of the central archives and the Lancaster library into the new library building which has been named the Philip Schaff library on the campus of the Lancaster Theological Seminary. The Seminary will provide the new quarters and all the equipment needed to house it. The Society will assume the responsibility of moving the collection.

The move from Fackenthal Library at Franklin and Marshall College to the new quarters will take place this coming summer.

The new library is fast moving toward completion and will make a beautiful addition to the Franklin and Marshall campus.

Dr. George Bricker will continue to serve as Librarian and as custodian of the archives of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society.

We regret to report the death of Judge Florence E. Allen, a member of the Board of Governors since the founding of the Congregational Christian Historical Society in 1952 and at the last Annual Meeting one of the six persons made Honorary Members of the Board of Governors. Judge Allen had a long and distinguished career as a Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court and then for 25 years as the only woman member of the Federal Appellate Court. She had a keen interest in the work of our Society and her loss is deeply felt by her many associates and friends.

Rev. William Rupp Dies

The Rev. William Rupp, member of the Historical Commission and of the Executive Committee of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society, as well as president of the Eastern Chapter, died September 24 after a short illness. He was a keen student of history, especially the history of the German Reformed Church and of the Pennsylvania German settlement. He was instrumental in beginning the publication of the Occasional Papers of the Eastern Chapter.

Résumé of an address given at the Annual Meeting
of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society

AN EXAMPLE OF REVIVALISM AND RENEWAL IN AMERICAN CHURCH HISTORY THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, 1820-1863

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The heritage of the Reformed Church in the United States included the basic concepts of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. All important was the Church, the congregation chosen for eternal life. Parish life among the Reformed in Germany included regular instruction in the Reformation theology expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism, spiritual nourishment of the sacraments administered on the important holy days and other occasions, and worship according to the forms of the Palatinate Liturgy.

Gradually, the Church drifted from its heritage. The Pietist movement, which developed in Germany during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, initiated the departure. What pietism initiated, emigration to America stimulated. In America, the German Reformed people experienced serious problems which rendered the Church susceptible to the new measures for promoting revival of religion which were prevalent in many American churches during the nineteenth century.

After 1820, when the Church's classes held their first meetings, during the 1830's, and early '40's, the records of the Church's administrative bodies and its periodicals consistently reported protracted meetings and camp meetings, featuring pungent preaching and frequent altar calls. At these services, some worshippers revealed extreme emotional enthusiasm by groaning during prayers, beating out tunes with their feet during the singing of hymns, clapping their hands, and jump-

ing and tumbling about on the floor. The Eastern and Ohio synods, the classes, and the Church's periodicals expressed approval of these methods of promoting revivals and acquiesced in their results.

By the mid-1840's, the Church was in danger of losing its Reformation heritage. The new measures had replaced instruction in the Catechism as the primary method of evangelism. Conversion had replaced baptism as the moment of entry into the covenant relationship with God. Coming to the anxious bench in response to the altar calls had replaced the Lord's Supper as the central act of worship. Beside such dramatics, the steady ministry of the Church paled into insignificance. Revivalism, new measures and all, contained the seeds of renewal, for it stimulated a study of specifically Reformed doctrines and practices which revealed how far afield revivalism had carried the Church. A leader in this study was the Reverend John W. Nevin, professor of Theology at the German Reformed Seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. In 1843, he published a very influential work, *The Anxious Bench: A Tract for the Times*, wherein he discredited the system of new measures by demonstrating how the subjective struggle for conversion obscured God's initiative in effecting man's salvation. Reinforcing Nevin was the Reverend Philip Schaff, who became Professor of Church History at the Mercersburg Seminary in 1844. In his Inaugural Address, "Principles of Protestantism," later published and circulated widely, Schaff emphasized the validity of the Church's traditions.

As the Reformed Church in the United States began to ponder the deeper meaning of its heritage, it turned away from its dependence on revivalism. Administrative bodies which had earlier supported revivalism condemned it after the mid-1840's. Reports of emotional excesses faded from the Church's periodicals. Simultaneously, the Church infused spiritual life into its own traditional doctrines and practises. It adopted what Nevin called "the system of the Catechism" which emphasized the Christian nurture provided by the Church. By the tercentenary of the publication of the Heidelberg Catechism in 1863, when the Eastern and Ohio synods merged to form the General Synod, the Church had emerged from its flirtation with revivalism firmly renewed in its own history and sense of mission.

The Church's ultimate rejection of nineteenth century revivalism demonstrates an institution cannot violate its history and become what it has not been. In order to move into its future with integrity, the Church's present had to come to terms with its past.

At a meeting of the Historical Commission of the United Church of Christ, held in New York on October 25, it was voted to hold a joint meeting of the two Historical Societies in Cleveland, Ohio, on Wednesday, April 12, 1967. Separate Business Meetings of the two Societies will be held from 10:00-11:30 A.M. At 12:15 there will be a Praise Service in the Cleveland Music Hall in honor of the 10th Anniversary of the uniting of the Congregational Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church to form the United Church of Christ. Following

luncheon there will be an address on the Protestant Reformation in honor of the 450th Anniversary of Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses on the doors of the Wittenburg Church in 1517. At 4:15 there will be an address honoring the 150th Anniversary of the beginning of the Evangelical Church Union in Germany. Thus we will be celebrating three great anniversaries at this significant meeting. Speakers will be announced in the Spring News Letter. Save this important date now and plan to be present.

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