

THE
MERCERSBURG QUARTERLY REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1857.

ART. I.—THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH DIET OF GERMANY.

THE German Evangelical Church Diet has now been in existence since 1848, and become one of the most important and encouraging facts in the history of modern Protestantism. A condensed account of its origin, history, influence and prospects, based upon the official reports of its proceedings, as they were published from year to year, upon personal observations made at its seventh meeting at Frankfort on the Maine, and upon intercourse and correspondence with its founders and leading members, must be both interesting and instructive to those who wish to become fully acquainted with the present state of theology and religion in the land of the Reformation.

The Kirchentag, or Church Diet, is a free association of pious professors, ministers and laymen of Protestant Germany, for the discussion of the religious and ecclesiastical questions of the day, and for the promotion of the interests of practical Christianity, embraced under the term *Inner Mission*. It meets annually in one of the leading cities of Germany, and is at present by far the largest and most respectable representation of evangelical Christianity in that country. Its doctrinal basis is the Bible, as explained by the ecumenical symbols and the evangelical confessions of the sixteenth century. It comprehends thus far four protestant denominations, the Lutheran, German Reformed, United Evangelical (a union of the former two), and the Moravian brotherhood, and holds intercourse at the same

time, with foreign evangelical Churches of Switzerland, France, Holland, England, Scotland and the United States, as far as they may choose to have themselves represented at its meetings, by official delegates on the above general Christian and positive protestant basis. The Church Diet is no formal or official union of these denominations, but a free confederation simply of many hundreds and thousands of their ministerial and lay members, although it looks undoubtedly to a stronger consolidation and coöperation of the original Churches of the Reformation against their common enemies from without and from within. All parts of Germany, especially Prussia and Württemberg, the two leading evangelical States, send delegates to this body, and amongst them their very best men. But the rationalists and semi-rationalists, as well as those rigid Lutherans who refuse to hold any ecclesiastical communion with the Reformed and the Unionists, oppose it,—the former, because it is too orthodox and churchly for them; the latter, because it is not confessional and churchly enough, in their sectarian and exclusive sense of the term.

This assembly may be regarded as the practical fruit of that vigorous evangelical theology which, for the last twenty or thirty years, has risen in successful opposition against the most learned and dangerous forms of infidelity. The leaders of that theology, as Tholuck, Nitzsch, Müller, Hengstenberg, Dorner, Ullmann, Hoffmann, Ebrard, Lange, etc., are also amongst the principal founders and supporters of the Kirchentag. But the war, victoriously waged in the field of science and literature, must now be carried into the congregations and the practical life of the people. This work must be continued and completed by the rising generation of ministers trained by orthodox and pious professors, by the various Church-governments, and by free associations, of which the one under consideration is by far the largest and most influential.

The German Church Diet took its rise in the eventful year 1848, when all the thrones of Europe—save those of England, Belgium and Russia—trembled, and the very

foundations of civil and religious society seemed to give way, to make room, as was to be feared, to a reign of rationalism, atheism and Satanism. It appeared after the storms and earthquakes of revolution, as a rain-bow of peace and promise, on the horizon of Germany, and has outlived the commotions and mushroom creations, the bright hopes and dark fears of the memorable year of its birth.

It is true it was prepared long before by the pastoral conferences, which, since the days of a revival of religious life, assembled annually pious ministers and laymen in various parts of Germany; and also by the desire of many of the most distinguished divines, for a closer union and independent action of the national churches, held under the bondage of as many secular governments. But the imminent danger of an approaching dissolution of all order in that revolutionary year on the one side, and the labors of the Parliament of Frankfort for a political regeneration of Germany on the basis of unity and constitutional liberty, on the other, matured this desire and suggested the plan of a great meeting of all the true friends of Christianity, for mutual consultation on the present crisis of the country, and for forming a confederation of the Protestant Churches without destroying their distinctive features or interfering with their internal affairs; in fine, a sort of evangelical defensive and offensive alliance against the growing flood of infidelity and destruction.

These ideas sprang up simultaneously, as with the instinct of historical necessity, in different minds, amongst which Dr. von Bethmann Hollweg, of Berlin, Dr. Dorner, then at Bonn, Dr. Ullman and Hundeshagen, of Heidelberg, Dr. Wackernagel, then at Wiesbaden, Bonnet, Heller and Haupt, in or near Frankfort, were the most active; and in several local pastoral conferences, especially one held at Bonn, on the 11th of May, 1848, one at Berlin, on the 21st of June, and two at the Sandhof, near Frankfort-on-the-Maine, on the 3rd of May and 21st of June, of the same year.

At the last mentioned meeting many perplexities arose, and doubts were started as to the success of such a serious undertaking, when a true Christian nobleman, von Bethmann Hollweg, who was subsequently elected President, of the Kirchentag, quieted their fears and re-animated the courage by pointing to the never failing source of all true strength. "It is the Lord, my friends," he said, "who builds the Church. Never forget this! Whether the assembly spoken of will accomplish what we desire and hope, no one can tell. Our resolution must be an act of faith. Like Peter, we shall have to walk on the sea; but we know also that the Lord does not suffer any one to perish who trusts in him. If we look merely upon ourselves and upon the scattered, distracted and weak members of the Church, we would have indeed to despair. But if we raise our eyes in faith to Him, who is the Lord, we may venture it."

Finally, the Sandhof Conference, after a session of nine hours, resolved to call a general free assembly of distinguished ministers and laymen of the Lutheran, German Reformed, and United confession, to be held at Wittenberg, over the grave of Luther, for the purpose of consulting on the true interests of the evangelical Church of Germany at the present crisis, on the basis of the evangelical faith. An invitation to this effect was issued, signed by nearly fifty names from all parts of Germany, well known for their high standing and excellent Christian character.

Accordingly the first Kirchentag, consisting of five hundred members, eminent divines and ministers, (Nitzsch, Müller, Heubner, Hengstenberg, Lehnerdt, Sack, Sartorius, Krummacher, Ball, Wichern, etc.) statesmen and lawyers, (von Bethmann Hollweg, Stahl, von Gerlach, Götze, etc.,) and plain Christians of all classes of society and parts of Germany, especially from Prussia, met as one brotherhood on the 21st of September, 1848, in that venerable town so well known as the cradle of the Reformation, in that very church to whose doors its signal, the ninety-five thesis, were once affixed; and on the tombstones of Luther and his friend, Melanthon, whose last desire and

prayer was for the unity of distracted Christendom. The old lecturer's chair of the former University was used as the rostrum, adorned with the portrait of Luther and with the significant motto of the Reformation, "*Verbo solo—fide sola,*" (On the word alone—through faith alone). A fervent prayer of the late venerable Dr. Heubner, then President of the Theological Seminary at Wittenberg, and the singing of the celebrated war-and-victory hymn of the evangelical faith, written by Luther a year before the Diet of Augsburg, opened the proceedings. It faithfully expressed the feelings which pervaded this first meeting from beginning to end, much better than we could do it, and may, therefore, claim a place here in the admirable translation of Thomas Carlyle.

A safe stronghold our God is still,
 A trusty shield and weapon ;
 He'll help us clear from all the ill
 That hath us now o'ertaken.
 The ancient Prince of hell
 Hath risen with purpose fell,
 Strong mail of craft and power
 He weareth in this hour,
 On earth is not his fellow.

With force of arms we nothing can,
 Full soon were we down-ridden ;
 But for us fights the proper man,
 Whom God himself hath bidden.
 Ask ye, Who is this same ?
 CHRIST JESUS is his name,
 The Lord Zebaoth's Son,
 He, and no other one,
 Shall conquer in the battle.

And were the world all Devils o'er
 And watching to devour us,
 We lay it not to heart so sore,
 Not they can overpower us.
 And let the Prince of ill
 Look grim as e'er he will,
 He harms us not a whit,
 For why ? His doom is writ—
 A word shall quickly slay him.

God's word, for all their craft and force,
 One moment will not linger,
 But spite of hell, shall have its course,
 'Tis written by His finger.
 And though they take our life,
 Goods, honor, children, wife,
 Yet is their profit small;
 These things shall vanish all,
 The Church of God remaineth.

The significance of this hymn and its thrilling effect on that occasion, will be better understood, if we recollect all the revolutionary storms, wars and rumors of war, by which the first German Church Diet was surrounded. The frightful murder of Lichnowsky and Auerswald, had just been committed in the streets of Frankfort, and broken the remaining moral weight of the national assembly; the excesses of the revolutionists and destructionists had reached their height, and the future looked dark and gloomy as it never did before. With such prospects before them, the assembly at Wittenberg felt the whole weight of its awful responsibility; past differences were forgotten, and the disciples of one common Master pressed together into a close adhesion and holy brotherhood as they awaited the issue of their own yet dimly apprehended mission. Surrounded, as they were, by the sacred associations of the most remarkable period in modern Church history, they looked less to Luther's name, so long abused by dead Churches, than to Luther's God, and were animated by the very spirit of repentance and faith, of humble self-distrust and strong confidence in Christ which had animated the reformer, without suffering themselves to be distracted by the minor domestic controversies which disfigured the great work of the sixteenth century.

"It was," says a well informed and esteemed English friend, on this meeting, (Mr. Tho. H. Gladstone, in an article on the Kirchentag for the London Eclectic Review, April, 1855)—"it was indeed a new and interesting sight to behold the learned professor seated side by side with the simple-minded Christian, the dignified ecclesiastic taking

brotherly counsel with the humble lay-missionary or provincial school teacher. It was no less a strangely novel spectacle to see the strongest upholders of the respective orthodoxies, Lutheran and Reformed, forgetting doctrinal differences in the harmony of Christian purpose and Christian love; still more to see the object of their common jealousy, the "United" Church, as well as the Moravian and other dissenting communities, completing the picture of Christian union and brotherly love by being admitted to their association without question of their ecclesiastical polity or Church rule. All seemed to point to the dawning of a better day. And the tempest of persecution with which the Church was assailed, appeared already converted into a blessing, in the recognition of its essential unity, and the sense of the mutual dependence of its parts as members of that mystic body which is one in its living Head. This feeling of Christian fellowship was heightened to the sublime, and received an expression too deeply affecting ever to be erased from the memory of those who witnessed the scene, when, at a solemn moment on the last day, the earnest Krummacher, in one of his fervent addresses, pledged the members to stand true to one another in the day of persecution, which seemed about to burst upon them, and received in the prolonged affirmation of the whole assembly, the assurance that they would bear each other as members of one family in their hearts and prayers, would receive each other in the day of persecution to house and home till the storm should be overpast, and would account as their own sister and their own children the widows and orphans of the brother who should seal his testimony by the martyr's death."

The results to which this deeply solemn and interesting assembly arrived in three days session (from the 21st to the 23rd of Sept.,) were:

1. An invitation addressed to all the Protestant Churches of Germany, to hold on the 5th of November, 1848, the Sunday following the anniversary of the Reformation, a day of general prayer and humiliation, in order to be-

gin the work of the regeneration of Protestantism with the same spirit of true evangelical repentance, with which Luther commenced the Reformation, and which he so clearly expressed in the very first of his ninety-five theses.

2. The resolution to form a confederation of all those German Churches which stand on the ground of the reformatory confessions, not for the purpose of an amalgamation of these Churches and an extinction of their peculiarities and relative independence, but (a) for the representation and promotion of the essential unity and brotherly harmony of the evangelical Churches; (b) for united testimony against every thing unevangelical; (c) for mutual counsel and aid; (d) for the decision of controversies; (e) for the furtherance of ecclesiastical and social reforms, especially Inner Missions; (f) for the protection and defense of the divine and human rights and liberties of the evangelical Church; (g) for forming and promoting the bond of union with all evangelical bodies out of Germany.

We see from all this, that the first Kirchentag was animated by a truly Christian spirit, placed itself wisely on the most solid basis, viz: the Gospel and the Reformation, evangelical repentance and evangelical faith, and proposed the noblest practical aims, which are well worthy of the united efforts of all Protestant Churches, in and out of Germany. It is evident, from its subsequent history, that the Lord has eminently blessed it for the good of his Church, although its original plan was considerably modified.

But before we follow its progress, we must say a few words on the relation of the Church Diet to a somewhat similar body, the Evangelical Alliance. This originated two years earlier, in August, 1846. It met first under the name of the "World's Convention," in the city of London, and consisted of nine hundred and twenty-one members; forty seven of which were from the Continent, eighty-seven from North America, the rest from England and Scotland. It convened again in London during the World's Fair, in 1851, a third time at Paris, in 1855, and is to meet at Berlin in 1857, at the special invitation of the King of Prussia.

Both the Kirchentag and the Alliance are no union of Churches, but a union of Christians, laymen as well as ministers, no legislative assembly, but simply a free association with moral power. Both afford an admirable occasion for Christians from all parts of the world, to hold fellowship and consult with each other about the common interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Both tend thus to promote the true unity of the spirit, and to strengthen the interests of divided Protestantism. But they differ at the same time in the following points :

1.) The one is an essentially German, the other an essentially English and Scotch plant.

2.) The former has at least a *semi-official* character, and looked at first to a confederation of the Churches of the Reformation, which the latter never contemplated.

3.) The Kirchentag is an association simply of four denominations, Lutheran, German Reformed, United, and Moravian, although it received delegates also from foreign evangelical bodies, while the Alliance at its first meeting, was composed of representatives of about fifty denominations, amongst which the Scotch Presbyterians and the English Baptists seem to have had thus far the controlling influence.

4.) The Kirchentag never pretended to make a new creed, but took for its doctrinal basis the Bible and the original Confessions of evangelical Protestantism from the period of the Reformation ; while the Alliance issued a new symbol in 1846, consisting of nine short articles, which express the fundamental doctrines of Protestantism, in such a manner as to exclude none of the leading Protestant sects except Unitarians, Universalists, and Quakers.

5.) The Kirchentag aims at an internal regeneration of Protestantism over against infidelity and vice within its own borders ; while the Alliance had from the beginning a special reference to the foreign foes, and intended to erect a bulwark against the progress of Romanism and Puseyism.

6.) The Kirchentag is more extensive and practical in its operation, as it embraces all the important questions of the time and the whole field of Inner Mission ; while the Alliance con-

fined itself so far mainly to the preparation of reports on the condition of the various Churches of Christendom, and to the promotion of religious liberty throughout the world, in opposition to the intolerant and persecuting spirit of Rome.

Since 1848, the Kirchentag met every year in September, with the exception of 1855, when it would have assembled at Halle, according to appointment, had it not been providentially prevented by the sudden appearance of the cholera in that city. The following is a list of the places of meeting, with the number of regular attendants, exclusive of the large crowd of spectators :

1. Wittenberg,	a. 1848,	members about	500
2. Wittenberg,	1849,	“ “	700
3. Stuttgart,	1850,	“ “	2000
4. Elberfeld,	1851,	“ “	1800
5. Bremen.	1852,	“ “	1400
6. Berlin,	1853,	“ “	2000
7. Frankfort-on-the- Maine,	1854,	“ “	1800
8. Lübeck,	1856,	“ “	400

The next Kirchentag is to take place, on urgent invitation, at Stuttgart in 1857 or 1858, as the central committee may decide. The fluctuation in attendance is owing mostly to the local situation of the respective places. The small number of regular members at Lübeck, for instance, can easily be accounted for, partly by the extreme Northern location of this city, and partly by the raging of the cholera in it a short time before the meeting took place. We are confident, that should Providence not prevent the proposed assembly at Stuttgart, the large Stifts-Kirche will be crowded to overflowing, and the members will be as hospitably and affectionately entertained as in 1850.

As to the general nature of these meetings, they have far less of a business character, but are much more instructive and edifying than our Synodical assemblies. They are exclusively occupied with spiritual affairs and have nothing to do with money matters and cases of discipline, which unavoidably take up so much time in our self-governing

legislative Church-councils. The Kirchentag lasts four days, two of which are devoted to the congress of Inner Mission, of which we shall say more hereafter. Dr. von Bethmann Hollweg and Prof. Stahl, were annually re-elected Presidents, except at Frankfort, where Dr. Hoffman took the place of the absent Stahl. The business of the Kirchentag during the year is managed by the select central committee, the principal members of which, von Bethmann Hollweg, Stahl, Nitzsch, Hengstenberg, Snethlage, Hoffman, von Mühler, Jordan, reside in Berlin. They select the principal topics for discussion, and the speakers or reporters six months before the meeting, so as to give them full time for careful preparation. At the day and hour appointed these speakers read their papers on the subjects assigned them. Then follows a free discussion, and if necessary, a resolution for the adoption of measures proposed for the carrying out of the object in view. Owing to the great number of speakers, they must generally be limited to five or ten minutes. Some standing delegates, as Wichern, Krummacher, Sander, Stahl, Nitzsch, Kapff, speak often; others, who are equally well known, as Hundeshagen, Ullmann, Rothe, Bähr, prefer to sit silent. There is also room given, for short addresses, to the delegates from foreign Churches and religious societies. The official minutes contain the reports in full, and an abstract of the debates and proceedings. We need not add, that devotional exercises open and close each session, and that most, if not all, the pulpits of the place of meeting, are filled by distinguished orators every evening and during the intervening Sunday.

Besides the general sessions, a number of separate sessions are held early in the morning and late in the evening for particular objects connected with the Kirchentag, as the promotion of the better observance of Sunday, the reform of prisoners and prison-discipline, the establishment of houses of refuge, the cultivation of religious art, etc.

Finally, the Kirchentag has become the nucleus and occasion for the meetings of the Reformed Conference, of

Missionary, Bible, Tract, and other benevolent Societies, so that it is impossible for the most anxious and persevering visitor to attend more than one third of these gatherings. The excitement and commotion is so great, that it would be better to extend the Diet over one or two weeks, instead of condensing such a large amount of religious life and social enjoyment into the short space of four days.

It would lead us far beyond our proposed limits to give a detailed account of all the meetings of the Kirchentag from the first held at Wittenberg to that of Lübeck. We must confine ourselves to the principal topics of interest in the last three meetings.

The Church Diet of Berlin, in 1853, was the most important of all in a doctrinal point of view. For it solemnly and almost unanimously adopted the Augsburg Confession of 1530, as the fundamental symbol (*Grund-Symbol*) of the entire Evangelical Church of Germany in all its branches, with the distinct understanding, however, that the tenth article on the Lord's Supper, should not exclude the Reformed doctrine on the subject, and that this whole act should not interfere at all with the peculiar position of those Reformed Churches which never adopted the Augsburg Confession. The measure was supported by Sartorius and Stahl, in the name of the Lutheran, by Krummacher, in the name of the Reformed, and by Nitzsch, in the name of the United Church. After a very interesting discussion, which occupied the whole of the 20th of September, the two thousand members who filled the garrison church of the Prussian capital, signified, almost with one heart and one mouth, their assent to the most venerable and most catholic Confession of German Protestantism, and then burst out in the German *Te Deum*, "*Nun danket alle Gott.*" The joyful news of the decision was carried with the greatest haste to the King, who received it with every expression of delight, and was hailed with enthusiasm by the pious Protestants throughout Germany, while the Roman Catholics were disagreeably surprised by this unexpected testimony of doctrinal unity and strength among their opponents.

This act of confession, coming from such a vast assembly, including the most respected and influential men from all parts of Germany, was no doubt a powerful protest against Romanism, and still more against Rationalism, and marks an epoch in the history of German Protestantism.

And yet while we concede the great importance of this fact for Germany and for Lutheranism, we are not in the least surprised that some Reformed members present, as the late Dr. Henry, the author of the life of Calvin, Prof. Heppe, of Marburg, and Dr. Merle d'Aubigne, of the city of Calvin, were not altogether satisfied, and would have greatly preferred the resolution, if, instead of simply guarding the Reformed conscience in reference to the interpretation of the Augustana, it would have included a formal recognition of the Heidelberg Catechism, or the Helvetic Confession, or some other Reformed symbol. Dr. Merle, the author of the popular history of the Reformation, abstained from voting, and in an interesting speech, after bestowing due praise upon the Augsburg Confession, made some significant remarks from the stand-point of general Protestant Christianity against German and Lutheran sectionalism. "I have no objection," he said, "to the Augustana, nor to the Lutheran Church, which I honor and love like a child, having learned much from Luther and his associates. But I fear an excess in the Lutheran spirit, and can, therefore, wish it nothing better than an intimate confederation—I do not say union which has a peculiar technical sense—with the believing, living and more free Reformed Church. I fear first the increase of a traditional, ceremonial, hierarchical element in Lutheranism, which may all be found in much greater perfection in the Church of Rome; and secondly, an isolation from, and condemnation of other children of God who live of the same Word of God. Luther had two hands, the one with which he turned off Zwingli at Marburg, that was his left hand; and the other with which he signed the Wittenberg Concordia, that was his right hand. And finally, I fear that Lutheranism may withdraw too much from practical life. Its

passivity must be melted with the activity of the Reformed Christians. Three great colossi of mankind are now shaken to the very base, Mohammedanism, India and China; and in every case Reformed Christianity has a hand. The Reformed element has grown mightily since the Reformation. A mustard seed then, it is now a large tree, spreading its branches over the face of the globe. The modern progress of Christianity in Great Britain and North America is especially astounding. The sceptre of the future development of humanity lies in the hands of the Reformed Confession. Now, my dear Lutheran brethren, let us rather unite under the banner of our common Head for the conversion of the world, with the inscription: *Hoc signo vinces!* As far as I am concerned, I would place the Gallicana, or the Helvetica, or the Heidelbergensis, on a par with the Augustana. But whatever you may do, let us who are redeemed by the blood of atonement, members of all confessions to the ends of the earth, be one in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Ghost."

The seventh Church Diet, held at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, in 1854, September 22nd to 27th, derived special importance from the variety and fulness of its reports, as well as from the place of meeting in the old imperial city, in whose immediate neighborhood (the Sandhof) the Kirchentag itself was born six years before, and in the same church of St. Paul, where, in 1848 and 1849, the famous Parliament discussed, with the assembled learning of German professors and patriots, the political regeneration and reorganization of Germany on the basis of liberty and unity, and where, in August, 1850, the representatives from Europe and America held the third General Peace Congress. This building was thus within a few short years the witness of angry debate and of heavenly worship, of political clamor and the eloquence of peace and good will to the Church and the world. Of the sixteen hundred and sixteen published names of regular members, eleven hundred and twenty were theologians and ministers, and four hundred and ninety six laymen, of all ranks of society, and from all parts of

Germany and foreign countries. A dense crowd of spectators of ladies and gentlemen filled the galleries at every session. The evening sermons which were preached in the different churches of the city by Krummacher, Tholuck, Hoffmann, Kapff, Bahrdt, Mallet, Ebrard, Sander, Grandpierre, and other distinguished pulpit orators, were so largely attended, that hundreds had to return home for want of room. This fact may show what a salutary influence this assembly may exert upon the place of its meeting, as well as upon the hundreds and thousands of visitors from abroad.

The first paper read before the Frankfort Church Diet, after the introductory services and the annual report of the President, von Bethmann Hollweg, was a most able, pointed and stirring essay of about two hours length, on the right use of the Bible in the church, the school and the family, by the Rev. Dr. W. Hoffmann, now court preacher and general superintendent of Berlin. The speaker declared the whole Bible, from beginning to end, (exclusive of the Apocrypha) to be the Word of God in human form and speech, an organic whole, unfolding the divine plan of redemption, the infallible rule of faith and practice, and pointed out the ways and means by which a universal Bible-custom (*Bibel-sitte*) and a universal Bible-life (*Bibel-leben*) should be introduced into all the churches, schools, and families of Germany. He advised the ministers to study the whole Bible, not only from commentaries, but on the old principle of the self-interpretation of Scriptures, and on their knees, so as to be filled with the Holy Ghost and with the majesty and power of the Word of the living God. Then their sermons will be truly scriptural, i. e., not merely quote passages from the Bible, but unfold its great ideas and realities of the divine plan of redemption, bring near the powers of the world to come, and make the Word of God alive in the hearts of the hearers. Concerning the third point he said, Every Christian household should become an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, a temple of the living God. There never yet was a Bible-life, in the full sense of the

term, in the families of the Church, except by way of exception. Before the invention of the art of printing, it was impossible; the Reformation made an attempt to introduce it, but could not carry it through. But now, when a copy of the Bible is in almost every family, it can and ought to be fully realized, that it may exert its sanctifying influence over all branches and ranks of society, and make the German nation emphatically the people of God in the new dispensation. Thus the Church would cease to be merely a Church of theologians and preachers, and become truly a Church of the people. The meetings of the Church Diet would become free feasts of thanksgiving and praise to the great Author of the book of books. Let us all wish and pray that He may kindle this Bible-life amongst us and make it shine in all its pentecostal glory.—This address was exceedingly well received, and ordered to be extensively circulated, so as to reach, if possible, every minister, school-master and father of a family.

The second report by Dr. Julius Müller, of Halle, assisted by Advocate Thesmar of Cologne, related to the law of divorce, a subject of great practical importance for Germany, and wound up with the resolutions which were unanimously adopted: 1.) That the civil governments of Protestant Germany be respectfully requested to reform the matrimonial legislation, and to abolish all causes of divorce not sanctioned by the word of God. 2.) That the Protestant clergy decline to marry such persons as had been divorced on unscriptural grounds. This subject was subsequently agitated in the Prussian Chambers, and the result was, that at last, some of the fourteen, say fourteen reasons of divorce which the Prussian *Landrecht* recognizes since Frederick II, were abolished. But there is great room for additional improvement in this direction all over Germany.

Then followed an interesting and animated discussion on infant baptism, introduced by an original essay of Dr. Steinmeyer, of Bonn, without leading, however, to any definite results.

Dr. Wichern, of the Rough House, near Hamburg, open-

ed the Congress for Inner Mission on the third day, in his usual fervent and heart-stirring manner, with a lengthy, instructive and encouraging report on the great theme of his life. He discoursed, out of the fullness of his experience, and enthusiasm, on the training of laborers for Inner Mission; on the propriety of forming evangelical brotherhoods and sisterhoods, without the Romish addition of vows, celibacy and meritorious works; on new institutions for destitute children; on the recent labors for promoting family worship, the sanctification of Sunday, for providing every married couple with a copy of the Bible; on the spiritual care of the poor, the orphans, sailors, emigrants, mechanics, and destitute classes of society; on prison discipline, the temperance movement; in fact on nearly every topic of moral reform and Christian charity, which now arrests the attention of serious and benevolent men in Germany.

The ecclesiastical care of the poor, next occupied the attention, on the basis of a paper presented by superintendent Lengerich of Pomerania.

Then came, on the fourth day of the session, a most valuable and popularly written report of Prelate Dr. Kapff, of Stuttgart, against gambling houses and lotteries. It is a notorious fact, that two or three little German governments disgrace themselves by tolerating, for filthy lucre's sake, faro-banks in fashionable watering places, especially Baden-Baden, and Homburg, to the temporal and moral ruin of hundreds of families. One of the best acts of the unfortunate German Parliament of Frankfort was the abolition of these miserable establishments in January 8th, 1849. But with the triumph of political re-action, they were restored, and even increased in number. The Electorate of Hesse sanctioned in 1853, or 1854, four new ones (Neuheim, Hofgeismar, Wilhelmsbad and Neundorf); and yet this government, then under the control of the unpopular Hassenpflug, (called by his enemies *Hessenfluch*, also *Hass und Fluch*,) wanted to be pre-eminently Christian, abusing the holy name of order and of Christianity for the promotion of political tyranny and bigotted churchism!

It was, therefore, highly proper, that the assembled piety of Germany should give free utterance to the indignation of all good men against this abomination, and this, too, at Frankfort, which lies in the immediate neighborhood of these gambling-hells. The Church Diet unanimously, and without any discussion, resolved upon a petition to the respective governments for the suppression of all games of hazzard, faro-banks and lotteries, within the limits of the German confederation. The petition was favorably acted upon by the *Bundestag* of Frankfort, but the miserable little governments, basing themselves upon their sovereignty, refused, thus far, to abolish those nurseries of vice and misery. Prussia alone promptly responded to the appeal of the Kirchentag, and at once suppressed the gambling establishments at Aix-la-Chappelle.

The last session of the Frankfort meeting was devoted to the consideration of the relation of the evangelical Churches of Germany to the German Churches of America, and the spiritual care of the German emigrants. The writer of this article, then on a visit in Europe, had been requested to prepare the report on this subject; and spoke of the general significance of America for the future development of Christianity and civilization; of the particular mission of the German evangelical Churches in the United States; and finally on the duty of the mother Church in Europe toward her daughter in America, and especially toward the thousands and hundreds of thousands of emigrants who annually flock to our shores, to become either a disgrace, or an honor to their native country, and a curse, or a blessing to their adopted home, according to the moral and religious character they bring with them from Germany. In the discussion which followed, and in which Kapff, Krummacher, Sander, Kaiser, Conze, Grandpierre, of Paris, Cappadose, of the Hague, von Bethmann Hollweg, and others, took part, the kindest Christian interest was expressed in the state and progress of Christianity in the new world, and a new impulse given to the societies and efforts which have for their object to provide for the spirit-

ual destitution of the German emigrants, and to make them good citizens and pious Christians. The meeting unanimously resolved to enter into fraternal correspondence, and as far as possible into an exchange of delegates with the German and Anglo-German Churches of America, and concluded with the solemn singing of Zinzendorf's beautiful hymn on the union of all believers, alluded to at the close of the preceding report, ("Lass uns so vereinigt werden, Wie Du mit dem Vater bist," etc.)

The resolution was subsequently carried out. The officers of the Church Diet sent a truly Christian and fraternal address written by the president, Dr. von Bethmann Hollweg, to all the American Churches of German descent and evangelical profession, which are also represented in the Church Diet, namely, the Lutheran, German Reformed, Evangelical United, and Moravian. The letter was responded to in the same spirit. The German Reformed Church, at its Synodical meeting held at Chambersburg in 1855, sent not only a written reply, but also three delegates, two clergymen, (Rev. Dr. Schneck and Rev. B. Bausman) and a lay-elder (Mr. Griffith) to the Church Diet at Lübeck. This fact is now recorded in history as a delightful testimony of the communion of faith and love which in spite of the ocean, still binds together the Churches of the German and Swiss Reformation and their children and brethren in the new world, whither the star of Christ's kingdom is taking its way. Besides there are important practical interests which strongly recommend such a correspondence. For the German Churches, on both sides of the Atlantic, ought certainly to cooperate in bringing the large and increasing tide of German emigration to America under Gospel-influences, and giving it such a direction and shape as to make it an honor to their old, and a blessing to their new home. It is to be desired, that the General Synod of the Lutheran Church of the United States, at its next meeting, should imitate the example of the German Reformed Church, and have itself represented by a personal delegation at the next Kirchentag of Stuttgart, where it may confidently expect a most warm-hearted Christian welcome.

The eighth Church Diet, having failed to meet at Halle in 1855, on account of the sudden outbreak of a violent epidemic, took place in the free city of Lübeck, in the extreme North of Germany, in September, 1856. For local and other reasons, it was apprehended by many, that this meeting would prove a failure, especially since it was known, that the cholera had raged there during the summer. But this fear was not realized. The attendance, it is true, was much smaller than at any previous meeting, especially from the central, western, and southern regions of Germany. Still it was a respectable and imposing assembly of about four hundred clergymen and pious laymen. Several foreign countries and Churches also, as the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Churches of Holland and France, besides various benevolent societies were worthily represented. The three delegates of the German Reformed Church of America were all on the spot, and express themselves in their official and private reports highly delighted with all the proceedings, as well as with their personal reception. Concord and harmony reigned from beginning to end. The distracting Church question, which agitates at present the Prussian establishment to its very centre, and on which even the presiding officers of the Kirchentag are by no means entirely agreed, was fortunately not permitted to disturb the truly Christian tone and feeling, or to overshadow the essential agreement in all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. The subjects, although not of such absorbing interest, as on former occasions, were judiciously selected and ably discussed.

The first topic related to the revival of evangelical Church-discipline, and was opened by a veteran divine, Dr. Sack, formerly professor at Bonn, now Consistorial-rath at Magdeburg, a son of the Reformed court-preacher in Berlin, who was one of the chief promoters of the Union in Prussia in 1817.

Discipline, we are sorry to say, has almost entirely ceased in Germany, and it is difficult to see how it ever can be

properly exercised, as long as the Church remains so intimately interwoven with the State, and as long as the sick and dead members so far outnumber the living Christians. The State-Church system drills every body mechanically into the Church, but permits them afterwards to believe and profess and act as they please. The State cares only for the outward appearance and the legal aspect of the case, but cannot produce an inward change, and the Church, which is the proper moral and religious agent, is constantly cramped in its free action by the secular government, and not unfrequently paralyzed by the bad example of the head of the State, who is at the same time the *summus episcopus* of the Church. In Würtemberg, for instance, excommunication for adultery sake, would have to commence with the King, who is generally known to be habitually addicted to that grievous sin.

On the second day, Dr. Schmieder, the successor of the venerable Dr. Heubner, and head of the Theological Seminary of Wittenberg, read a lengthy address on the call to the ministry. Our German brethren complain both of the want of efficient, and an excess of indifferent ministers. This evil is likewise to be attributed, in part, at least, to the close union of Church and State. Many study for the sacred office merely from utilitarian and mercenary motives, to the injury of the Church and themselves, while many, who have the proper spirit, refuse to obey the internal call, to the loss of religion. The clergy proceed almost exclusively from the middle and lower classes. Count Zinzendorf still remains almost a solitary example of a missionary nobleman. The cause of this sad fact was found in the prevalence of materialism among the higher classes, the love of gain, and an aversion to the solemn duties of the ministry. The excellent pastor Meyer, of Paris, remarked, that there were at present twenty-three vacant parishes in the Reformed Church of France; that they had the son of a wealthy banker who served as a faithful village-pastor; and that they had many excellent ministers, who were the children of street-sweepers. "If they only come," he said,

“we care not whether they come from above or below. Yes, let them come from *above, far above*, from the Lord and head of the Church.”

The third topic of discussion was the question, How shall the Church oppose the influence of materialism in modern natural science upon the masses? Dr. Fabri, the author of the “*Briefe gegen den Materialismus*,” 1856, one of the very best refutations of this latest form of infidelity, had been very properly selected for the leading report, and seems to have done full justice to his theme.

It is a singular fact, that, after a temporary stagnation of philosophical speculation in Germany, a crude materialism should suddenly spring up, proclaiming in the name of the natural sciences, the irreconcilable contradiction between geology and astronomy with the Bible, and flatly denying the very existence of an immortal spirit. This seems to be the opposite extreme to the transcendental idealism which formerly prevailed, and yet there is a connecting link between the two in such books as Feuerbach’s *Wesen des Christenthums*. But to the credit of Germany, it must be said, that quite a number of works, both scientific and popular, have already appeared against this pseudo-philosophy of a Vogt, Moleschot, Burmeister, Büchner and other infidel naturalists of the day.

Fabri takes the ground, that materialism is no philosophy at all; that it must logically end in nihilism; that it must be met, not with governmental coercion, but with the weapons of reason; that theology and natural science do not necessarily contradict each other, but can be harmonized without torturing any of their principles or data. Dr. Stahl, in the discussion, denied that materialism was a product of Protestantism, as it existed under the papacy long before the reformation. Much as he respected and admired the investigations of science in the sphere of nature, he regarded it as transcending its reasonable limits, when it presumed to define and explain the domain of spiritual and eternal truth. It can discover planets, but it cannot tell us whether they are inhabited. It can invent

the telegraph, but it cannot explain the essence of electricity, much less the hidden mysteries of God.

The last days, as usual, were devoted to the discussion of the various benevolent operations of the Congress for Inner Mission. Here the most important and interesting part was an address of Dr. Wichern, nearly three hours in length, on the sphere of woman in the evangelical Church, where the distinguished Christian philanthropist gave a graphic picture of the present position, trials, claims and duties of woman.

As already remarked, the next meeting of the Kirchentag is to be held in Stuttgart, either in 1857 or 1858, as the central committee on further deliberation may deem best.

We think it likely, that the meeting will be put off till 1858, for in the autumn of 1857 the Evangelical Alliance will assemble for the first time on German ground and attract no doubt a great deal of attention. Some of the best friends of the Church Diet believe that it will sooner or later be brought to a close either by the course of events which may supersede it, or by the growing confessional strife and doctrinal exclusiveness which is averse to union and confederation of different confessions. Some of its leading members and founders, as Stahl and Hengstenberg, become more high Church Lutherans every year, and are alienated in the same proportion from their brethren who occupy United or Reformed ground. In 1855, it was apprehended also, that the burning political difference on the Russian and Turkish question which divided the two presidents, Dr. von Bethmann Hollweg and Prof. Stahl in the Prussian Chambers, might seriously overcloud or break up the proposed meeting at Halle, which, however, was providentially prevented. The Eastern war is now concluded and with it the bitter controversy to which it gave rise. But the general political difference between the monarchical absolutism of the high Church Lutherans, and the constitutional liberalism of the Reformed and the moderate Unionists still exists, and the controversy about ecclesiastical union or disunion rages more fiercely than ever in Northern Germany, especially in Prussia.

But no one can tell what may take place in the short space of one year. Events may happen in Germany, which will show the necessity of a closer union amongst evangelical Christians even more strongly, than the revolutionary storms of 1848, which gave rise to the Church Diet. Besides, it has a host of friends, who will do all they can to keep it up. In Würtemberg especially, which has stood aloof so far from the confessional war, the Church Diet is universally popular among the pious of the laity, as well as of the clergy, and the proposed meeting at Stuttgart, though it should be the last, will be one of the most enthusiastic, a worthy end of a worthy beginning.

But whatever be the final fate of this assembly, it has already a glorious history of nine years, and forms one of the most interesting and encouraging chapters in the annals of Protestantism.

This leads us to sum up, in conclusion, the benefits and results of the Church Diet.

As regards the official and authoritative confederation of all the Protestant State-Churches of Germany, which the Diet proposed at its first meeting in Wittenberg, as a safeguard against the fearful dangers and evils of that particular time, we must say, that this object has not been attained, and was almost entirely lost sight of in its subsequent meetings. The sudden changes in the political condition of Germany, the defeat of the revolutionists and anarchists, and the restoration of the old order of things, are the immediate causes of this failure. But the idea of one evangelical Church in Germany still lives, and may perhaps be realized better in the end on the ruins, than on the basis of the existing rotten establishments. On the other hand, it may be questioned, whether such an official confederation of Churches is at all desirable, and whether the mission of Protestantism, for the present at least, lies not rather in the direction of a free, voluntary association of Christians in their individual capacity. At all events, the past and present power of the Church Diet rests on the principle of a free association and communion, while by passing over into

an official body, it would have become inevitably connected with all the evils of State-Churchism.

In some sense, however, the desired confederation may be said to exist in a body distinct from the Kirchentag, but called into existence by its influence. We mean the Conference of Eisenach, which consists of a small number of official delegates from the various Church governments of Protestant Germany, and meets since 1852, annually or bi-annually, as circumstances may require, at Eisenach, for consultation on subjects and measures of common interest to all. But its deliberations are private and subject to the final sanction or rejection of the respective authorities. The most important work of this Conference, so far, is the preparation and publication of one hundred and fifty standard hymns, with their melodies, for public worship, which should form the nucleus of the hymn-books of the different Churches and thus promote unity in the place of the endless confusion produced by the arbitrary alterations of hymns and chorals.

In the mean time the Church Diet has accomplished, in a free form and altogether independent of State-control, much more than an official State-Church-confederation, in all probability, would have done under similar circumstances. Deprived of legislative authority and even pecuniary means, the Kirchentag had all the moral power of faith and truth speaking in love, of remonstrance with the authorities and of appeal to the people at large. It exerted a most salutary influence upon the cities and neighborhoods in which it met. It travelled like a living evangelist to the centres of leading influence in Germany. It gave a powerful impulse to the course of evangelical piety and active Christianity all over the land. It discussed topics and started measures of the greatest theoretical and practical moment. Several of these were already mentioned above. To them must be added, from previous meetings, the discussions on Christian education, the relation of Church and State, the political duties of ministers, the sanctification of Sunday, the reform of worship, the introduction of a com-

mon hymn-book for all Germany, the relation of voluntary societies to the ministerial office, the Romish question, the treatment of dissenters, the spiritual care of the poor, the emigrants, the prisoners, the travelling journeymen, etc. It interceded in behalf of the persecuted Madiai at Florence, in connection with English and French Protestants, and protested against several crying abuses in certain countries of Germany. It has become a nucleus for a large number of benevolent and reformatory societies which cluster around it. It has promoted the cause of Christian union, not only at home, but also abroad, by receiving delegates from, and forming connections with the Protestant Churches of France, Holland, Belgium, Scotland, Geneva, the Canton de Vaud, the British Evangelical Alliance, the American Tract Society, and the German Churches of America.

But one work must be mentioned with special praise, which may be called the adopted child of the Kirchentag, and has been most fruitful and blessed in immediate results. We mean the cause of "Inner Mission," to which it devotes two days, or fully one half of the time of its annual meetings. This is undoubtedly one of the most important movements of the age, and is alone sufficient to immortalize that assembly in the history of practical Christianity and Christian philanthropy. The term, Inner Mission, comprehends much more than what we mean by Home Missions, or Domestic Missions. It aims at a relief of all kinds of spiritual and temporal misery by works of faith and charity, at a revival of nominal Christendom, and a general reform of society on the basis of the Gospel and the creed of the Reformation. It is Christian philanthropy and charity applied to the various deep-rooted evils of society, as they were brought to light so fearfully in Germany by the revolutionary outbreaks of 1848. It comprises the care of the poor, the sick, the captive and prisoner, the laboring classes, the travelling journeymen, the emigrants, the temperance movement, the efforts for the pro-

motion of a better observance of the Lord's day, and similar reforms, so greatly needed in the Churches of Europe.

Dr. Wichern is the chief author and moving spirit of this great work in its modern German form. For as to its essence, of course, it is as old as Christian charity itself. It was with considerable difficulty, and only after a most eloquent speech, that he succeeded in urging it upon the serious attention of the Church Diet at its first meeting in 1848, and in making it one of its regular and principal objects. The movement spread with wonderful rapidity. There is now hardly a city in Protestant Germany or Switzerland, where there is not a "Society for Inner Mission," or an "Evangelical Association" for the promotion of the various works of Christian benevolence. "That which, seven years ago"—says an English philanthropist—"was a germ of thought lodged in the mind of one man, is now a principle actuating human minds, instigating Christian endeavors, and giving birth to benevolent enterprise in a hundred forms throughout the fatherland, and wherever, in Europe, in America, or in Australasia, Germany may find a home." Dr. Wichern presents a general survey of the progress of the work at every meeting of the Kirchentag, and urges to renewed efforts with ever fresh vigor and with an earnestness and enthusiasm that is not from this earth.

We cannot better conclude this article, than by quoting the last words of Wichern's report at the Church Diet of Frankfort. "The Inner Mission," says this great and good man, "is the work of John, not the Baptist, but the apostle who leaned on the bosom of the Lord. According to the word of this apostle, we should all love each other as brethren, who confess the only saving name of Christ. But in this brotherly love we should also burn, like John, in the pursuit of the apostate youth, for the recovery of those who are wandering on the abyss of destruction. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts, uniting the disciples into one body, going forth like a burning light into the world, and converting the dreary deserts round about us into a paradise of God—such Johannean love is the hope

and the strength of Inner Mission. May God bless this work, in midst of envy and strife, for the establishment of peace.”

Mercersburg, Pa.

P. S.

ART. II.—THE ANATOMY OF SENTIMENTALISM.

SENTIMENTALISM and the SENTIMENTALIST—Etymologically considered, the words seem fair enough, and plain enough; their descent from *sentio*, to *feel*, is quite respectable; in their genealogy they are allied to thought (*sentiment*) on the one side, and may claim a still nearer kindred with *taste*, *aesthetics*, *αἰσθητικὴ*, on the other. And yet we all somehow *feel*, in using them, that they are bad words, and denote a bad thing. We *feel* right in this respect. The unconscious or instinctive logic, as we may call it, is justified by a careful examination of the phrase and the idea. In accounting for this loss of caste, the first thought is, that the term denotes *false* feeling. But how, or on what grounds? How can feeling be false? How do we distinguish false feeling from the true? Feeling is feeling, one may say; it is a pleasurable or painful motion in our physical or spiritual sensorium, or in both combined; and in this there can be only a difference of intensity. Thus viewed, one feeling is as real as another. Even the pleasurable and painfulness, although it has never been physiologically analysed since Plato made the attempt, must fall somewhere in a similar category. If not a matter of strict quantity, it is some how, one of ratio and relation. And how can there be any thing false in this? As a man think-