



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -
Diocese of Columbus

Vol. XXVII, No. 11

Nov. 4: St. Charles Borromeo

November, A.D. 2002

A GLIMPSE OF THE OHIO VALLEY

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Letter 12 - The Sects (Part 2 of 3)

The Baptists are the most numerous of all the sects in the United States, but they are again split into eleven different divisions or separate churches. Each one naturally claims that it has the original Christian teaching and the correct form of baptism. Allied to the English Baptists, Congregationalists, Cecdgers [Seceders?], Sabbatarians, Campbellites, etc., are our Anabaptists of German origin, namely, the Dunkards and Mennonites.¹¹ These latter are distinguished from the others not only by their peculiar dogmas but also by their long beards, Quaker-like dress, German language and school system, and their quiet industrious way of life. The latest reform among the Baptists is Campbellism which is gaining ground rapidly because it seems to be the latest thing and its energetic founder, Campbell, has made a big name for himself through his public defense of Christian doctrine against the attacks of the notorious Mr. Owen.¹² Campbell, like so many talented, popular, but crafty preachers, appeared as another reformer in western Virginia and published a new revision or translation of the Bible¹³ just like all such celebrities before him. This brought him great renown and much money.

The most peculiar concept in his Bible is his translation of "baptize" (*baptizare*) into

"immerse" (*immergere*) so that one reads about "John the Immerser." As a result of this basic idea come about his commands on ritual, along with other strange teachings and directives, that all his disciples must be baptized in deep creeks or streams so that both the baptist and baptized must wade into deep water accompanied by the singing of psalms and in the presence of the congregation standing on the creek bank. The head of the person being baptized is plunged three times beneath the water even in the depth of winter. Then shouts of joy and welcome to the newly born soul resound three times from the creek bank. This is the regeneration of man toward which the strange fanaticism of America is turning. This is the burial and resurrection of the born again as Campbell claims and the new life so clearly demanded by Scripture and announced by St. Paul, "Do you not know that all of us, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death? And through baptism we are buried together with Him in His death," etc.

The Campbellites through their overwrought carrying on,¹⁴ much like the Methodists, easily make the transition from the so-called coldly dogmatic sects to the others that can be classified in regard to their religious character into three groups, namely, the emotional, the pietistic, and the enlightened (*illuminati*).

Among the emotional, the Methodists are by far the most numerous. Their founder, John Wesley, personally arrived in North America during the latter half of the last century and began to spread his teachings in the forests of North Carolina, but without the hoped for results. He returned to England without having achieved his goal. However, one of his disciples had better success. He had been appointed and made a so-called Wesleyan bishop in Baltimore. Naturally, he obtained other such creatures and subordinate preachers who spread their Methodist Episcopal Church throughout all the states within a few decades. But these rural bishops placed at the helm of their church soon found dangerous opponents, who envied their position which they had usurped without Wesley's approval. Within a few years a large party arose in opposition to this title and usurpation. In opposition to Episcopal Methodism, they founded a Protestant Methodist Church.

Then the more radical members in the western hills gave themselves up to more liberated and more personal emotionalism and wild conduct. Then this sect which had spread rapidly among the rabble, split again and they all claimed that they had the true religion. Their assignments and appointments, in graded departments with flattering titles and dignities, are aimed at promoting the spread of their views so much so that even the phlegmatic Germans often feel the attraction of the new belief and begin to skip over to it. This is all cleverly introduced in order to recruit, attract, and win over followers, much like one would entice school children. In fact, they could surpass even the systematic intrigues of European demagogues. Thus they have Sunday schools, distribution of tracts, itinerant or travelling preachers, circuit riders, quarterly assemblies, and revivals. Their behavior at their so-called camp meetings is already disgustingly well known without my having to speak of the ravings of their preachers, the moaning of their new converts, and the resultant breakthrough of

grace or inner rebirth which is manifested by convulsive spasms and a sort of fainting fit. This sort of thing takes place in the evening in cities during their long, drawn out, protracted meetings. However, I believe that such camp meetings are not attended by respectable, educated Methodists even though the time and place¹³ of these meetings are announced in the public newspapers and billed as a sort of celebration after the example of St. John the Baptist in the wilderness.

Such revivals are very much imitated in small towns and hill country by several Calvinist and Presbyterian sects to enliven the grim coldness of their church services. (The liveliest and fiercer eloquence of a Methodist farmer or school teacher has more attraction for such hearers than the studied, cold, hair-splitting monotonous twaddle of the ordinary preacher of the other denominations. Emotional shouting generally appeals more to ordinary people than dry, repetitious fine points of doctrine.) Then, too, they want to keep intact the membership of the church because with the gradual loss of members they lose their menfolk, that is, the voters who would favor their political candidates.

Along with the above, we can count the jumpers or leapers who hop and leap from right to left to the point of exhaustion. This is done because it says in the Bible that David danced before the Ark, etc., and John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb, and the disciples of Christ on one occasion prophesied as if drunk.

On the other hand, the Friends or Quakers (this is a term of derision) make their prophetic utterances quietly. They sit silently with head covered at their services, sometimes even during the entire service. Then someone, stirred by a higher spirit, i.e., an inner revelation or inner Christ or inner light, opens his mouth to prophesy. By virtue of this spiritualism they separated themselves entirely from the

Anabaptists and Mennonites from whom they originated and whom they resemble in their attire. They differ from all other Protestants particularly in the simplicity of their doctrinal system which they developed as a whole with fewer contradictions. They are the only ones of all sects that remain true to their religious system, manners, and customs. However, in the last two or three years, the Quakers in America have been split by a great schism that broke out in New Jersey. The reform party naturally is more and more pleased with their innovations.

The Groaners or Shouters are even more disorderly in their services. They also base their conduct on the Bible which contains 47 scriptural quotations that justify their shouting.

The Shakers are a variation of the Quakers and manifest their devotion during worship by shaking which can sometimes become strenuous gesticulation and hopping even to the point of exhaustion. Since this sect views itself as pure and chosen beyond all others who do not belong to it, the members live separately from the rest of society. They build their dwellings in secluded places in forest lands where they can live undisturbed according to their rule, which prescribes that men and women live a community life without marriage which they consider an invention of the devil. Therefore they condemn

the behavior of the Generationists who probably stemmed from them and who put into practice the fable of the Amazons by epic meetings with men. These latter manifestations of sad aberrations seldom appear in the United States but in northeast Ohio such religious oddities like the Shakers still occur. Sin is said to be reflected in their faces.¹⁶

Naturally Germany's sharp separatism is added to this chaos. Even though the earlier and later Lutheran and Reformed immigrants show more propriety in their worship, as one might expect, yet they lack more than any other sect a definite, complete body of doctrine. Nowhere is there a greater doctrinal freedom and indifferentism than in both these respectable denominations. In America they think and teach differently than in Germany. There is great jealousy among the preachers themselves. German preachers from Europe (and I know several of them) have to conform their views to American preachers' views and to the opinions of the congregations on whom they depend. Even the old German congregations of Pennsylvania and their schools, as for example at Gettysburg, have become English speaking in their daily life and religion to the extent that they cannot rightly be called Lutheran. This is a complaint that I have often heard from good people. In most places, especially in Ohio, they have the same church and



Shakers dancing, drawn and engraved by John W. Barber in 1838 (from Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio, 1896 edition, Vol. II, page 751).

often the same preacher as the Reformed. I have no doubt that most of them really do not know the difference between the two denominations. The Reformed Lutherans are almost generally called Dutch Presbyterians and the wealthier ones really appear to be just that, at least in their actions. The whole thing seems strange to new arrivals who find everything different from their customary practice of seeking out and listening only to their own preachers and they complain a lot about it.

However, they usually take comfort in calling themselves "Protestant," a name that covers everything else and I may say covers the one essential point.¹⁷ Meanwhile a large number remain away from religious services, especially those who are taken in by rationalism or some such fraudulent notion of freedom. Sometimes they are joined by a few overly enlightened Catholics who had already forgotten their God and conscience in Europe, like the Freemason and all that type. But others who put more stress upon the Bible join the Methodists or establish their own brotherhoods. And so there is no lack of denominations that spread and practice German pietism in the American hill country. For example, the Moravian Brethren still exist here and there, even though they do not have the sphere of activity that they once had, perhaps through lack of manpower. Their evening meal is preceded by a community love feast consisting of cake and coffee, but they marry by casting lots. This much I know about the Brethren at least in Tuscarawas county in Ohio. Another similar but more progressive sect is called the Albrights, and like the Brethren and the Dunkards they live separately on their farms but have their meetings mostly in communal houses.

More personable and on the average more tolerant and better educated are the Swedenborgians, who built their New Jerusalem Church in Cincinnati just a few years ago. Its immense facade or portico swallows up the

actual church building which is quite small. I am not in a position to say how closely they actually follow the dogmatic principles or theosophical visions of their Swedish prophet. Moreover, they are bitterly opposed by the Calvinists. Last winter a pamphlet entitled, "Swedenborgianism Unmasked" was published by a printing house hostile to them.

More conspicuous and separated from the rest of the world are our Würtembergers. I refer to George Rapp's group of about 700 persons who settled on the Ohio River in Pennsylvania. Then, too, there are the Zoarites who settled along the Tuscarawas River in Tuscarawas County seventy miles west of the original Economy.

Much has been said and written in Europe about Rapp's Harmony. Less known but no less noteworthy is the Community of Zoar. It is off the beaten track for travelers. This community, which works in common for a common fund, owns a piece of land of many thousand acres that stretches along both sides of the river and the Erie Canal. It includes hills and forests as well as flat lands. Their beautiful and neat village, a perfect and surprising replica of a German district, erected here in America, lies not far from the banks of the Tuscarawas River at the foot of a slope facing east and covered for the most part by a vineyard.¹⁸

The village is adorned with a garden and hothouse, the like of which is seldom seen in North America. This is surrounded by many types of workshops and boutiques where their handmade articles are much sought after, especially their household linens. Otherwise a strict, cloister-like silence reigns. This is broken only by the sound of a bugle which summons them to work or to meals. The inhabitants wear uniform, gray clothing made out of homespun cloth which they have made. Over it the women wear a full length white apron that covers their chest and shoulders. They are polite, but do not



A view of Zoar, drawn by Henry Howe in 1846 and published in his Historical Collections of Ohio (1896 edition, Vol. II, page 700).

waste a minute going to their appointed tasks so that there are very few people free to greet visitors. Mr. Bäumlér, a man of medium age and stature and lame, unites in his person the office of leader, preacher, and physician. Their religion recognizes no one else, except initiated members of their community. They reject baptism in water because St. Matthew writes in his Gospel (c.3, v.11), "I indeed baptize in water for repentance but He who comes after me who is greater than I ... He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." For the rest they are said to observe a sort of Lord's Supper. In the first years after the organization of the community, marriage was suppressed following Rapp's example (with whom they are otherwise not connected). However, at present it is said that it is allowed, although a marriage seldom takes place. Their increase, therefore, comes from outside in so far as they select poor children from everywhere on the pretext of charity to which they are indeed no strangers. Even though this community lacks the wealth and grand facilities and factories of Rapp's group, nonetheless, their industrious busy bees must surely become wealthy in a short time. Intense dedication seems to be their mainspring and spirit of their community, along with a religion modeled after this spirit, like a visible, inevitable taskmaster. They prefer to withdraw as much as possible from the laws of the land. And so they tried in vain to be exempt from

military service like the Quakers and Rapp's followers in order not to participate in the crimes of the worldly wise, especially since they, like Lot, had fled from the oppression of the destructive Sodom of Würtemberg and had found their refuge in Zoar. As Lot said in Genesis (ch. 19, v. 20 ff.), "See there is a place close by to which I must flee and it is small and there I shall save myself. It is indeed small so that my souls may live. Hurry and save yourself (God said) because I can do nothing until you arrive there. That is why this town is called Zoar."¹⁹

(To be concluded)

NOTES

11) In America they are called Amish.

12) This public debate which lasted several days took place in Cincinnati in 1827. Owen's godless adherents (Harmony) prevail, I believe, only in name now, although New York, among the outlandish religions, still has a group of such godless people (to give them their exact designation) who reject marriage, God and everything divine. This miserable sect still publishes an "anti-deistical catechism." But this systematic teaching seems to find less approval among Americans than the French and German Enlightenment formerly did, even though Owen and Thomas Paine and many others strove mightily to promote it. Paine died in horrible drunkenness in New York.

13) Noteworthy is the announced translation of the Bible by H. Webster, a learned Bostonian in Massachusetts, who with puritanical scruples "in parvis", clothes in more respectable words all expressions in Holy Scripture that could offend sensitive pious ears. Even names of animals, for example goat, and even the poor devil have to have a more delicate and refined name. Undoubtedly the intention of this good man is to obviate somewhat an evil which his love for young people and his experience discovered only after 300 years. Perhaps he thought that people might fall into the hands of unbelievers by indiscreet reading of the Bible, which might lead to corrupting the morals of the young and bring about the downfall of revealed truth. Perhaps he could have been influenced by the following words of an enemy of revealed truth, "The clergy in popish lands were clever enough to realize that when the Old Testament was made available to everyone, the deception of the New Testament in regard to Christ would be discovered. But we deists on the other hand have constantly encouraged the people to examine personally and to judge for themselves whether a book so filled with contradictions and wickedness could be the Word of God, and whether we dishonor God by ascribing to Him such a book." Cf. *A True Deist*, a supplement to Thomas Paine's theological works; New York, 1830.

14) This sort of preacher is often so worked up and carried away by the spirit that he takes off his coat and rolls up his sleeves in order to pound out like a butcher the text of the Bible. I was an eye witness to such a performance in Fulton, Ohio, where a huge crowd was gathered in a warehouse. It was near the Erie Canal and many people were baptized in the Canal.

15) The forests they use for these meetings form a background for a partly cleared field. We can still see the cabins, about 10 to 12 feet long, five feet wide, and about that height with the floor covered with straw. These huts stand in a quadrangle with space in the middle where the speaker's raised platform is erected between posts. There they shout and rave day and night for eight days. In the background the cooking, etc., is done by the baptized initiates. One can imagine such a nighttime gathering of Negroes, as happens in most cities, and it is really

frightening. Their shrieking is much more hideous than that of the White man because their voices are normally a bit more hoarse and shrill.

16) How pitiable these poor people are. They must excite in all tender hearts a deep sympathy if one considers how firmly they cling to their fanaticism which they call scriptural religion pleasing to God and its activities good. Furthermore, one sees in this the stages of error among men, i.e., the departure point of man-made religion into moral degeneration, and to all sorts of uncontrolled development, without the hope of returning to Christianity as long as they chase farther and farther after the glittering illusion of new religious beliefs. How can they return to the Mother Church, the pillar and foundation of truth, when they have strayed and become lost beyond her horizon? I am therefore very much inclined to believe that for such sects it has become absolutely impossible wherever they may be found, to exactly define their own deviations, alterations and departures from truth, even if the Catholic Church were inclined to tolerate such whims. Hence, it is the constant visibility of our Church and its unalterable insistence on the whole deposit of its teaching that extends to us the standard of eternal truth by which we can judge the profound extent of all these errors. Without the Church, revelation is a dead letter and knowledge derived from it is a mere chaotic creed. Bigots prove this.

17) As far as I know, Lutheran and Reformed preachers have made few or no visits to Western America to convert the heathens or savages. How differently the Moravian Brethren show their zeal!

18) According to the Lutheran translation. The Vulgate calls the city Segor, that is, small or few. It was formerly called Bela or Bala. Cf. Gen. ch. 14.

19) I saw this rich collection of books consisting mostly of works of the holy Church Fathers on my journey through Pittsburgh where they had been purchased by Mr. Pettermann, a prominent lawyer, who joined the Catholic Church some years ago. Many of the best works were already sold.

**Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Columbus
Cathedral Section C, Lot Records,
1867-1926**

(Continued, from Vol. XXVII, No. 10)

64-C east

p. 103, Maurice Neal, [later] William Neil, 128 South Mitchell St., 1878 April 1, lot 64 east half. Graves: 1878 Apr. 1; 1897 Nov. 23; 1922 May 2.

Thos Neil died Nov. 5, 1879

Mrs. Ann Neil died Apr. 1, 1878

(Brother) Edward F. Neil born Feb. 25, 1863 died Nov. 23, 1897

Maurice W. Neil 1858 + 1922

65-C east

p. 39, Philip Long, Milo, 1875 May, lot 65 east half. Graves: 1898 July 7 child; 1899 Sept. 14 child; 1901 March 16? child; 1902 Oct. 18; 1911 Dec. 26; 1912 June 13. [no stones]

65-west

p. 33, Mrs. Ann Clark, 1875 lot 65 west half. Graves: 1891 May 15 child; 1900 July 23; 1905 July 24; 1915 Jan. 4.

Fannie Welsh 1871-1900

(Mother) Ann Clark 1848-1905

Frank E. Clark 1878-1915 Redwood Camp No. 88

(Grandma) Bridget Cain 1820-1886

(Father) Isaac Clark 1845-1884

Zearia Daughter of F. & A. Clark born Dec. 28, 1874 died Feb. 3, 1875

66-C east

p. 172, Daniel Molloy, 1874 Jan. 9, lot 66 east half. [No grave charges listed.] [no stones]

66-C west

p. 50, Louis Corieri, 1874 June 24, lot 66 west half. Graves: 1899 May 30; 1899 July 15 child.

FRISCHMANN:

(Husband) Matthias 1886-19[blank]

(Wife) Anna 1879-1948

Esther M. Mainetti Mar. 21, 1899-July 16, 1899

(Mother) Mary Ellen wife of J. B. Mainetti, born June 23, 1867, died May 29, 1899

Margaret daughter of L. & E. Corrieri, born June 25, 1871, died June 10, 1873

67-C

p. 289, Leonard Frank, lot 67. [no payment made] Half transferred to Frank J. Holmes, 98 W. 3rd Ave. see p. 426

p. 426, Mrs. Ann Reilly, 388 N Monroe Ave., 1901 Sept. 16, 2 graves in lot 67 east half. Graves: 1901 Sept. 16; 1902[?] Aug. 27.

p. 426, Mrs. Ellen Larken, St. Anthony's Hospital, 1901 Oct. 5, 1 grave in lot 67 south[?] half. [This entry has been entirely crossed out.]

67-C southwest

+ Thomas A. Vallelunga June 27, 1891 - Nov. 6, 1981 +

67-C northwest

p. 404, Frank J. Holmes, 98 West 3rd Ave., 1898 Aug. 22, lot 67 [west?] half. Graves: 1898 Aug. 22; 1924[?] Nov. 29.

(Father) Christopher Connor 1855 + 1942

(Mother) Sarah Connor 1858 + 1943

(Mother) Anne Holmes died Aug. 20, 1898 aged 73 years At rest.

67-C southeast

p. 435, Edward Morris dec[eased], Andrew Morris, 71 Broom St., 1903 Apr. 6, one grave in lot 67, southeast corner. Grave: 1903 Apr. 6.

Edward Morris, Native Co. Tyrone Ireland died Apr. 5, 1903 aged 65 y.

68-C north

p. 89, Thomas Corbett, 1873 March 30, lot 68 north half. Graves: 1910 Sept. 5; 1913 Apr. 3; 1927 Sept. 21.

+James Corbett, died Mar. 14, 1863 aged 2 y 10m

(Father) Patrick J. Corbett 1871-1913 Rest in Peace.

(Daughter) Margaret E. Corbett 1903-1927 Rest in Peace.

(Father) Thomas Corbett, born Co. Limerick Ireland 1838-1884 Rest in Peace.

(Mother) Margaret Corbett born Co. Cork Ireland 1834-1910 Rest in Peace.

68-C south

p. 88, Patrick Caple, 375 North 11th St., 1873 March 30, lot 68 south half. Graves: 1886 March 18 child; 1900 March 15; 1901 July 10; 1903 Apr. 29; 1910 May 20; 1912 Oct. 28 "to dig grave & raise body"; 1920 Jan. 13; 1928 July 21.

(Father) Patrick Caple, born Co. Cork Ireland died March 14, 1900 age 61 yrs.

(Aunt) Catharine Caple born Co. Cork Ireland 1831-1896 Rest in Peace.

69-C south

p. 143, John E. Gormley, 1872 Feb. 9, lot 69. Graves: 1878 Dec. 16 child. Transferred to C. A. Mulhearn Sept. 3, 1898. See p. 405. North half to Matthew Meagher. South half to J. M'Glone[?].

p. 405, John McGlade, 665 West Rich St., 1898 Sept. 17, lot 69 south half. Owns 4 graves in the half. Graves: 1898 Sept. 17; 1900 June 27; 1901 March 20; 1909 July 13 Margaret Gormley died Feb. 10, 1872 aged 57 years. May her soul rest in peace.

69-C north

p. 405, Matthew Maegher [sic], 988 Harrison Ave., 1898 Oct. 5, lot 69 north half, transferred to him by Mrs. J. E. Gormley. Graves: 1898 Oct. 5; 1912 July 2; 1929 Apr. 4.

(Father) Matthew Meagher 1845 + 1928 Co. A. 40th O.V.I.

(Mother) Emma Meagher 1848 + 1929

Minnie L. daughter of Matthew & Emma Meagher born Apr. 8, 1873 died Oct. 4, 1898

Florence Maher Ferrel 1889-1948

Thos. F. Maher 1883-1945

70-C east

p. 40, William Hester, 1872 Aug. 25, lot 70 east half. Graves: 1881 Dec. 8 child; 1887 Sept. 27; 1899 March 24 "infant"; 1901 July 28 child; 1919 Dec. 30.

Mary Ann daughter of William & Johana Hester, died March 13, 1872 aged 9 mo. and 1 day. May she rest in peace.

(To be continued)