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PIETISM AND THE SWEDISH COVENANT

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	v
A. The Subject	vi
1. The Subject Stated and Explained	vi
2. The Subject Justified	vii
3. The Subject Delimited	viii
B. Sources	ix
C. Method of Procedure	x
 Chapter I PIETISM IN GERMANY AND METHODISM	
	IN ENGLAND
A. Introduction	2
B. German Pietism	2
1. The Structural Background	2
a. The Political Situation	2
b. The Religious and Moral Situation	5
c. Society	7
2. The Work of Spener	9
3. The Work of Francke	13
4. The Popularity of Pietism	19
5. Developments After Francke	21
6. General Characteristics of Pietism	22
7. Less Desirable Tendencies	27
8. Summary	29
C. English Methodism	31
1. The Structural Background	31
a. The Political Situation	31
b. The Religious and Moral Situation	32
2. The Work of the Wesleys	33
3. Characteristics of Methodism	35
4. English and German Pietism Compared	37
D. Summary	39
 Chapter II PIETISM IN SWEDEN	
A. Introduction	42
B. Eighteenth Century Sweden	43
1. The Political Situation	44
2. Society	44
a. The People	45
b. The Home Life	45
c. The Church Life	46
3. The Religious and Moral Situation	47
C. The Introduction of Pietism	49
1. The Suppression of Early Pietists	54
a. Johannes Folcher	54
b. Lars Ulstadius	56
c.	57

June 7, 1948

26292

c. Elias Wolker	59
d. Prisoners from Siberia	60
e. Some Friendly Ministers	60
f. Herrnhutism	62
g. Conclusion	63
2. Growing Popular Acceptance of Pietism	63
a. Schartau	64
b. George Scott and Methodism	66
c. Carl Olof Rosenius	67
3. The Emergence of the Mission Friend	
<u>Läsare</u>	73
a. Survey of Sweden at 1850	73
b. Eric Jansen, an Extremist	75
c. Waldenström and the Organization of	
the Mission Friends	78
d. The Great Revivals and Emigration	81
D. Summary	82
1. The General Character of Swedish Pietism	82
2. Swedish Pietism Compared with German and	
English	85
 Chapter III SWEDISH PIETISTS IN AMERICA	87
A. Introduction	88
B. The Organization of the Swedish Evangelical	
Mission Covenant Church in America	90
1. The American Scene	90
a. The Political Situation	90
b. The Social Situation	90
c. The Religious and Moral Situation	91
2. The Immigration of Mission Friends to	
America	91
3. Two Synods Organized and United	96
4. The Organization of the Mission Covenant	99
C. The Growth and Development of the Mission	
Covenant Pietists	100
1. Americanization	100
2. The Battle of the Faith	103
a. The Battle-ground and the Enemies	103
b. The Educational Front	107
c. The Doctrinal Front	110
d. The Front of Secularism and Materialism	113
D. Summary	116
1. General Characteristics	116
2. Less Desirable Characteristics	120
3. Comparisons and Contrasts of America and	
Europe	121

Chapter IV PIETISM IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY . . .	123
A. Introduction.	124
B. A Survey of the Criticism of Pietism	125
1. The Ritschlian Criticism	125
2. What About the Critics?	128
C. Pietism In the Light of Psychology	130
1. Why Pietism At All?	130
2. The Requirements of a Sound Personality. .	131
3. Pietism And Real Psychological Needs . . .	134
D. The Limitations of Pietism for the Develop-	
ment of Christian Personality	137
1. A Yardstick of Measurement--William James.	137
2. The Intellectual Limitations	139
3. Limitations in their Conception of God . .	140
4. Limitations in their Understanding of Man.	141
5. Limitations in Historical Sense	142
6. Limitations in their Understanding of	
Christian Freedom	144
7. Limitations in their Activism	146
E. The Criticism of Pietistic Asceticism	147
1. Self-Preservation and Self-Discipline. . .	147
2. The World	151
F. Pietism in Relation to American Life	152
G. Summary	153
Chapter V. SUMMARY	156
BIBLIOGRAPHY	162

INTRODUCTION

PIETISM AND THE SWEDISH COVENANT

INTRODUCTION

A. THE SUBJECT

1. The Subject Stated and Explained.

"Pietism" is a name given a great religious movement within the Christian Church in behalf of practical religion. Pietism has strange relatives. It is akin to mysticism, yet it is not mystical for feeling is not all. It is related to empiricism and pragmatism in its selection of "useful" doctrines, and yet it is idealistic and supernatural. It bears close resemblance to progressive education in its activism and emphasis on a full life experience, but it has goals and ends. Pietism is democratic and emphasizes individual freedom and responsibility, and yet in its specification of prohibitions for pietistic Christian conduct it resembles totalitarian state practices. That pietism is found in this family group perhaps may most easily and truly be explained by saying that it is near the heart of the human family, than which there is no stranger group.

Pietism appeared in Germany in the seventeenth century, was introduced to England in the eighteenth and was labeled Methodism, to Sweden in the nineteenth and was labeled "lāsare" and resulted in the Mission Friend movement. Its influence is felt in all parts

of the Christian Church today, among Protestants. This is another indication of its vital relation to the human family and to vital Christianity. Yet despite its contribution and vitality pietism has always been subject to attack and criticism from friend and foe. It has been the family member who has not been comfortable to live with and who has needed apology and explanation.

This religious movement, practical and personal, warm and direct, will be studied with special reference to the Swedish church background of the writer.

2. The Subject Justified.

It would be possible to justify this study from the motive of curiosity alone. How can it be that a significant movement within the church could be given a name that carried reproach, in three different countries and for three centuries, especially when the movement enlisted in these lands some of the best people and promoted practical and consistent Christian living? But a more important justification than this question perhaps can be found in the failure of most church historians to link the three expressions of this movement in any significant way to the basic psychological, social, and religious cause and effect patternⁿ which is to be found in each country.

The strongest and prime justification for the writer is a personal concern about the whole subject. The most precious experiences of a Christian are those which brought him into a living and saving relationship to his Lord. It was this precious memory that made any criticism of pietism difficult for the writer, since it was among the pietists that he lived and became a Christian. Yet there existed also a haunting doubt about this interpretation of Christianity that threatened not only to sweep away confidence in its mode of Christian life but also to undermine confidence in the validity of its central message--the need and possibility of personal communion with God in Christ. This study was born of that doubt and has resulted, it is hoped, in a more mature understanding of pietism and an enlightened confidence in the validity of the experience with God that was transmitted by the pietists. Paul's conviction that "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and a sound mind" has been reaffirmed.

3. The Subject Delimited.

Ritschl wrote three volumes on Pietism, and he did not deal with the Swedish aspects. This indicates the breadth of the subject and the need for further study. In this study two topics will especially receive

serious consideration. The values and the strength of pietism will be investigated and the limitations of the movement will also be examined with an aim to positive criticism and suggestion.

B. SOURCES

The sources for the German and English phases of pietism are readily available. A good history of the denomination under consideration has yet to be written, as also a good single work on the long background of the pietistic ferment in Sweden. Some excellent work has been done by American writers with Swedish backgrounds and in addition to these sources denominational material has been used.

C. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In order to determine the basic causes for pietism the social-historical background and the "soul" of the people must be reviewed in each case. Therefore the first two chapters will deal in a matter of fact way with some of the causes which seem significant for understanding the movement as a whole. These two chapters will be structurally the same to facilitate comparison and contrast. Chapter three will deal with the Swedish pietists as they came to America and should provide a

a true and interesting check upon the significance and value of the causes and characteristics noted in the first chapters.

Chapter four will begin to make conclusions on the basis of the material presented in the first three chapters and will survey the criticism of pietism found in theological and historical writers and attempt to weigh them for their worth. Following this a Biblical-psychological thesis will be proposed as a valid explanation both for the strength and the weakness of pietism, and as a significant principle for use in making constructive criticism.

The thesis will conclude with a summary and some brief references to other similar secular movements.

CHAPTER I
PIETISM IN GERMANY
AND
METHODISM IN ENGLAND

PIETISM IN GERMANY
AND
METHODISM IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

A. INTRODUCTION

In studying the Mission Covenant Church of America one is immediately forced back into the revivals in Sweden in the middle of the nineteenth century. When this journey has been made the next part of the historical retracing must be done in two divergent pathways, one to England through a Methodist missionary to Sweden, named George Scott, who came in the 1820's, and the other to Germany and the pietistic sources found there. However, the journey to England and Methodism turns out to be only an alternate route, for Methodism in turn must be traced in part to the influence of the Moravians and the pietist teachings.

Therefore in this chapter primary attention will be given to the German sources, with a mere sketch of the English phase at the close.

B. GERMAN PIETISM

1. The Structural Background

a. The Political Situation

The structural background for pietism must be sought to understand the movement. It must be remembered that the

German State in the period from Luther onward was not democratic but rather increasingly nationalistic. This period at the time of the Reformation was a time when the chief political development was the formation of nations with strong, centralized governments. The royal power, which in Germany was split among many princes, tended to become absolute.

"Germany had a political organization similar to the American union under the Articles of Confederation. Ever since the German Carolingian line had become extinct, the great nobles of the kingdom had assumed the right to elect their king; and from the coronation of Otto the Great in 962 the chosen king also had a right to the crown of Italy and to the imperial title. By the close of the Hohenstaufen period (1138-1254), Germany was divided into about three hundred virtually independent states, but seven of the leading princes had usurped the right to elect the king." 1

By the time of Maximilian (1493-1519) the feudal relation between the king and the princes and between the princes and their vassals had become purely nominal. The princes were sovereigns in their states. Local diets had been introduced that looked in the direction of modern concepts of government but did not restrain the princes very effectively at any time.

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1. Qualben, L. P., A History of the Christian Church, New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936, p. 207.

When ^{one}/_e enters the 17th century especially after the Thirty Years' War, the authority of the prince over his people was especially prominent. The disastrous results of this prolonged struggle played into the hands of the princes.

"The princes knew well how to profit by the national prostration. The local diets, which, as we have seen, formed a real check on petty tyranny, and kept up an intimate relation between the princes and their subjects, were nearly all destroyed. Those which remained were injurious rather than beneficial, since they often gave an appearance of lawfulness to the caprices of arbitrary sovereigns. After the Thirty Years' War it became fashionable for the heirs of principalities to travel, and especially to spend some time at the court of France. ... Before the Reformation and even for some time after it, the princes were thorough Germans in sympathies and habits; they now began to be separated by a wide gulf from their people. Instead of studying the general welfare, they cruelly wrung from exhausted states the largest possible revenue to support a lavish and ridiculous expenditure. The pettiest princeling had his army, his palaces, his multitudes of household officers; and most of them pampered every vulgar appetite without respect either to morality or decency.... Beneath an outward gloss of refinement these nobles were, as a class, coarse and selfish, and they made it their chief object to promote their own interests by fostering absolutest tendencies. Among the people there was no public opinion to discourage despotism; the majority accepted their lot as inevitable, and tried rather to reproduce than to restrain the vices of their rulers.... In the free imperial cities there was more manliness of tone than elsewhere, but there was little of the generous rivalry among the different classes which had once raised them to a high level of prosperity. Most of them resigned their liberties into the hands of oligarchies, and others allowed themselves to be annexed by

ambitious princes." 2

Thus ^{one} ~~we~~ may summarize the state structure simply by noting that Germany was ruled chiefly by princes over their individual states and that these princes were sovereign and controlled their people with absolute and final authority. These rulers were in the time of pietism not noted for their enlightened despotism but were careless about their people.

b. The Religious and Moral Situation

One may briefly dismiss the church structure. It was the state-church structure which began under Luther and continued until 1918. However, due to the weakness of the central government in Germany, as has ^{been} ~~we~~ noted in mentioning the power of the princes, the church was actually placed in the hands of the evangelical princes or the evangelically disposed city-councils. 3

"The prince became the recognized head of the church in his territory. He controlled all activities of the church, even doctrine and form of worship, although decisions on doctrinal matters were usually left in the hands of the clergy. In 1539 a special ecclesiastic court was established at Wittenberg for the purpose of deciding such matters as church discipline, divorce, and the like. The members of this court, or "Consistorium" as it was called, consisted of theologians and jurists selected by the Elector. After the death of Luther this

.

2. Sime, James, article in Encyclopaedia Britannica New York, Henry G. Allen and Co. Ninth Edition Vol. X p. 502.
3. Qualben, Op. Cit. p. 243.

Consistorium was changed from a court to a governing body which functioned much like the former Catholic episcopacy. The majority of the Lutheran churches in Germany copied this form of church government." 4

The practical effects of the church organization of this period must not be forgotten. Divergent religious views had not been possible under the Roman Catholic Church. Nor was there religious freedom under the Lutherans or the Calvinists. One has only to remember and recount the fate of the Anabaptists to realize how little freedom for any type of divergence there was. In some regions these radical reformers were wiped out with revolting persecutions and savage slaughter. These conditions obtained and were highlighted further in the Thirty Years' War. After this protracted struggle ended with the Peace of Westphalia it is important to notice that the terms provided equal religious and civil rights to Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics. But note further that not only was there not general religious liberty, in that the three named groups alone were given equal rights, but these rights were not given within any one state, rather each state was to be Lutheran, Calvinist, or Catholic, according to a "normal" year. Moreover the people did not determine the predominant religious position, but the princes.

Thus for a long period of time there was no room for

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4. Ibid. p. 278.

dissenters in Germany, either before or after the Reformation.

c. Society

Society was divided into two main groups in this period, the rich and privileged and the poor peasants or laborers in the cities. The church before the Reformation had added to the heavy taxes of the local governments with its tithes and payments for its services. The Lutheran Church too had taken its stand largely on the side of the nobility in large part because of the Peasant's War.

In many ways the setting of pietism in Germany can be more truly appreciated today than at the beginning of this century for war has once more devastated the earth. McGiffert in his review of pietism places this first in his account of the setting of the Thirty Years' War.⁵ This was not the only war of the time, for the Peasant's War had preceded it as has been mentioned. But by 1648 a large part of Germany was left in shambles. Peasants gave up working the fields. Inhabitants of captured towns had been massacred. How like the headlines of the past few years! The results of war were widespread. The church was affected adversely.

"The long Thirty Years' War produced, throughout the whole Lutheran church, a very great prostration of order, neglect of discipline, and profligacy: and the preachers were incompetent to

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5. McGiffert, A.C., Protestant Thought Before Kant, London, Duckworth Co. 1911, pp. 155-185.

meet this disordered state of things, which continued to exist after the return of peace. Some preachers were wholly incompetent to it: for the people had to choose such preachers as they could get; and among these, many were of indifferent talents and acquisitions. Others had no lack of native talent; but they had been ill instructed. For education was very differently conducted in the higher schools, then, from what it is now. The chief science then taught was the dry and cloudy Aristotelian metaphysics; with which were connected scholastic dogmatics and polemics. Thus our theology was very dark and intricate, and such as was unfit for the pulpit and for common life: the heads of the preachers were full of technical terms and distinctions; and no one understood how to make the truths of Christianity intelligible to the common people.... Of course the preaching was very poor; as is manifest from the postills of the times. The clergy preached from the lectures in the schools; and therefore, explained and proved the doctrines of faith, artificially, which the people could not understand: or they ornamented their sermons with quotations from the fathers, and from the heathen philosophers. They confuted errors and heresies, the very names of which frequently were unknown to their hearers; but they said little or nothing that was calculated to amend the hearts of their hearers; and they could say the less on such subjects, as they themselves often possessed unsanctified minds, or hearts in which pride, contentiousness, obstinacy, and a persecuting spirit predominated."⁶

In addition to the war mentioned there was also a continuing war of doctrine, against Rome, and between the Lutheran and Reformed branches of the Protestants. It was a time of dogmatism in matters of faith and as seen above, the aim of the teaching of Christian doctrine was not to save and regenerate but to hold and defend each

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6. Mosheim, John L. Von, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, translated by James Murdock, New York, Stanford and Swords, 1844, pp. 377-378, (footnote).

article of the orthodox creed. Preaching was of a scholastic kind, dry and hard, and reduced to fine systems of homiletics, almost to complete absurdity. There were twenty five systems or homiletical procedure! ⁷ Ker characterizes the preaching as formal, full of endless disputes, forgetful of great moral and spiritual truths and of the wants of the people. Sermons were composed on hymns, emblems (as a rose, a lily, honey, etc.) and on proverbs.

There resulted and followed with all these conditions an almost unbelievable, save for the present day conditions, lowering of morals. This was the immediate cause and setting of the rise of pietism from the negative side. Latourette writes:

"... in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) when so much of Germany was laid waste, and sensitive and devoted Lutheran Christians, in their reaction from the colossal evils of the time, took refuge in a Pietism which nourished the inner life and stimulated philanthropy to those suffering from social ills, but despaired of being able to remake society as a whole." ⁸

2. The Work of Spener

Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705) is the founder of German Pietism, the son of a Lutheran clergyman. He was

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i 7. Ker, John, Lectures on the History of Preaching, edited by A.R. Macewen, London, Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 175-76 for the above and other facts mentioned, see pp. 168ff. (1888)

8. Latourette, K. S., A History of Expanding Christianity, New York, and London, Harper and Bros. Vol. VII, p. 94.

a man of mystical but practical temperament, sober-minded and active. He was widely read in the devotional literature, both medieval and modern, and having read both Arndt and Baxter. He was aware of the weakness of the church and of the needs of the people and has been characterized as a religious realist who turned to the things that were direct and real in his own experience, who preferred life to doctrine, and who would simplify for others the theology which contained so many things irrelevant to life.

Spener was not a mystic but gave sanction to mysticism in so far as it perfectly responded to the teachings of the church, and it was used in his daily repentance.

Spener's interests have been summed up under the four following heads: 1. Subjective, 2. Ethical, 3. Piety, and 4. Democratic.⁹ From these it may be seen that his interest was in the common man and in the practical effects of theology upon his life. For Spener doctrine must be true, but the question of "How is it used?" was even more important. He emphasized not the faith which is believed but the faith that believes. The faith must be revealed in a changed life. Justification should almost be tested by sanctification. Piety was his way of expressing the desire for a directness and warmth in religious life that

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9. Uwoki, Tadahazu, The Significance of P.J. Spener in the Development of Protestant Thought, a thesis in The Union Theological Seminary Library, April 15, 1924, p. 45.

had been so noticeably lacking in the church.

To gain these worthy ends Spener proposed a change in the program of the church, publishing this program in a preface to an edition of Arndt's sermons which he issued in 1776, and which was called Pia Desideria or Pious Wishes.

Six of these may well be listed:

(1) He wished for a larger circulation of the Word of God and for private meetings of Christians to study it.

(2) He wished for the diligent exercise of the Christian priesthood, in the cooperation of the church members with the minister for prayer and edification. It was here that his little churches within the State Church were begun as a practical means to make the wish a fact.

(3) He expressed the earnest conviction that knowledge is not enough in Christianity, but that we must also have life and action.

(4) He felt the need for a change in the training of ministers so that they would seek progress in heart and life as much as in learning.

(5) He wished for the right bearing toward unbelievers, so as to carry on discussion with heartfelt love, and to seek not merely to answer them but to gain them and to do them good.

(6) He wished for a new way of preaching that

would show by life and in word that Christianity consists of the inner life or the new man whose soul is found in faith and whose results are seen in a good life.¹⁰

From these suggestions it is apparent where Spener's sympathies and interests lay and how he proposed to work. It is important to remember that Spener was an orthodox Lutheran clergyman who never intended to separate from the state church. He did give up his hope of converting the whole church but unlike friends who urged separation, he turned to his ecclesiolae in ecclesia. As early as 1684 he published "The Use and Abuse of Lamentations over a Corrupt Christianity" to avert all separatist degenerations and misconceptions.¹¹ He repeated this publication twice thereafter, in 1687, and 1696.

Spener promoted interest in the Sunday School, in catechetical instruction, and in Protestant confirmation. He fought for the privilege of private devotional meetings. He opposed dances, cards, and the theatre, and taught moderation in food, drink, and dress. He was interested in missions, and among the first to promote missions to Jews.¹²

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10. Ker, Op.Cit., p. 184 f. See also McGiffert, Op.Cit., pp. 155-157.

11. Dorner, I.A., History of Protestant Theology, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1871, Vol. II, p. 203.

12. Latourette, Op.Cit. Vol. III, p. 60.

3. The Work of Francke

It fell to August Herman Francke (1663-1727) to bring the Pietistic movement to its great height in Germany. He also was the leader who systematized and to a large extent left his personal impression even more than Spener upon the Pietistic movement. Because of this and because of his sudden conversion experience which became a standard requirement for later pietists, it is well to study him more carefully.

Francke's father was a doctor of laws at Lübeck at the time of his birth. Francke was educated as a child chiefly in private and afterwards at the Universities of Erfurt, Kiel, and Leipsic. He was a good student, studying both Hebrew and Greek. His aim, he states, was to become a learned man, not to know the will of God. As a measure of his ability it is interesting to note that he read the Old Testament seven times in one school year! He wrote later about his life at Kiel (his 17th year), saying:

"I knew how, at that time, to discuss all the doctrines of theology and morals, and could prove them from the Bible. I was correct in my external conduct and neglected none of the forms of religion; but my head, not my heart, was affected."

His conversion reminiscences are especially interesting because of their close parallels in Swedish accounts. Francke spoke to these people. Brown gives the following account which he describes as the "substance" of it:

"About the twenty fourth year of my age I began to feel, more than ever before, my wretched condition as to spiritual things, and to desire more ardently that I might be delivered from it. I do not remember that any external means led me to this result, unless it may have been my theological and Biblical studies, which I pursued, however, with an entirely worldly spirit.... These words of Scripture were impressed upon my mind: 'For when ye ought for the time to be teachers, yet have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God'. (Heb. 5:12) I had been engaged in the study of theology for nearly seven years, and was familiar with the doctrines of our Church, and could defend them against all opposers; I had read the Bible much, and many other practical works; but all had only affected my understanding; my heart was as yet unchanged, and it was necessary for me to begin anew to be a Christian.... I became diligent in using the means of grace, and neglected no opportunity of worshipping or serving Him. I began to see a little light dawning upon my path, but it was more like twilight than the perfect day. I seemed to have placed one foot upon the threshold of the temple of life and salvation, but lingered there, being too much attracted by the temptations of the world to enter. The conviction of my duty was very strong, but my habits were so fixed upon me, that I could not avoid indiscretions in word and action, which caused the keenest pain. At the same time, there was such a change in my feelings, that I now longed after and loved holiness, spoke of it frequently, and declared to some of my friends, that I was determined to live, hereafter, a godly life. Such a change was observable in me, that some of them thought me a very devoted Christian; but I know well that I was, at that time, too much under the influence of the world, that my resistance to my evil dispositions were very feeble. How miserable would have been my condition, had I continued in this state, grasping earth with one hand, and reaching after heaven with the other--desiring to enjoy both the world and God, but being at peace with neither!...

In this state of anguish I kneeled down again and again, and prayed earnestly to that God and Savior in whom I had, as yet, no faith, that if He indeed existed, He would deliver me from my misery. At last He heard me! He was pleased, in His wondrous love, to manifest Himself, and that, not

in taking away by degrees, my doubts and fears, but at once, and as if to overpower all my objections to His power and faithfulness. All my doubts disappeared at once, and I was assured of His favor. I could not only call Him God, but my Father.... I was convinced that the world with all its pleasures could not give such enjoyment as I now experienced, and felt that, after such a foretaste of the grace and goodness of God, the temptations of earth would have but little effect upon me." 13

Francke dated his conversion here. Forty years later in his last prayer in the garden of the Orphan House he said a fountain had been opened then in his heart from which streams of happiness had uninterruptedly flowed, religion had been a reality to him, and he had been able to deny all ungodliness and every worldly desire and affection.

Two years after his conversion Francke spent two months in the home of Spener with whom he felt warm sympathies. Spener had made this a practice for some years, lodging the theological students in his own house for some time while he instructed them in the duties of preachers. It was through this connection that Spener, in beginning the university at Halle, called Francke and others. Spener had created quite a stir in Germany with his lectures in German instead of Latin.

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13. Brown, Rezeau, Memoirs of Augustus Hermann Francke, Philadelphia, American Sunday School Union, 1830 pp. 26-32.

When Francke came to Halle he came not only as professor but to be a minister in one of the town churches.

"The congregation was in a broken and desolate state. The previous minister had been deposed for gross immorality and his example had told on the people.... Francke's church was at once crowded through the attractive power of his preaching. It was not sensational, nor filled with figures and stories, but drawn from the Bible through his own heart. It was full of faith and warmth, simple and direct, referring constantly to Christ, and to life through Him. All the doctrines were in his sermons, but they were more than doctrines, they were filled with spirit and life;"¹⁴

Both Spener and Francke were subjected to bitter attacks from their own fellow pastors and were able to continue their ministry in part because of the inability of their opponents to prove their charges but also in large measure to the ability to change from one state or city to another and so find a more friendly prince. An especially interesting attack was made upon Francke while he was in Halle by a Dr. Mayer, a Swedish theologian. He attacked him as being injurious to the pure Lutheran religion and as opening the door of the church to heretics of all kinds. This was not the last attack to be made by the Swedish men of the church upon pietism, but is probably the first, being dated in the middle of the 1690's.¹⁵

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- Cit.,
 14. Ker, *Op.*, pp. 202, 203.
 15. Brown, *Op. Cit.* p. 98.

Francke's work may be summed up under eight heads:

- (1) His preaching. This has been noted above.
- (2) His interest in devotional services. He opened his morning devotions in his home to neighbors and any who cared to come. This grew until it became necessary to meet in the church and it became a regular morning service conducted in the familiar and informal devotional way.
- (3) He held catechetical classes for the young to which the old came as well in their interest for the simple and warm instruction.
- (4) He circulated tracts: On Christian knowledge.

On the Bible. His

suggestions for Bible reading are interesting and sound. Among them are listed the following:
 Read grammatically; historically; analytically; with expository aim (for instance, in the purpose intended by the Holy Spirit, Thou shalt not kill, means not to lay violent hands on any person to deprive him of life); read doctrinally so as to obtain a just and saving acquaintance of the nature and will of God; read inferentially; practically, to apply to faith and life; and read in proper order so as to understand.

He further circulated tracts on: Prayer.

Family religion.

Against prevailing vices.

An interesting tract instructs believers how to conduct themselves in company, another on the proper use of leisure.¹⁶ The whole of a Christian's daily life came under his pen in this fashion. He furnished ready and complete guides for conduct in a most detailed way.

(5) He took special pity on war orphans as they came begging to his home, and took them in to feed and instruct them in Christian truth. This grew into the well-known orphanage work which was important not only for its work as a home but for its educational work. He showed great insight into pedagogy and piety.¹⁷

(6) In with his orphanage work he set up an Apothecary Institute, showing an interest in medicine.

(7) He also established a printing work for circulating the Bible and other books and tracts.

(8) He did university work with two branches:

(a) Collegium Ministeriale for the exercise

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16. Brown, Op. Cit., pp. 67-68

17. He felt piety essential, education should be practical, utilitarian, recognized the need of sympathetic and loving discipline. See Painter, F.V.N., A History of Education, New York and London, D. Appleton and Co. 1920, p. 261.

of preaching and catechising.

(b) Collegium Orientale for the study of the Old Testament. All these discourses were to be in Latin and the Old Testament was to be read in Hebrew once a year.

4. The Popularity of Pietism

The immense popular interest in pietism can be measured in various ways. One is the size of the institutions at Halle. At the time of his death there were twenty-two hundred pupils and over three hundred workers, teachers, and attendants. The university, while not under Francke, nevertheless at the beginning trained hundreds of theological students in pietistic manner.

Another means of measuring the importance of the movement is to note that in most of the provinces of Germany strict laws against the pietists were enacted.¹⁸ Laws, it must be remembered, are not enacted against shadows. There was real interest in the Halle school and its teachings. Sweden too felt the danger and passed laws against those tainted with pietism.

Another means of measuring the importance of the movement among the common people can be found in the history of the Moravians. These missionary people had as their

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18. Mosheim, J.L. Von, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, p. 381.

charter members Moravian and Bohemian Protestants who had been driven from their homes by the Catholic Counter Reformation and were given sanctuary on the estate of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf in Berthelsdorf in Saxony. Zinzendorf wanted the group to stay within the Lutheran church, as Spener had proposed for his little churches within the Church. This Moravian community attracted immediate and widespread attention from all Protestant nations whose religious refugees found here a home. From this center they were in turn sent out throughout Germany, and to Holland, Denmark, England, and North America. Spanenberg was one of these who on his trip to North America chanced to sail with a man named John Wesley and of whom it has been written, "It was this personal and immediate consciousness of the presence of Jesus which Spanenberg found wanting in John Wesley on that memorable trip across the Atlantic in January 1736".¹⁹ This meeting had a profound influence upon Wesley and introduced pietism to England where in the form of Methodism it gained such great following and exercised such influence that historians are yet weighing its part in saving England from rationalism and the revolutions of France.

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19. Pinson, Koppel S., Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism, New York, Columbia University Press, 1934, p. 24.

5. Developments After Francke

Before leaving German pietism and before summarizing and noting other aspects of the movement, it will be helpful to survey the course of pietism after Francke.

"After the death of A. H. Francke, Pietism, whose central station was at Halle, gradually degenerated in North Germany. In proportion as its vigor declined, and its energetic efforts ceased, did it seek to retain the spirit of its better days by means of a stereotyped terminology, by external discipline, and by the unchild-like system under which Christian piety was to be trained and accustomed to a precocious self-introspection. All this did but beget, however, much that was unnatural and inwardly untrue; and Pietism now fell into a spirit of legality, which soon showed its infectious power, and had, after the manner of law, a very disintegrating effect upon popular life, by that spiritual pride and unloving temper, that judgment of, and separation from, others, which it is ever wont to introduce, but which was utterly powerless to generate individual freedom through communion with God. On the contrary, not a few of the leaders of the rationalist movement proceeded from this school of pietism,"²⁰

By the middle of the 18th century pietism had almost disappeared. Those who followed the great leaders, that is Francke the younger, Joachim Lange, and others, had neither their mental power nor their spirit.

"They became narrow and ascetic, dark and bigoted, and for the freshness and strength of feeling of the earlier men, they substituted an affected talk and a withdrawal from the

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20. Dorner, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 225-226.

ordinary employments and enjoyments of human life. They divorced Christianity from humanity, and there came a recoil, a revolt against their aberration in behalf of the bare, cold, understanding which assumed the name of reason." 21

It is necessary to come down to J. A. Bengel (1687-1752) the author of Gnomen or Index to the N.T. a scholar and respected churchman to find another pietist of the rank of Spener or Francke.

"His preaching was thoroughly evangelical, though he did not dwell upon conversion as constantly as did the Pietists. 'That doctrine', he said, 'is very important; it is the fingerhand of the clock, but we must remember also the round dial-plate--all duties in their turn'".²²

He was true to the principle of working within the church, yet he would not allow himself to be bound by it.

6. General Characteristics of Pietism

The outward labels and significant characteristics of pietism have not yet been named. It is wise to divide them into two groups, first, those under the first leaders, and then, those found in the later followers. In naming these characteristics it is well to remember that what is outward is not always most significant, yet some of the marks noted by critics may not be significant but are long remembered.

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21. Ker, *Op.Cit.*, p. 223.

22. Ker, *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Taking the chief characteristics and listing them under eight heads, it is possible to obtain a quite sharply defined picture of the first German pietists. The order followed is not intended to be necessarily according to importance.

(1) The attitude toward the established church was that it was worthy and could be redeemed. They recognized that there was a true kernel within the church and proposed to act with this kernel as a leavening influence for good. They never left the church. They died within it.

(2) The movement was democratic, asserting the rights and privileges of the individual against the institution, as can be seen in its great emphasis on the layman. The priesthood of believers was reasserted.

(3) It was a return to the Bible as a book for the common man, to be accepted wholly and read devotionally and hence practically.

(4) Its intellectual outlook was limited. In its stress upon important doctrines for its day it neglected others. This was necessary but resulted in an impoverished clergy and people. Spener depreciated the theoretical side of religion. Francke was interested in the education of children and pastors, but in the

productive rather than the speculative branches. He was the progressive educator in his day with the consequent limitations as well. He broke with scholasticism but also spoke disparagingly of philosophy, and stressed instead the mystical writers.²³ They had no interest in art, science, and secular culture, because it was not directly conducive to piety.

(5) Pietists were rigidly austere. This was needed at the time when immorality, luxury, riotous living, and contempt for the rights of others affected the whole of the nation. The moral tone of the clergy was raised as a result.

(6) Religious experience was centered chiefly in two doctrines and experiences, conversion and sanctification. The emotional experience was stressed as determinant in conversion. Emotion and will were emphasized at the expense of the intellect. It is apparent that this was a needed emphasis for correcting conditions but it need not have been permanent nor taken as the whole. In the conversion

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23. Mosheim, Op. Cit., p. 380.

experience a keen sense of individual sinfulness and guilt was given an important and permanent place. Sanctification was almost made the test of the reality of regeneration. Both Spener and Francke insisted on the perfection of the believer after conversion. Of Spener one reads,

"That a saved man could keep the commandment of God, and that he did no longer sin, was again and again affirmed.... There was a distinction between 'having sin' and 'doing sin', the saved man was a sinner only in the sense of 'having sin'. Those who committed sin consciously were ones who did sin, such were never born again".²⁴

But turning to Francke one finds him saying,

"I do not, however, profess to be without faults and infirmities.... Yet since I am in Christ Jesus God pardons and overlooks them all, as a tender father the failings and misconduct of his child.... But though I thus trust that I am not under condemnation, his grace does not render me careless and secure; it rather excites me, daily, to be more and more renewed in the spirit of my mind. I daily fight against sin, and crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts; yet I cannot do this in my own strength; but through the Holy Spirit who dwells in me.... I do not seek to be justified in one way and sanctified in another.

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24. Uwoki, Op. Cit., pp. 28-29.

I have but one way and that is Christ... How readily we deviate from the straight and narrow way! How often does the believer suffer himself to be led away from Christ, and his trust in Him, to attempt a mere legal obedience! How prone is he to forsake the Gospel, for the Law!" 25

(7) The pietists' attitude toward all of life was both positive and negative. Their life was unified around the positive desire to do everything possible for all people and at all times to lead them to piety and to promote piety in the person himself. Piety meant the general attitude in life of knowing God's will and practicing it. "Piety was nothing but the expression of the desire of the religious realist for directness and warmth of religious life." 26

It is on its negative side that pietism has most often been criticized and caricatured. The positive unification of life from the principle that all of life should conduce toward or be the exercise of piety, that is, love and obedience to the Savior, was accompanied by a denial of the worth of much of human culture and the negation of many activities which for others were at least matters for private interpretation. It expressed

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25. Brown, Op. Cit., pp. 35-38.

26. Uwoki, Op. Cit., p. 38.

itself in forbidding and condemning pantomimes, jocular discourse, reading of ludicrous books, the theatre, dancing, cards, smoking, and feasting, not only for themselves but also in all others; until these became marks of true Christianity.

(8) Deep love and practical piety were stressed as a necessity for every preacher. There came to be held the doctrine that only the man who is himself pious and a friend of God is able to teach others to be pious or to guide them to salvation. 27

7. Less Desirable Tendencies

Under the later followers when pietism in Germany was no longer suffering attacks and persecution but was aggressive and victorious, many of these characteristics were retained but stressed beyond what the first leaders intended, or assumed as sources of life when in fact they had only been marks of life. Part of this was due to the lowering of capacity and vital experience in the later people. Part of it was due to the making out of these early expressions of life bursting its bonds expressions of a new orthodoxy that in turn was repressive. Some of the more important may here be noted:

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27. On this point, and the above one, see Mosheim, *Op. Cit.*, p. 383.

(1) Pietists became separatists; as early as 1691 "party" spirit was manifest. They became characterized by greed for power, one-sided condemnation of opponents, and failure to censure friends.²⁸ Pride became too common.

(2) The intellectual became even more limited. The themes avoided by the leaders grew into prohibitions in the followers.

(3) Preaching became dull and tame and what was more strange, these later preachers paid undue attention to Latin and so lost out in their mother tongue. Thus the popular appeal was greatly weakened both in form and content by the later leaders.

(4) Asceticism at its heights was assumed. This led Spener to remark that he had more to fear from the follies of his friends than from the attacks of his enemies.²⁹

(5) Activity became limited to introspection, constantly reverting to the fact of conversion and an examination of moods and motives. This became morbid and an unhealthy subjectivity.

The societies aimed chiefly at their own edifi-

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28. Murbt, Carl, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Edited by G. W. Gilmore, New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1911, Vol. IX, p. 60.

29. Ker, Op. Cit., p. 213.

cation, forgetting the work for others that had been such a great force with the leaders. With this came, as has been suggested, the feeling that they possessed a higher amount of Christian life than others; pride was doing its deadly work.

(6) Language became affected. "There came to be associated with this [introspection] an affected language about spiritual experiences, real in the first gush of emotion, but sought out and mechanized when it was no longer real. Not only was this injurious to the individual, it sounded hollow to the hearers".³⁰

8. Summary

Pietism was a widespread popular movement in Germany, a state split up into independent principalities where the ruler was sovereign. The church was a state church with no freedom and no realization of the gulf between it and the common people, and society divided into the privileged and the poor.

Conditions in society were bad morally, religiously, and politically. War had worsened conditions and revealed the inability of the clergy to alleviate them. The church men were occupied with scholastic disputations and

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³⁰. Ker, Op. Cit., p. 213.

the defending of orthodox doctrine.

Into this state of affairs the leaders of pietism came anxious to make religious teaching apply to life, to ethics, and to gain these ends preached conversion and sanctification in language and manner which the people could understand. They implemented their aims further by urging informal prayer and Bible study meetings, by educating a clergy in their new approach. They were anxious to remain within the state church to redeem it.

The strength of this movement lay, like the Reformation, in the wide popular interest in it. The state and church were bitterly opposed.

The weakness of this movement lay in its emphasis of part of the Bible and part of the doctrines, to the exclusion of others also important. The part was substituted for the whole.

The pietistic movement may be characterized under three general heads. It was a more inward, emotional, and enthusiastic form of Christianity. It emphasized Christianity, saintliness and activity being its marks. Greater emphasis was placed upon the general priesthood of all believers, with Bible study encouraged.

Pietism must be divided into two periods for accurate and true description, analysis, or criticism. The first was the vital, free stage, the second the more formal and institutional stage. As a result pietism soon spent

itself in Germany as a vital and important movement, although this does not mean that it did not have important and far-reaching effects within its home land as well as in England and Sweden, and elsewhere through the Moravians.

C. ENGLISH METHODISM

1. The Structural Background

a. Political Situation

One finds England's structure parallel to Germany's in state, church and society. England had a state church whose change from Catholicism to Protestantism was not wholly a matter of popular conviction. Both before and after the Reformation in England heretics perished unless they possessed power other than spiritual. It was unusual for dissenters to die in bed before the Reformation, and the experience of the Pilgrims gives a living picture of the church-state structure after it.

"The early part of the century found England very desirous of quiet and moderation. After the turmoil of the Puritan revolt political leaders, like those of America after the World War, magnified the super-values of a state of normalcy. Corruption in political life was accepted as inevitable. Walpole, the guiding power of England's destinies for a quarter of a century (1721-1742), opposed all progressive measures as being inimical to his 'let-well-enough-alone' policies. The close union of church and state brought this deadening spirit into the former institution. The church, in fact, was used as a convenient tool for the

promotion of political ends." 31

... "Unregulated industrialism with its system of coercion and iron discipline connived with a brutal legal system and a proud landed aristocracy to bring indescribable misery and distress upon the helpless masses. The latter were beginning to be housed like cattle in unsanitary, unwholesome districts and forced to work twelve to fifteen hours for a mere pittance." 32

b. The Religious and Moral Situation

The industrial revolution and the church-state structure bear the load of blame for the disastrous results at this time in England to life, morals, and religion. There was neither time nor means for social enjoyments among the majority, the poor people. The whole of society was profligate, improvident, and shockingly immoral.

"Amusements were often coarse, gambling extremely prevalent, governmentally sanctioned lotteries everywhere, cock-fighting and bull-baiting and feminine pugilistic contests not infrequent.... Drunkenness was more prevalent than perhaps in any other period of English history. The stage was condemned by a drama-lover like Addison as extremely offensive." 33

The church was enlivened chiefly by doctrinal discussion and strife. Religion was identified overmuch with correct morals and correct theology whereas true piety was neglected.

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31. Nagler, Arthur Wilford, The Church in History, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, The Abingdon Press, 1929, p. 184.

32. Ibid., p. 185.

33. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

"To this untoward situation must be added such ecclesiastical evils as nonresidence, pluralities, a servile clergy, a cleft between the lower and the higher clergy, preferment seeking, passionless, polemical preaching, neglect of evangelical teaching and of systematic parish work." 34

2. The Work of the Wesleys

Reference has been made (see page 20) to the influence of the Moravian Spanengberg on John Wesley. This gives a direct connection with one part of the pietistic movement which is strengthened when Wesley's journey to the Moravian community in Herrnhut made on June 15th, the month after his conversion in May 24, 1738 is recalled. While there, Wesley made many notes and while he disagreed in some particulars, his own joyous experience and his sympathies with the Moravians make him one of the number of important men in the pietistic movement as a whole.

Wesley's work is too well-known to need recounting here. The features in it that parallel Spener's and Francke's work are apparent. The Methodist movement was a popular, personal, emotional, Biblical, ethical, experience centered religious movement. It began within the church and was forced out of it.

How much like the pietistic emphasis on piety it was can be seen in the following paragraph, which although written by a critic is nevertheless an acute judgment and

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34. Ibid., p. 187.

analysis of Methodism.

"The chief hinge, on which their whole scheme of religion turns, is, that no action whatsoever is indifferent; and hence they condemn several actions as bad which are not only allowed to be innocent, but laudable, by the rest of mankind. They avoid, as much as possible, every object that may affect them with any pleasant or grateful sensations.... All social entertainments and diversion are disapproved of;....fancying (as is thought) that religion is designed to contradict nature." 35

Wesley's reply to such a judgment was something like this!

"Here is a short, a plain, an infallible rule, before you enter into particulars. In whatever profession you are engaged, you must be singular or be damned! The way to hell has nothing singular in it; but the way to heaven is singularity all over. If you move but a step towards God, you are not as other men are." 36

The work of the Wesleys was important in both its scope and its effect. Historians almost all agree that the Evangelical Revival saved England.³⁷ More need not be said here.

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35. Lee, Umphrey, The Historical Backgrounds of Early Methodist Enthusiasm, New York, Columbia University Press, 1931, p. 121. (a Quotation from Fogg's Weekly Journal)

36. Ibid., p. 122, taken by Lee from Sermon XXVI--"Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mt." Discourse X.

37. Bready, J. Wesley, England: Before and After Wesley, New York and London, Harper and Brothers, 1938. Bready states in his introduction, page 14, "the title suggests the water-shed significance of the great Spiritual Awakening to Britain", and feels that its impact extends to the United States and to the Empire. See also page 331 for

3. Characteristics of Methodism

Using the same eight heads under which German pietism was characterized Methodism may very briefly be summed up and also compared with the German movement.

(1) The attitude toward the state church was similar.

Separation was made necessary by the attitude of the Church of England, not by the Wesleys.

(2) The movement was democratic.

(3) The Bible was a moral and doctrinal authority of the most binding character and was for all men.

(4) Stress upon education must not blind ones eyes to the under-estimation of the intellectual.

The work of these institutions, like Spener's and Francke's, was direct, productive. John Wesley was a great organizer, with a scientific mind, rather than a theologian.

(5) Methodists were austere. Results were good.

(6) Three doctrines were stressed by Wesley: conversion, the witness of the Spirit, and Christian perfection. The similarities to the German pietists is immediately apparent, although the terminology is not the same.

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his estimation of the importance of the movement under Wesley not only to Britain but to all Europe.

Bready makes a strong statement of this after five years study of the problem. Other historians may not make as strong or exclusive a case, but agree in the main with this thesis.

(7) The attitude toward life was in Wesley's word, "singular", both positively toward God and His will, and negatively toward the world. Wesley's social vision was kept alive and active whereas the German pietists lost that broad interest of Spener and Francke in the welfare and salvation of others too quickly. But like the pietists, the Methodists were hostile or indifferent to wide realms of art, culture, and science.

Methodism, like pietism, has its prohibitions, adding to the list prohibition of drinking.³⁸

[Wesley] "believed the best way to aid in accomplishing this end [perfect love, or entire sanctification] was to practice abstinence from certain types of entertainment that were deemed harmful to full Christian growth. They may not be since in themselves but they did not help one to attain to Christian perfection. Among these were dancing, card playing, the theatre, idle talking, and various other forms of doubtful amusement." ³⁹

(8) Wesley himself chose the preachers to work with him and therefore without doubt used only those who showed appropriate marks of conversion

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38. See Bready, Op. Cit., pages 312 to 317 for a statement of these and other criticized characteristics, under the heading Recreation, Education, and Emotion, Bready defends the prohibitions by reference to the low state of recreational activities.

39. Sayre, Eldon B., A Survey of the Pietistic Movement with a Critical Analysis of its Contribution to Modern Christianity, a thesis, The Biblical Seminary, 1945.

and piety.

4. English and German Pietism Compared

The structure of the state, church, and society in England was similar to Germany. The chief difference noted was the intensification of bad conditions by the industrial revolution instead of the Thirty Years' War.

The moral and religious setting was also similar. Even church people agreed that affairs were at a low state in England. At the same time no real effort was being made to remedy conditions.

The work of the Wesleys struck at the heart of the problem in England and the response was widespread and the effects important and far-reaching. The chief differences between Methodism and Pietism were the greater degree of organization of Methodism which carried the active work on after the first flush was gone, and the fact that Methodism left the Church of England and became an independent church.

With some modifications the characteristics of pietism are also the characteristics of Methodism.

The history of Methodism after its first leaders passed from the scene does not follow the sad course of pietism in Germany. Its work has continued and its name has lost its first content of reproach.

The connection between pietism in Germany and Methodism in England is a very real connection. The similari-

ties between the structural features of the two countries are striking. The parallels in the state of society morally, religiously, and socially are very close. The evils following the Thirty Years' War in Germany may be found in England but here traced to the industrial revolution in the main. The "soul" of the people in both countries had suffered long under repression politically, socially, and religiously and these sufferings had not been more than temporarily relieved by the Reformation. The common man had little or no voice and his cause was neither appreciated nor pleaded by either political men or church men. When, in that mysterious historical and psychological moment, men with the vision, the religious experience, and the capacity and training to lead, appeared, the common man responded warmly and enthusiastically and in the face of ridicule and persecution.

From this point the historical progress of the two movements are not similar. The Pietists were poorly organized and in the absence of their great leaders soon fell from the great heights of experience and service that the first years knew. Methodism was excellently organized, its activities were varied and continuing, and the movement grew with the passing years.

The two movements were alike in unifying life about the principle of piety narrowly defined in terms of direct beneficial results in Christian living or in winning others

to Christ. The world was shunned or ignored by both. In the stress of the hour intellectual activity and the rational powers of man was slighted. Francke depreciated philosophy, Wesley at sixty-five said in a sermon that he was sure of nothing else as certainly as that which he had learned from his Bible.⁴⁰ These men were not theologians.

Both movements stressed will and emotion and a joyous experience of conversion with continuing sanctification during life. The emotional element can be illustrated most easily by the testimony meeting and the large place hymns of experience and of loving adoration had in the meetings.

D. SUMMARY

A study of the Mission Covenant Church in America leads back to Sweden and then to Germany, and England. The unifying characteristic running in these lands is the pietistic movement. A study of the Mission Covenant church must therefore also be a study of pietism.

German Pietism sprang up in a state split up into absolutist principalities, with sovereign and not enlightened rulers. The church was a state-church with no freedom for divergent religious views or room for private

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40. Lunn, Arnold, John Wesley, New York, The Dial Press, 1929, p. 292.

meetings outside the church. Society was sharply divided into the rich and poor and was in a devastated condition due to the Thirty Years' War. The chief activity of churchmen seems to have been doctrinal argumentation.

Spener, the son of a clergyman, is the founder of German Pietism. He brought theology and the Bible to the common people and emphasized the practical effect it should have upon the individual and through him upon the Lutheran Church. By vitalizing small groups of Christians he hoped to renew life in the whole church. To do this he fought for the privilege of private devotional meetings and opposed many current social practices.

Francke was the clergyman who lived at the same time as Spener and who systematized the movement of Pietism through institutions for training clergymen, children, orphanages, and publishing organizations.

Pietism was a popular movement which was bitterly criticized and mercilessly ridiculed and yet grew rapidly. Strangely enough this strong movement died out quickly and lost its desirable characteristics for a narrow and hypocritical religious exclusiveness.

Thus Pietism in Germany must be characterized by two periods, the first wholesome and corrective of the Lutheran Church, the second overbearing and degenerative.

Pietism sprang up in England under circumstances similar to Germany: in an authoritarian state, a state-

church, and a divided and demoralized society. The origin was different in that it was introduced to England by the Moravians and came at a later period. The Wesleys had direct contact with the Moravians and owed much to them.

Methodism separated from the Church of England and continued to grow and develop even after its founders died. Hence its history has not the same sad ending that was found in German Pietism.

Both German Pietism and English Methodism influenced Sweden and resulted in the revivals and the Mission Friend movement there. Thus, to know Sweden and the Mission Friends requires some knowledge of Germany and England.

That the vital force that effected these great results did not reside in their leaders is evident from the broad interest in it in places not under the influence of the men, as well as the recurrence of it in Sweden a century after Methodism appeared in England and two centuries after Pietism appeared in Germany. Conclusions about this vital force will be reserved for the two final chapters. It is now important to turn to the Swedish phase.

PIETISM IN SWEDEN

CHAPTER II

A. EARLY EDUCATION

Sweden has been one of the most homogeneous Lutheran nations of the world since the legal introduction of the reformation by King Gustavus Vasa in 1527. In that year the young king announced to the Diet the alternative of his abdication or the Reformation. After three days of heated debate the Diet yielded, and resolutions were adopted that the Word of God should be preached in its purity and that the king, not the pope, was to be the highest authority in the Church.

CHAPTER II

At the Church Council of Upsala in 1593, **PIETISM IN SWEDEN** it was declared that the Bible is the sole rule of faith, and that its doctrines are correctly set forth in the three symbols and the unaltered Augsburg Confession.⁴³

Pietism played an important part in the church history of Sweden. Stephenson points to the second phase of the pietistic influence when he writes,

The eighteenth century brought with it a second religious reformation in Sweden, a reformation not just as radical and profound as the one effected

43. Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 230, his footnote.

by Gustavus Vasa in the sixteenth century. The latter came from above and was mainly doctrinal, the statesman and theologian held the reins. In the nineteenth century the situation passed beyond the control of men skilled in statesmanship and ecclesiastical polity, and men of simple faith and often of humble birth assumed leadership; they faltered at times, it is true, but they were none the less successful in changing the hearts of men and shaping a new order of things. The older reformation was German; the younger was Anglo-Saxon, and in the later stages, almost exclusively American." 42

Whether or not Stephenson is correct in his contrasts when he says the latter was not German will be answered later, but his main statement about the second reformation shows the great part played by pietism.

B. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SWEDEN

1. The Political Situation

The struggles for supremacy in governmental power in Sweden had been confined to the conflict of the king for despotic power and of the nobility and privileged classes to assume like power, until the nineteenth century. The landed aristocracy was most important of the classes of people, and they were proud and well-to-do. The peasants were dependent upon them, although the degree of serfdom was exceeded in other countries of Europe. Of Sweden in the nineteenth century we read,

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42. Stephenson, George M. The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1932, p. 24.

"In Sweden,... the only check upon royal absolutism until 1863 was the clumsy oldfashioned Estates General with its four houses of nobles, clergymen, burghers, and peasantry; and though in 1863 a modern bicameral parliament was substituted for the medieval Estates General, the aristocratic classes controlled it and the King retained an absolute veto over its acts." 43

There was no voice from the common people nor were their needs or rights very often considered. An important part in government was played by the clergy who spoke not for their people but for their ruler.

2. Society

a. The People

Swedish people have been characterized as stolid, formal, and conservative. They have also been said to have an inordinate affection for everything foreign, to be somewhat unstable in character, and to love company while they ^{have} more often been forced to live in solitude. There has been an undertow of pessimism, perhaps due to his struggle to live, but seldom has there been skepticism of the German variety.

The home in Swedish society, until the pressure of the industrial development changed it, was central in forming individuals. In a sense hardly understandable to modern Americans, the home was patriarchal in organization. "It

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43. Hayes, Carlton J., A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe, New York, MacMillan Co., 1936, Two Vol., Vol. II pp. 622-623.

was frequently difficult for the father to relinquish his position as the head of the household when the estate had been handed over to the son".⁴⁴ If the king ruled with iron hand and adamant will over his subjects, each home was a reproduction of that same system. Disobedience was unthinkable even after marriage in many homes. The rigors to which the children were subjected would no doubt call for action today by the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, but were an accepted part of social customs in Sweden for many decades.

b. The Home Life

Swedish Society was sharply divided into classes even though the peasant was not servile but considered himself a free man. The nobles considered the peasant crude and uncultured.

The population was largely engaged in agriculture. In 1855, 65% of the population belonged to the class of landed peasant proprietors and their families. The next class was the landless agricultural people who made up 29%. Only 2.24% were of the urban class.⁴⁵ Shortly after this, industrialization had broken up this society pattern and along with the industrialization went a new land policy,

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44. Janson, Florence Edith, The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1931, p. 57.

45. Janson, Op. Cit., p. 46.

breaking up villages and parcelling out the land. Rural communities were greatly changed in the period just before the 1880's. There was heavy migration to the cities and factories, and there were many young people without homes, who found in the churches a place of meeting.

Society is in part dependent upon natural environment. A comprehensive statement of this is not available but a hint of the significance of this factor can be seen in a description of Norrland, an important area in the Läsare history.

"In Norrland, in Northern Sweden, where a sparse population, a stern environment, and long distances from church buildings made religious instruction and frequent church attendance difficult or impossible, church discipline was lax, non-Christian superstitions were rife, and warm religious life, when toward the end of the eighteenth century, it had tardy development, expressed itself largely through conventicles".⁴⁶

c. The Church Life

The church was the community center of the Swedish community. It was a State Church acting as an agent of the state in religious, educational, and civil affairs. The extent of its control over its people and the strength resident in it can be seen in the following description.

"The Reformation in Sweden marked a radical doctrinal departure from Roman Catholicism, but

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46. Latourette, Op. Cit., Vol. III, p. 433.

the organization of the Church was only slightly affected.... In spite of the wide departure from medievalism a trace of the leaven of Romanism remained. The pastor was called präst (priest), and the New Testament term "presbyter" was translated präst. Although the service was rendered in the vernacular, certain parts of the liturgy were chanted, and the pastors retained the ornamental gowns that were such an abomination to the puritans in every country. Moreover, the church and its bishops and pastors retained most of the privileges that were theirs under the medieval system. Until well along in the nineteenth century every child had to be baptized within eight days of its birth, and if parents refused to allow this sacramental rite, an action might be raised against them in the civil courts. ... As late as the middle of the last century every confirmed person [he had memorized the catechism, and some hymns] was required by law to partake of the Lord's Supper at least once a year in order to enjoy the rights of citizenship, to serve as witness in the courts of justice, to enter the marriage relation, or to take up any secular employment.

The parish pastor was a very influential man in the community,... This is due in part to the pastor's position as a servant of the state, which sometime or other brings him into personal contact with every inhabitant of the parish. In the past he was the cultivated person in his community, and religion was generally looked upon as a cultural as well as a spiritual interest, entitled as a matter of course to support from the state....

In spite of the hierarchal character of the church it embodied certain very democratic elements. The pastors were not, as a rule, arbitrarily assigned to congregations by the bishop, but were elected by the qualified voters in the parish, sometimes after a battle royal between the aristocratic element and the bönder--landowning farmers".⁴⁷

The democratic elements mentioned only serve to show how far from modern democratic standards the society of

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47. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 1-3.

Sweden for many years was. The hat must be removed when the pastor passed. It was with fear that the would-be emigrant went to his pastor to obtain the permit necessary to leave Sweden. Many of the clergy had a traditional patriarchal, aristocratic attitude toward their people.

Education was in the hands of the church.

All worship was monopolized by the State Church. Doctrine had been codified in the Church Handbook of 1693, and the "psalmbook" in 1695. Deviation was punishable by court decision. Any revision in these church books was done by the clergy and once changed must be accepted. Home meetings were specifically prohibited in the Conventical Act of 1726. A summary of its content is given by Stephenson:

"Persons who led conventicles were liable to fines and imprisonment for the first offenses and banishment from the kingdom for two years for the third transgression. Fines increasing with each offense were assessed upon frequenters of conventicles. In spite of a provision in the Constitution of 1809 granting religious liberty, the old regulation remained in force until 1858, and banishment was not abolished until 1860".⁴⁸

Full religious liberty came in 1873.

3. The Religious and Moral Situation

All was not peaceful or well within the State Church

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48. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 11-12.

in Sweden despite its power and control over the people. The disturbing influence of pietism was feared and fought by church leaders and the king while it was yet only in Germany, and in 1694 an edict similar to the Conventicle Edict of 1726 was made by the king "for the sake of his people's eternal welfare", at the instigation of Dr. Mayer, the king's counsellor.⁴⁹ The people's interest in more than what the church was providing is seen in the number and kinds of laws passed to prohibit the entrance or continuance of any doctrine or practice not fostered by the State Church.

That there was room for improvement in the church can be shown from many sides. In the established church there was not much effective preaching. "Its preaching had little of that simplicity and appeal to childlike faith that arouses the conscience and awakens the sinner to a better and more active life".⁵⁰ The church was orthodox but permeated by the dry rot so deadening to all real spiritual life. Stephenson writes conservatively:

"It is deplorable that the pastors showed little interest in the religious awakening that was manifesting itself all over the country in the two decades prior to 1860. This was due in part to the lack of religious experience and in part to the training they had received in the universities. Young men studied for the ministry without the solemn conviction which the

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49. Ekman, E. J., Den Inre Missionens Historia, Stockholm, Svenska Tryckeriaktiebolaget, Kungsgatan 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ 1896, p. 2.
50. Stephenson, Op. Cit., p. 25.

theologian terms the "inner call", and their education was more classical than theological. They knew far more about liturgics, symbolics, and dogmatics than about pastoral theology. The church became a body of frigid mechanical forms and ceremonies which quenched the spirit and gave to the people only the dry husks of formalism. Persons with scarcely a spark of spirituality regarded with horror the omission of any part of the liturgy.

In the first half of the nineteenth century neology had so permeated the church that it was said to have become a "magnificent ice palace". This type of rationalism had crept into the liturgy, hymns, catechisms, and sermons. The sermons were often masterly and faithful to the text, and their rounded periods and rhetorical figures satisfied the aesthetic sense, but left the heart untouched. Free prayers were rarely offered; instead the prayers were read in the form of a hymn from the Psalmbok, which had come to be regarded as almost perfect and was used by some pastors to an even greater extent than the Bible. Formalism was so ingrained that most of the pastors looked with hostility upon informal gatherings where people met to read the Bible and to unite in prayer without the leadership of the pastor.

Although there were notable exceptions, the lives of the clergy were not exemplary. Profanity and intemperance were by no means unusual. A reliable witness has testified that on one occasion the pastor in his parish was so intoxicated that he laughed aloud before the altar and preached nonsense in the pulpit. In a letter to a religious journal in 1868 a pastor in the diocese of Växjö quoted a bonde as saying, "In our parish there are three pastors: one is a drunkard who has often to be carried into the pulpit in a state of intoxication; the second is avaricious and for the most part busy with his own affairs; the third is a wag and in his own way is a well-behaved person". The same year the archbishop, in his address to the convention at Uppsala, presented a harsh picture of the clergy. In the catalogue of their sins were listed heresy, profanity, blasphemy, dishonesty, lewdness, and sacrilege.

George Scott, the Wesleyan missionary who may be regarded as the progenitor of the free-church movement in Sweden, after only a few weeks' sojourn in Stockholm, painted a dark picture of the state of religion in Sweden in 1830. 'Christian experience

seems utterly disregarded in this country; an empty and uninfluential form is the highest object at which they aim. The Lutheran Church, by all accounts I can get, is fast asleep if not dead; the priesthood has become worldly, sensual, and mercenary, the ordinances are neglected and experimental religion is unknown".⁵¹

It is therefore clear that moral conditions were at a low ebb. Drinking was becoming a national curse. "A glass of spirits morning, noon, and night was a part of the diet of both men and women ... the per capita consumption of alcoholic liquor in Sweden exceeded that of every other country of Europe".⁵² Part of the early strength of the religious revivals was derived from the concern with prohibition which the preachers urged and which was felt urgently needed by both people and leaders in Sweden.

It is important to note that despite the defects in the church and the indications of waning morality and lack of vital spiritual life among the people, there was a saving factor from disintegration in the strong social structure formed by the home and church habits. Within this framework the people were held in contact with these basic social organizations.

However, as has been noted, religion was largely a matter of habit, and not of heart. The preachers confirmed people in their formal assurance by their poor

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51. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 5-8.

52. Stephenson, Op. Cit., p. 17.

example and yet by their position as servants of Christ. Funeral sermons especially made people secure when all regardless of past life were praised as God-fearing and doers of good works.

A picture of the average home contrasts in many ways from today. It was the rule to read the Bible and to pray at night, and many did so in the mornings also. Older children read prayers aloud from the hymnal and the younger members of the family repeated simple ones by memory. On Saturday afternoons in the winter no work was done, but the family, including the "hired man" and other help (the landless agricultural worker was like a member of the family and spoke of the land as "our" farm) gathered around and read the next day's portion of the service in the church books. Sunday found all away at church except those who were needed for the cattle. They went to the morning service and then met for a social (and often a drinking) time in the church yard. Sunday afternoon was a time for cards, dancing, or social affairs or clubs for the young people, while the older folks read the sermon or a book of sermons by some noted preacher. Luther's and Nohrborg's sermons were read and also in many homes Arndt's True Christianity, in addition to the Bible.

To a superficial observer these pictures of the home might outweigh in importance the picture given of the church and the accompanying low moral state. It will

appear in the more specific account of the times that there actually was not only much room for improvement but also a wide popular appreciation of that need. The revivals of pietism in Sweden were vitally inter-related with the rise of the modern spirit. On these strong tides personal religion was in part borne and promoted. Included in these forces were rationalism, freedom for the individual, democracy, industrialization, world expansion, and growth of interest in America. The first public education act was passed in 1842, for elementary education.⁵³ The kinship of pietism to these forces named need not be labored here but the importance to the religious revivals must not be under-estimated. Stephenson writes,

"The movement toward democracy lagged far behind the Lutheran Reformation, but the pietistic reformation and political reform went hand in hand.... 'Pietism is unmistakably democratic by nature', commented a conservative periodical; 'it advances against the duly constituted authorities in the church, with all the trappings of democracy and with hate and enmity against the established order'".⁵⁴

C. THE INTRODUCTION OF PIETISM

1. The Suppression of Early Pietists

Pietism was effectively suppressed or excluded by Church and State in Sweden for more than a century. As

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53. Janson, Op. Cit., p. 59. Janson notes also that the involvement of the church in the life of individuals was almost like the Roman Catholic. Burial in the consecrated ground of the church was necessary for future redemption.

54. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 24,25.

has been pointed out, in the years immediately preceding 1700 Dr. Mayer, a counsellor to the king, fought and succeeded in obtaining the king's decree against it, first proclaimed in 1694.⁵⁵ Qualben states that the Pietistic movement was suppressed by a royal decree in 1706.⁵⁶ He does not give his source. The Conventicle Act was passed in 1726 and used until 1858 when it was repealed. The history is clear that there was a determined effort to stamp out this German heresy in Sweden. To preserve the people and the church the doctrine and hymns were formally adopted and revisions were made only by the constituted authorities. This began in 1693, with revisions under rationalistic influence in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

This summary account is however not sufficient.

Ekman in his Historia gives many detailed accounts of experiences which will be introduced here to show more clearly the meaning of the generalized survey already given. Ekman does not give a comprehensive history but has selected important men in the history of what he calls the "spiritual movements" in Swedish history. He is sympathetic toward all shades of spiritual experience and longings, so his account is very valuable. It must be remembered that he has in his first part selected representa-

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55. Ekman, Op. Cit., and Ante, p.50.

56. Ibid., p. 365.

tive men who may not have been numerous, but in them a significant index of the state of the people can be found.

a. Johannes Folcher

In Chapter one Ekman tells of the first pietist in Sweden, Johannes Folcher, the first to disregard the king's decree of 1694. Folcher was an exceptional student, ready for the university of Upsala to study for the ministry at twenty. He received a philosophy degree there and on a scholarship went to the German university at Giessen. He was born in 1664, so was in Germany about 1690. In Giessen he received the highest theological degree and in addition became acquainted with pietism and became an ardent pietist.

He held a high position in Sweden, and at the coronation of Karl XII gave a speech to assembled knights in Latin. He sought a position as preacher in his home city of Kalmar. The bishop and consistory did not want him because he was known as a pietist and they feared unrest and difficulties for the church fathers if he were placed there. But his learning surpassed all others by so much that it was not possible to escape proposing his name to the king. He was in Kalmar until in 1701 he transferred to professor of theology in Pernau in Livland.

This university had a settled inclination toward orthodoxy, but little toward living Christianity. Here Folcher bravely and clearly testified that in Christ and His fellowship there was power to free from sin and unrighteousness.

His bravery was needed for he was evidently alone in this estimation of the value and meaning of a changed life. Fellow professors were bitter against him. Of one of them it is said that for two weeks it was impossible for a student to receive aid because he was in that time either sleeping or drunk. This was not a secular university, it must be remembered. Folcher was too outspoken for such company.

He was accused of heresy and tried by an unfriendly jury and found guilty. He was not permitted to appear on his own behalf. He lost his position and was jailed from 1709 to 1718 when he was freed by Ulrika Eleanora. The reason for such treatment was to protect the young people and others from pietism.

b. Lars Ulstadius

In chapter two Ekman turns to Finland where Lars Ulstadius, ordained to the ministry in 1680, lived. He became much concerned about his sins in student days at the University in Åbo, nearly breaking down in his distress. He sought peace by three means before he lived as an insane man. First he burned his library of philosophical books which he had inherited from his father and the teaching of which he felt responsible for his sin. Secondly, he turned to the clergy, but found no understanding of himself among them, as a result he became bitter against what he termed the sleeping clergy. His last step was to go to the church

in which he had been installed to confess his sins in public, but with no beneficial results.

Ulstadius lost his grip upon himself after these desperate efforts at adjustment failed, and neglected his appearance. Consequently he became well-known to the people who differed widely in their opinions of him, from those who thought him sent of God, likening him to Isaiah, among whom were many respected and learned men, to those who thought he had lost his mind. While in this state he made an appearance at an important church gathering declaring after the reading of the Gospel for the day that he had a confession to make before the sermon. His confession was that the Lutheran doctrine was a damnable doctrine and that the ministers didn't have the Holy Spirit. The preacher called out "You lie!" and then ordered him taken from the service. Twenty men responded but when they seized him his clothes fell off. At this Ulstadius cried out, "So shall the ministers' shame yet be disclosed, as I stand naked before you". A friend then took him home, and strangely enough he was allowed to go free and appeared at the afternoon meeting without causing any further disturbance.

Two days later the police arrested him and he was tried on doctrinal matters. He was judged insane and jailed. He was freed by Ulrika Eleanora in 1719 but refused to go out unless he was pronounced not guilty. At his funeral pious students carried him to his grave and great crowds

followed. He received great publicity as a martyr for truth.

c. Elias Wolker

In chapter three there is an account of pietism in Stockholm. A Doctor Mathia Iser related in 1702 that meetings on Wednesday and Friday evenings were being held, especially at the home of Elias Wolker, one of Sweden's first laymen. This was evidently the result of pietistic promotion by three students who had studied at Halle and participated in the meetings of pietists under Francke. At these meetings there was singing, and reading of the Bible, with closing prayer and song. The songs were those of the German Pietists, translated into Swedish, and the prayer was extemporaneous.

Wolker was sure that the Holy Spirit's school was better than the preacher's universities with their ungodly professors. A churchman who had eaten with Wolker found no fault with them or the meetings, all they did was to say what should be learned from the Scripture read and they ended by desiring more light and grace. But this group was directly connected through the son of one of their number to Halle and pietism's error.

For some reason neither Wolker nor any other of this group were imprisoned. The result of this disturbance within the church was the issuing of an edict forbidding home meetings where people outside the family circle came,

if those meetings were to hold religious exercises or to study the Scripture.

d. Prisoners From Siberia

Ekman gives a brief account of an interesting addition to the number of the pietists due to prisoners of war. An approximate translation of his entire record of this is given.

"At this time the pietistic movement received nourishment because many Swedish prisoners of war, who after the defeat at Pultava were shipped off to Siberia, returned to Sweden filled with the pietistic spirit. This came about in the following way. Among the prisoners who were sent to Siberia there was a Captain with a dragoon. He was German by birth and had studied various writings by Spener and Francke and had through them come to a serious disposition. He opened in Tobolsk in Siberia a school for Swedish children and taught them the Bible and held prayer-meetings. Many of the prisoners attended these meetings and were converted. From Francke these Swedish prisoners of war received many letters of encouragement and even money and books. After the time of captivity ended in 1721 the greater part of the prisoners returned to Sweden and their settlement there surely had an effect upon the pietistic movement there." 57

e. Some Friendly Ministers

Many of the preachers were sympathetic to the pietist teachings. In chapter three Ekman names Hilleström¹¹ who because he spoke of good works was called before the consistory. He did not deny God's grace nor the importance of faith but he said that a Christian does good works, and

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57. Ekman, Op. Cit., p. 18.

reminded them of this emphasis in Luther. He was warned and there were many efforts to stop him from preaching through state channels but to no avail.

Chapter five tells in greater detail of Erik Tollstadius whose dates were 1693-1759. He broke with his old life before his ordination at 26. Previously he had reckoned his descent from Greece and Rome, now from God's Word. He was never forgiven for defending pietism and for saying that the land would be better off if all the bishops and teachers did as they taught! He was called before the Stockholm consistory for this but retained his position. Part of the reason for this lies in the fact that the Second Estate took away after 1731 some of the power of the ministers to judge in religious matters. Until this they alone had the power.

Tollstadius held meetings for teaching and prayer because of the people's hunger for the Word. These meetings came to be held every afternoon. He gave himself no rest in this and even started a school for street children. He read Jacob Böhme. He opposed unbelieving clergy and the careless use of the Lord's Supper.

Tollstadius was bitterly hated by the clergy who paid a man to kill him on the street but the attempt was unsuccessful. He became famed for his power over men in a spiritual sense. He even received high church honors.

f. Herrnhutism

Chapter six tells of the introduction of Herrnhutism to Sweden and of Arvid Gradin's part in it. Two missionaries of the Moravians came to Sweden in 1737 on their way to work among the Lapps. The Church of Sweden sought and succeeded in driving them out but not before Gradin came to know them and their message of God's grace gripped him. He went to Herrnhut to learn more. Of him Zinzendorf said "He came half-Socinian--but was soon changed". He returned to his home land to work from 1741-1743 and won many pastors to a friendly attitude toward the Herrnhuters. He left Sweden to return in 1747 but was deported in 1749 and served after that as missionary to Africa and America. By 1747 many were sympathetic toward this doctrine in Stockholm, Göteborg, Karlskrona, and several places in Skåne.

Chapter sixteen mentions new movements in the 1770's and 1780's in North Helsingland. Religious exercises after 1776 began to be held in the homes where the Scripture was read and hymns sung and prayer made. When reproved, these people objected that the Holy Spirit did not lead to disorder, and that since they had long served Satan and the world, it did not seem right that now when they had opened eyes and perceived holiness and peace, they should be branded criminals. They said that they read only the Bible, and sermons by Sriver, Nohrborg,

Bald, and Wallström, and Arndt's True Christianity. They admitted that with concern they noted differences in these from their pastor's preaching but felt that they were not in the wrong since they only wanted more light. They were not severely constrained.

g. Conclusion

Up to 1800 the pietistic movement in Sweden was thus dependent upon brave men both in pulpit and home. These were indeed strange times when meetings in the home for drinking and amusement were allowed but if for religious purposes were banned and the force of the State used to implement the doctrinal stand of the church. The direct ties with the German pietists have been noted and will continue with some modification when the nineteenth century is considered. In this century the pietism so long suppressed burst the bonds and became accepted.

2. Growing Popular Acceptance of Pietism

Rather arbitrarily this period is set at 1800. This was an important time in all of Europe and Sweden too felt the force of rationalism and unbelief. Since this was an immediate factor in the rising protest by the pietistic minded people in Sweden the general name suggested in the heading "Growing Popular Acceptance" may be given to this date.

In the years around 1800 a burning wind of unbelief swept over the Lutheran Church of Sweden. Christ was

seen as only a great Teacher. From the common people the rich store of spiritual songs which had been gathered in the church hymnal since the Reformation were taken, and in their place were substituted pieces of poetry which were poor as poetry and were unscriptural.⁵⁸ The church leaders sought to make the service of God agree with reason. The revised church Handbook of 1811 and the revised Psalm-book of 1819 contained these mentioned changes.⁵⁹ Reaction against these changes in favor of the older books and preachers who preached without taint of the new rationalism was met by penalties, fines, and jail sentences. An instance of such a protest from the Norrlandsläsarene to the king is given by Ekman, and the reply given is an interesting one. These who protested against the revised books were accused of reading Luther too much and of being antagonistic toward all Catholic doctrine and good works. They were also accused of being so set in Lutheran phraseology that in their invidious comparison of all other unlike statements they were narrow. Those replying on behalf of the revisions claimed that they could express heavenly truth differently and still not change the truth.⁶⁰

a. Henrik Schartau

To cover the period from 1800 to 1870 three men who

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58. See Ekman, Op. Cit., p. 693

59. Janson, Op. Cit., p. 169.

60. Ekman, Op. Cit., pp. 694-709.

were important leaders will be mentioned. The first of these is Henrik Schartau, (1757 to 1825), a leader in the early revival movement a minister of the State Church. In the early years most of the läsare pastors were of the Schartaun school,

"Thoroughly orthodox on the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace. ... He [Schartau] was not unaware of the defects of the Church, but his high-church leanings caused him to oppose lay preaching and conventicles and anything that might lead to separatism. He maintained that pietism was too human in religion and too religious in human affairs".⁶¹

Schartau was a preacher of life and fire, despite his aversion to sentimentalism and emotion. He stressed the Holy Spirit and sanctification, and in his corrective position against the Herrnhuters hardly dared mention the suffering and blood of Christ. He had no faith in religion affected by feelings. Conversion both began and continued by the enlightening of the understanding. He said in a sermon, "Reason is a workshop for God's Spirit. Mankind's reason is ruined but still man has reason, such as it is, and in this reason God wishes to work with His Word for man's conversion...".⁶² A key verse was in Romans 12, "reasonable service".

Schartau held strongly to the authority of Peter's Keys and so became almost everyone's father-confessor.

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61. Stephenson, Op. Cit., p. 35.

62. Ekman, Op. Cit., p. 235.

He was a great catechist for the common people. He saw the need for the Christian to watch himself for false religiousness or for that which was against God's Word, without God's Word, or against the common reason's ground truths.

b. George Scott and Methodism

A change in the pietistic movement occurred when Methodism was introduced to Sweden by George Scott who worked in Stockholm chiefly from the year 1830 until he was forced to leave in 1842.

"Just as the Wesleys and Whitefield translated the message of the Gospel into language comprehensible to men in the factories and mines of England, so did Scott awaken a new religious life among the humble people in the capital of Sweden, and his influence was soon extended to all parts of the realm through personal visits, organizations, and the printed pages. . . . Perhaps his greatest contribution to the welfare of Sweden was the ultimate emancipation of her people from the bondage of brännvin drinking--which was sapping the vitality of the nation, demoralizing young and old, and contributing to crime and poverty. In a real sense he was the founder of the temperance movement. . . .

He had faith in the State Church and he believed that all that was needed was to breathe new life into it.

In the year that he left Sweden Scott established Pietisten, which exercised an influence in Sweden comparable to the influence of Luther's ninety-five theses in Germany. Under the editorial guidance of Rosenius, Pietisten was more than a name; as has been well said, it became a program and a slogan." 63

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63. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 13,15,16.

c. Carl Olof Rosenius

It is of this second period that Stephenson correctly says the influence was chiefly Anglo-Saxon instead of German. In this second stage Carl Olof Rosenius (1816-1868) played perhaps the chief part until after his death the revival spirit was so widespread that it cannot be contained or described by the name of any one man.

Because Rosenius in his spiritual experiences parallels Francke so closely and because of his importance in the movement a detailed study should be made of him. His father was a revival preacher and Rosenius was troubled at an early age about the existence of God. As a lad he determined to test for himself in search for an answer, and blindfolded tried to walk over a dangerous piece of ground. If there were a God He would guide safely to the other side. As he was going he stopped suddenly with a premonition of danger, removed the blind, and found himself about to fall into a deep well. He believed God had rescued him.

In school as a boy he came to venerate God and His Word. He was deeply impressed by a picture of Christ when a friend told him of the love of Christ for sinners. He was converted at fifteen and immediately began to witness to others, and to reproach the ungodly children; for which he was ridiculed. He met with older converts to pietism, and read Luther with them. He was warned by

a member of his consistory not to preach the mystical union or the inward and secret union with the Savior. As a student he preached once for a bishop, and decrying good works spoke of faith alone, whereas the bishop emphasized good works.

He went, as most candidates for the ministry, to the university at Upsala, where he wrote to friends of many fluctuations in feelings but also of clinging to God's promises for assurance. He complained of the drunkenness, unchastity, gross swearing, and all vices which were flagrantly prevalent in this school of the future ministers of the church.

He had to leave the university for want of money. He tutored at this time near Stockholm. It was a time of severe testing and his doubts were strong. He found no one in the place where he lived who spoke of or asked for God for a whole year. He prayed that he might be able to continue school but there was no answer. He began to doubt the reality of God and of the Word. For weeks he wondered how to be sure of God's Word. Creation assured him of a Creator, but how was one to be certain that the Scriptures were the Word of God? He remembered his happy boyhood years of belief when he used to spend whole days alone in the forest with the Bible and with the Savior in prayer.

He wrote to a trusted old preacher friend who replied with three suggestions. He was to read the Word even if he doubted it. He was to tarry with the Lord and to obey Him. He closed with the quotation from John, "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know..." and from Peter, "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God...". In this man's advice there was no real help, for his distress was too great.

Since he was near Stockholm he heard of Scott and went to him for help. Scott asked, after hearing his plight, whose word was the Bible if not God's. Was it of evil men? How then does it do so much good? Was it from good men? How then can it say it is God's Word? Do good men lie? The witness to the reality of God's Word is in its spirit and its power over men.

This helped Rosenius, but not for long. When he had returned home the old question "How do you know it is really God's Word?" returned. Rosenius returned to Scott who now suggested that he carefully write down all the arguments he could for the Bible's being God's Word and against its being God's. He was then to see which were stronger.

"With this extraordinary advice I went, and the Lord blessed so wonderfully that in three days such great certainty about the Bible's

divine authorship and the truth of all written therein came that I was both amazed and overjoyed, to such an extent that I shivered and cried in my lonely chamber. 'All is true, completely true, divinely true, and all is left that I had sorrowed for as lost', so I spoke. I no longer saw things as before, but my eyes were made new, so that I saw all things more clearly than ever before. It was now in my soul as in nature, when thick clouds, rain and bad weather for several days cover the landscape, and then suddenly it clears without a cloud to be seen and the air so clean, with the shining sun smiling on the glittering wet leaves that one feels he has never seen such nature. Now came even the so-destroyed and sought-for childlike trust toward God. I found grace to again believe in my sins being forgiven, and I could anew embrace my Savior, my God, and with Thomas say 'O, My Lord and My God!'" 64

After this, in the circle of Scott's friends, he preached in the afternoons on Romans for the winter of 1840. He began to feel God was leading him to preach outside the State Church. It must be remembered that he had not completed his training for a minister in the church. Rather than missing this he felt there was more of heathendom than Christendom in the schools for the ministers. He wanted to go to the Methodists' school in London. As a step in this direction he became Scott's helper in 1840. Ekman emphasizes the point that Rosenius was drawn to Scott because Scott was not a party maker but wanted to work within the Lutheran church in Sweden. He

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64. Ekman, Op. Cit., p. 401. This, my own translation, is not the most felicitous translation from the Swedish.

wondered that the church of Sweden fought such men as Scott who were true to Christ. He felt himself a servant of Christ's Church, not of Wesley or Luther.

Scott and Rosenius began Pietisten, a monthly religious paper for popular consumption. In this they wished to avoid all polemics and to provide needed spiritual material for all ages. Its starting program had five divisions: 1. A leading article, 2. A life story, 3. Reports and letters, 4. Various news items, and 5. Reading for children. Rosenius began by using scattered texts and then began using Romans, continuing this study for seven years. When Scott was forced to leave, Rosenius became the editor in chief of the monthly and under his direction this work went through successive stages of popularity, at first being mistrusted by even his own home friends, and openly attacked by the Nordisk Kyrkotidning, but finally attaining a respected standing even among the preachers of the Church. In fact full credit should be given to Rosenius for this undertaking, for Pietisten was begun the same year Scott left Sweden, 1842. By 1849 the subscribers of the above mentioned paper forced it to cease its criticism. By 1851 a preacher's conference had recognized the good in it and the movement of the Läsare. Pietisten was published from 1842 to 1868. Between 1853 and 1865 it had a circulation of 10,000 copies yearly,⁶⁵ which is a significant number in a country the

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65. Stephenson, Op. Cit., p. 40, in footnote.

size of Sweden.

Stephenson's summary of Rosenius' work may well close this study of him. He says,

"Although he had experienced a severe spiritual crisis, Rosenius, unlike many who have had similar experiences, kept his balance and was able to differ gracefully with men who, like himself, planted their faith squarely on the Scriptures as divinely inspired and infallible but whose interpretations were different. To Rosenius the Bible was an organic unity, and every word had its value for revelation, whether it could be explained or not. He had little faith in the state church because he thought it quenched the spirit, though his love for it was too deep to allow him to drift into separatism. . . . The key to his career was the belief that the old church could be reformed from within; that through the activity of laymen spiritual life could be breathed into it.

The great contribution of Rosenius consists not only in the revival of a sound Christian life, grounded in the teachings of an inspired and infallible Bible, but also in the emphasis on the practical side of religion, a view of religion not as a "means of grace" but as the accompaniment of Christian citizenship. However, it must be said that the central theme of the Rosenian revival was the doctrine of the atonement and justification by faith--the antithesis of rationalism and modernism.

Just as Luther had his Hans Sachs, so Rosenius had his Lina Sandell.... The appearance of Pietisten, Lunds Missions-Tidning, Bibel-Wännan, and Ahnfelt's songs inaugurated an epoch in the religious history of Sweden.... The songs in the Psalmbok of the established church were chiefly concerned with man's relation to God, but the Läsare also sang about his relations with his neighbors, and his songs were set to tunes that make his heart lighter".⁶⁶

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66. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 38-40.

Stephenson notes in the section from which these excerpts are taken that Jenny Lind went with the läsare, being astonished at the ungodliness of her fatherland after her return from America, and attended Rosenius' meetings. There was much stir in the press over this.

3. The Emergence of the Mission Friend Läsare

a. Survey of Sweden at 1850

Rosenius is perhaps the most important figure in the revivals in Sweden that brought people into the group that later became the Mission Friends, both in Sweden and in America. However, it is necessary to make a broader survey of conditions in Sweden in the years around the middle of the nineteenth century.

Small meetings in the homes were frequent at this time, although persecution from church, state, and people was strong. Preachers warned their people against these pietistic Christians from the pulpit. When the groups gathered in the church yard after the morning sermon and the läsare fell in with their friends there was open jibing by the other members of the congregation. The pietists were mainly poor and humble people, and were called fools by the "better" people. Preachers warned that this was a new-fashioned spirituality that was bringing its believers to destruction. The intensity of feeling can be felt dimly in the account of a young lad who went to some laborers to witness to them during their rest period, and asked if

he could read the Bible to them. They agreed to this, thinking they could rail more after he had given them a good occasion. But when he finished reading he fell on his knees and prayed God that He in grace would save them. Their mouths were stopped as they heard him pray from his heart and they said, "This can not possibly be from Satan".⁶⁷ Jailing was common at this time, even for lay preachers but the Conventicle Act was discussed in the Riksdag for many years before its repeal. An occurrence of such discussion is noted for 1853-54.

The bishops of Sweden called this spiritual stirring a "false subjectivism" and explained it somewhat as one man is quoted, "Many seek after a more sure ground to stand upon than our day's loose spirituality seems to wish to set up as man's ground of salvation. Conversion is taken lightly by these people of this new spiritual order, all too lightly".⁶⁸ The reason for this was that no bettering was needed under the pietist preaching before conversion; it was by faith alone. However, the sense of sin was a real one and this charge was unfounded.

Perhaps the best picture of Sweden at this time can be gained from Stephenson's summaries. He writes:

"Just as Europe was ready for a reformation before Luther posted his ninety five theses, so was Sweden on eve of a great religious revival

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67. Ekman, Op. Cit., p. 1071.
68. " " " " p. 2068.

when George Scott began his great work in Stockholm. During the years from 1840 to 1850 almost every part of Sweden reported the activity of lay preachers, many of whom were school teachers, by training and education qualified to lead the multitudes starving for spiritual nourishment.⁶⁹

It is singular that a country inhabited by a stolid, formal, and conservative people should have been so fertile a recruiting field for the apostles of radical religious sects. In every decade after 1850 the conservative, liturgical Church of Sweden saw great inroads made on its membership by Eric-Jansonists, Baptists, Mormons, Methodists, Mission Friends, Adventists, and Pentecostal Holiness adherents--none of them liturgical and all of them, with a single exception, departing widely from the Lutheran doctrine."⁷⁰

b. Eric Janson, an Extremist

At the risk of digressing too far, one of the sects mentioned above may be described. Eric-Jansonism was sharply criticized by Rosenius, and justifiably so from a doctrinal standpoint. Janson and his followers from the Norrland part of Sweden founded the Bishop Hill Colony in Illinois, a project which failed. Of the movement Stephenson writes:

"Janson carried his doctrine and ecclesiastical polity in the meshes of a crude language to a populace characterized by a self-confidence and a reserve that venerated an eccentric and violent temperament. When he appeared as a preacher of righteousness, the people of Hälsingland were addicted to drunkenness, which inflamed passions to fighting, stealing, and crimes of violence, and they were cursed with too many pastors who took their duties lightly and who were intemperate and too much occupied with secular affairs. It

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69. Stephenson, Op. Cit., p. 33.

70. " " " " p. 93.

was a time when a man seriously concerned with the salvation of his own soul and the souls of his fellow men had difficulty in restraining himself.

Gradually Janson accepted the tenet that through faith in Christ a person is freed not only from the consequences of sin but from sin itself, that is, a converted person has no sin, because Christ has taken away all sin. He thus obliterated the Lutheran line of demarcation between justification and sanctification and skirted the periphery of Methodism. This new wine of faith was imbibed by many who found it much more palatable than the gloomy teachings of a certain school of läsare, according to which the soul was in constant danger of falling into the abyss of damnation." 71

Janson repudiated all the devotional books of the church except the Bible. He began to call himself a prophet who received revelations and did miracles, casting out devils. He became aggressive, and contrary to the practices of the läsare held meetings during the regular church hours and brought suits and counter-suits against church and clergy.

It is by such contrasts as this that the real character of the mission-friend läsare is seen clearly. The ground was fertile for movements not as soundly Christian. The middle of the century found the Swedish masses ready for revivals, stirring with unrest that puzzled those who observed it. An editorial writer commented on the emigration under Eric Janson in the "Norrländ Post" on June 30, 1849 saying,

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71. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 49, 50, 52, and through 55 for the information which follows the quotations.

"When one sees large numbers of the country's most dependable, conservative, and peaceful common people leaving their native land, with many economic sacrifices and the severing of the dearest of ties, to seek a new home in a distant portion of the world, one must conclude that the motives for such sacrifice are deeper than were they only restless adventurers. Most of the emigrants from Gästrikland and Hälsingland, which have left the country during the recent weeks have been the well-to-do, honorable, dependable people of their community." 72

Jansen, in the same discussion, notes that of the 913 emigrants to the Eric-Janson colony 649 were adults. It must be remembered that this was a religious movement. This same characteristic of being an adult movement was true in general of the other pietistic movements also.

One further general picture of this time is given in contemporary governor's reports, summarized by Jansen. She says:

"In the governor's reports, there are citations of the dissenting movements. The governor of the county of Gävleborg wrote in 1847 that the common people in many of the parishes of Hälsingland had for a long time shown tendencies toward a kind of pietism and were called "readers" or dissenters. They were extremely religious, which some people misunderstood and thought just a pose. They held special religious meetings outside of the Church, but as long as they attended the regular church services and accepted the doctrine of the Church, they were left undisturbed and were even at times encouraged by the clergy to hold these private meetings. Governor W. Gynther of Västernorrland County stated in 1850 that the notorious Norrland "readers" were not the people who came together quietly and reverently to consider God's Word and by their contemplation

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develop spiritually, but those who had heretical religious doctrines, who opposed the Church ceremonies, and who, under the mantle of religion, broke with social customs. He continued further 'The private revivals begin often in good faith, but when many uneducated people begin to explain the Scriptures, they spread heresy', and he recommended that the clergy hold separate Bible meetings and prayer meetings to meet this new spiritual demand from the people.

The Governor of Västernorrland county reported in 1855 that in three parishes the people had petitioned the Cathedral Chapter to allow them to separate from the false community of the State Church until the old and pure handbook, psalmbook, and catechism should be restored and there should be true teaching from the pulpit." 73

c. Waldenstrom and the Organization of the Mission Friends

The great activity and popular interest in the pietistic emphasis resulted in revivals that reached their height in 1876-77, and seemed at times to be so great as to sweep all the people into the movement. These revivals were so widespread that a comprehensive history is difficult, and perhaps for that reason there is no good statement concerning them except that they were in large part influenced by Rosenius and also the American revivalist methods. From the large numbers won from the State Church there was formed an organized group, the only dissenting group registered in Swedish census figures, the Mission Friends.

The history of the organization is traced by C. V. Bowman to the time when the converts began to take an

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73. Jansen, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 177-178.

interest in doctrine and to criticize the State Church for its inclusion of every citizen as a matter of obedience to civil law in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. With this object in mind Communion Societies were formed for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper together. The new converts were also interested in the spread of the Gospel and so organized into Mission Societies, from which came their later name Mission Friends.⁷⁴

After the death of Rosenius in 1868 Waldenström came, and was important in the organization of the Mission Friends. His work may be defined under five heads:

- (1) He defended the administration of the Sacrament at Conventicles.
- (2) He said the "inner mission" movement could get along without the state church ministers.
- (3) He defended the "one-sided" preaching of colporteurs by saying they should be judged by their fruits.
- (4) He took the position that chapels were needed because most of the parish churches were closed to lay preachers.
- (5) He established the special doctrinal position of the Mission Friends, with references especially to the atonement.

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74. Bowman, C. V., The Mission Covenant of America, Chicago, The Covenant Book Concern, 1925, pp. 13-14.

Following the taking of this position there were eight years of controversy until on August 2, 1878, the Swedish Mission Covenant was founded in Stockholm. Of Waldenström's part and attitude Stephenson says:

"In common with Rosenius, Waldenström had little faith in the state church as such and he could be just as caustic in dealing with it as his predecessor had been. He was historically minded enough, however, to recognize it as an institution closely bound up with society and having such multitudinous ramifications that it was the duty of all believers to use their influence to make it a faithful steward of the things entrusted to it. Branded as a fomenter of schism, Waldenström was big enough to see the good qualities of the established church. He denied that the Mission Covenant was unscriptural and separatistic, and he tormented his enemies with such questions as these: Is the work of the free churches schismatic in the sense that the term is used in the Bible? Is it separatistic according to the terminology of the Apostle's Creed and the Augsburg Confession? He answered his own questions by affirming that the Church was the communion of saints and of believers and that in so far as the state church had departed from the Biblical conception of the Church it was separatistic, whereas the free-church movement represented a return to the true Church. What the free-church movement set itself against was the worldliness of the church..." 75

The Mission Church in Sweden was active in sending missionaries, in establishing schools, hospitals, printing presses and a large literature, and became a factor in politics, sending Waldenström to the Riksdag. Its members were members of the State Church and also of the

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75. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 109-110.

Mission Church. It was effective in spurring the State Church to greater mission activity both at home and in the foreign sphere, and to a revision of the hymnal, the hand-book, and the catechism in response to the pleas of the pietists.

Stephenson notes that the falling away from the old church was especially noticeable in the rural districts, where the State Church had had the strongest hold.⁷⁶ He also surveys in summary fashion the history of the free church movement of the Mission Friends since freedom came to Sweden; and writes of the church in the year 1928:

"On the other hand, the Mission Covenant has lost some of the spontaneity that it had at its inception. There is no mistaking the heritage of Rosenius and Waldenström and the strong influence of America, both on the sermon and on the congregational singing, but, as in America, institutionalism has made great inroads. It is no longer an unheard of event for a Mission Covenant preacher to take orders in the State Church."⁷⁷

d. The Great Revivals and Emigration

There can be no doubt but that the history of the pietistic movement in Sweden would be different if there had not been the emigration to America. The years of emigration and the revivals coincided to a remarkable degree and no doubt to a great extent for similar reasons.

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76. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

77. " " p. 114.

1865-1895 were the greatest years of emigration and of change in religion. The greatest revival was seen in 1873-1877, and emigration swelled to its peak in 1882. The years 1867-1869 were years of crop failure and terrible famine in Småland, the "paradise" of the läsare, and because of the crop-failure the proportion of emigrants from Småland was twice that of any other division of Sweden.⁷⁸

This emigration drained off many who would have made the Mission Covenant church of Sweden much larger, and also provided the people who after their arrival in the United States formed the American Swedish Mission Covenant church. This migration had its distinct religious motivation, almost like the Pilgrims centuries before. The freedom of religion in America was deemed of almost inestimable advantage.

D. SUMMARY

1. The General Character of Swedish Pietism

The direct ties of Swedish pietism to Germany and to England have been shown. Before making general statements comparing them, the eight divisions under which German Pietism was characterized will be used as a framework for the Swedish aspects.

- (1) The attitude toward the established church was always, with the exception of a movement

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78. Ibid., beginning of chapter 7.

like Eric-Jansonism of which Rosenius was critical, that it was worthy and could be redeemed. The strongest indication of this was probably the fact that the läsare held their meetings at times that would not conflict with the regular church services. The emigrants left the State Church first because they left the State, and even in America did not wish to form another church at first. Those who remained in Sweden were forced to seek their own fellowship, although technically their membership was retained in the State Church.

(2) The movement was democratic, among the poorer classes and hence the masses. As the movement progressed from its earlier days when pietism was bravely espoused by members of the clergy to the later more wide-spread days, its workers too were laymen.

(3) The movement was a return to the Bible, most strongly seen in the nickname given to the pietists: Läsare--"readers". This referred to their reading of the Bible, especially, as well as the devotional books.

(4) By virtue of its popular appeal and the work of laymen the movement was limited in its intellectual outlook. This is not to say that its leaders were

not great men, but in the corrective emphasis the value of philosophy and great learning was subordinated to the warm-hearted experience. It was a movement for practical action based on personal experience rather than a theoretical movement. Schartau in his emphasis on the reason was soon overshadowed by Scott and Rosenius and the more warmly emotional emphasis.

(5) The läsare were rigid and austere, with a strong moral sense. Their opponents admitted the beneficial results of this upon both the people and the clergy. Perhaps the special emphasis was upon drinking, morality, and swearing.

(6) Christian experience was centered in conversion and sanctification, much after the pattern of American revivalism. Songs, extemporaneous prayer, and enjoyment of the informal meetings lent emotional value.

(7) Life was unified positively in terms of doing God's will and seeking edification always, and negatively chiefly by prohibitions of some common social pleasures, abstaining from the use of alcohol, attacking the village dance and the theater.

(8) Deep love and practical piety were stressed as necessary for every preacher, and the principle was extended to regulate membership in the church, which

was to be only for converted people. Practically, this last was impossible except in the "Communion Societies" in Sweden, but both of these expressions were the cause of much contention. It was felt the parish pastor must radiate a living faith by renouncing worldly things.

2. Swedish Pietism Compared with German and English

The structure of the state, church, and to some extent, society of Sweden, was similar to that of Germany and England. There was also a similarity in the moral and religious conditions, with a strong, formal, and largely ineffective clergy in all three lands.

The greatest contrast lies in the time of the movement, the pietism of Sweden was not a pioneering movement, but one imported against the wishes of the state and church. Yet it took hold with the same people as in Germany and England, the masses. The time also found pietism allied with democratic forces, movement toward freedom, and, for Mission Friends, the emigration to the United States and its causes. Because of emigration the full force of the pietistic movement upon Swedish people cannot be measured in Sweden alone, but must be measured also in the United States.

The great practical effect of pietism upon national life and church life was seen both in morals and in mission

endeavors in all three countries named. There is not the record of children's schools and orphan homes in Sweden that there is in Germany and England, although the "Foreign Missionary Society & Training School" established in 1846 by Peter Fjellstedt trained ministers in the pietistic fashion.

An important common feature in all three lands was the adult characteristic in the movement. It was an individualistic and protest movement.

In organization Swedish pietism is unlike the German in that it became a separate movement and still lives both in Sweden and America, and yet unlike Methodism in that its organization is much more loose and spontaneously conceived. It has not suffered the same decline as in Germany nor has it been channelled into as effective a group as Methodism.

In conclusion the characteristics of the pietism of Sweden are very much similar to those of Germany and England.

CHAPTER III
SWEDISH PIETISTS IN AMERICA

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A. INTRODUCTION

Pietism was introduced to America in many ways but the subject of this chapter is the immigrants from Sweden who upon arrival in America worked together guided by pietistic principles and became organized into the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church. Not all of the Swedish immigrants with pietistic bent are included in this denomination. Nor is it necessarily true that the denomination represents pietism in its organization and development in the years since the organization of the denomination. The link is a historical one and will be followed in brief manner even if pietism has thinned out in later years. That is to say, that in this chapter instead of moving away from the Swedish pietists to the next bearers of the pure pietistic message, or to the next manifestation of strong pietism in America, the study will be concerned with the faith of the descendents of the immigrants who formed the Swedish Covenant Church in America.

Even though the treatment of this chapter is far too brief for the subject matter, it should provide valuable insights into pietism since America is in its social and political structure so different from the old world

countries out of which the pietistic movement arose. Without seeming too ambitious, the question of what will happen when pietism is transplanted to a different climate so suddenly as immigration permits may well be asked. If it cannot be answered completely, at least it can be suggestively.

The terminology may perhaps need some clarification. Members of the Mission Covenant Church of America (its abbreviated and Americanized name) are now using the term "Covenanters" for themselves. They were called and still are designated "mission friends". The long-standing name for the pietist-influenced people of Sweden is läsare. Both the latter two names are descriptive, much as "pietistic" is, one referring to their interest in missions, home and foreign, and to the fact that their meetings were called mission meetings, or mission associations. A close parallel in many ways in more recent days is the Alliance movements to support missions. The other name had reference to their reading and was generally derogatory. The name "covenanters" appears to be a deliberate attempt for denominational reasons to drop the Swedish emphasis and color. It will not be used very generally in this discussion.

B. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SWEDISH EVANGELICAL
MISSION COVENANT CHURCH IN AMERICA

1. The American Scene

a. The Political Situation

It should hardly be necessary to review the structure of the United States save to mention that it stood in sharp contrast to Sweden at the time of the immigration. Church and state have been separate for many years, and in the mid-west where most of the Swedish immigrants settled it had always been a fact. Freedom was bound up in the democratic makeup of the nation and was accented in the frontier conditions of the development of the West. The immigrations were at their height just at the time the Mid-west was being conquered. Both written law^{and} common law, and the atmosphere of the New World were entirely new but welcome to the immigrants from Sweden.

b. The Social Situation

There was no stratification in society that could not be ignored or overcome. This no doubt was part illusion but the frontier and the burgeoning industries gave force to it and the results in society of this mixture of fact and faith were very evident.

Perhaps the other great contrast that should be noted is the diversity as against the homogeneity of Swedish society. In America there were many denominations and sects, and the proportions between the branches of Christianity were entirely different.

c. The Religious and Moral Situation

Freedom of religion did not in the immigrant days mean freedom from religion. Revivals were shared in and the common American conference system of meetings was shared if not originated by the Swedish Mission Friends. Everyone was sought for Christianity, and (the home of the Mission Covenant denomination today is in Chicago, the scene of Moody's great work.) The immigrants had a wide choice and found their way to those American religious movements which were like their own, even while they themselves carried on their own services.

Latourette sums up the religious American environment under suggestive headings. He says the lay element had a larger place in America; that the philosophy was activist, that is, not interested in profound speculative theology but in movement toward social betterment; that reform movements and the social gospel were prominent; and that many individuals went to the extreme of humanism.⁷⁹

2. The Immigration of Mission Friends to America

The Protestant immigrants to America, according to Latourette, were usually poor, but had sufficient religious conviction to found and maintain congregations. They were conservative in theology. They were affected by the movements making for revivals, and were touched by the traditions

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79. Latourette, Op. Cit., Vol. IV. pp. 454-455.

of pietism. Many of them exacted adherence to high moral standards and opposed laxity in amusement and intemperance. Their doctrinal conservatism bred aloofness in America, which was augmented by the language barrier. They generally protested against church membership that was coterminous with citizenship and not dependent upon personal decision.⁸⁰ In addition to these things the Swedes were relatively uneducated and unsophisticated. This latter has become almost proverbial.

Lundberg states that after the pioneering phase of emigration, it "assumed what might well be termed the character of a lower-class movement".⁸¹

Stephenson writes:

"The student of immigration must look at the Church of Sweden through the eyes of the pietists or läsare, as they were usually called, for the foundations of the Swedish churches in the United States were laid by men who read the Bible with childlike faith and somewhat naively applied its teachings to practical life."⁸²

He notes further that they were industrious, resourceful and ambitious. He quotes a newspaper correspondent who said that "the larger number of immigrants is made up of young vigorous people, to a large degree from

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80. *Op. Ibid.*, Vol. VI. p. 280.

81. Lundberg, J. S., The Background of Swedish Emigration to the United States, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1930, p. 61.

82. *Op. Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

that group called läsare--in other words, those who have with earnestness grappled with the greatest end of life; to live holy and to die happy".⁸³

The läsare came seeking freedom and a new home. They found both although they were forced to work hard for little at first. It almost seems as though the freedom was embarrassing at first because when coupled with the dispersal over such large rural areas it nearly undid the feeling of unity that had come from persecution in their homeland. It was not long, however, until individual churches began to form, the first Mission Friend Society being that in Swede Bend, Iowa, with Carl August Björk, a layman, as pastor, organized in 1868.⁸⁴

An account of this organization will point up the character of the history of the Mission Friends up to the formal organization of the Covenant in 1885. Some quotations from Bowman will be helpful and will enable the later history to be abbreviated. He writes of the immigrants, and of Swede Bend:

"To the Swedish Lutheran churches on the other hand they felt a natural inclination, and the name of Luther on the banner inspired confidence as to the doctrinal stand of these churches.... But they soon found that the Swedish Lutheran churches in America aimed at the gathering of all the Swedes, regardless of their spiritual

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83. *Op. Ibid.*, p. 434.

84. Bowman, *Op. Cit.*, p. 26.

character, into the fold of the Lutheran denomination. This being their aim they were prevented from making a distinction between believers and unbelievers when admitting members into the churches. The unbelievers were invited to membership in the churches and in harmony with this practice unbelievers were also permitted to take part in the Lord's Supper. The Swedish Lutheran churches in America were in fact organized after the pattern of the State Church of Sweden as closely as American conditions would make it possible.... Consequently the greater number of the Mission Friends now arriving did not unite with the Swedish Lutheran churches in America though they were good Lutherans in faith and in practice. They, however, regularly attended the services in these churches on Sundays....

The desire of fellowship and of a closer union with each other which these believers experienced was soon to be satisfied....

The unscriptural organization of the Swedish Lutheran churches in America was the principal reason why the Mission Friends did not become members of these churches upon their arrival in this country. Then, too, it appears that at least some of the Lutheran pastors did not have that heart-touching message so characteristic of the colporters of Sweden, neither did they fully understand the spiritual needs of the Mission Friends. These ministers did not realize how deep were the impressions made by the revival movement in Sweden. Consequently they hoped that the dissatisfaction on the part of the arriving Mission Friends would soon disappear and therefore nothing was done to bring about an understanding and avoid an open breach.

The Mission Friends on the other hand had become more and more convinced that they could not from the Lutheran pastors expect an understanding in spiritual matters, nor an attitude of friendliness toward their cause.

In 1864 a young man came to Swede Bend,...his name was Carl August Björk. Because of his warm interest in matters pertaining to religion the people of Swede Bend regarded Mr. Björk as a very unusual type of young man. He would speak to them of the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus and sing religious songs with visible joy and happiness. On the first Sunday of his arrival he gathered the folks in the home, read to them a portion from the

"Pietisten", and sang old familiar hymns which gladdened the people. On the following Sunday the neighbors had been invited to the home,... these meetings were continued every Sunday with increasing interest and increasing attendance....

Upon his arrival in Swede Bend Mr. Björk joined the Lutheran church then already organized in this new settlement... The pastor in charge, having several churches in his circuit, could not preach in Swede Bend every Sunday; so he was glad to have some one to whom could be entrusted the holding of meetings among the people. Mr. Björk was consequently appointed to conduct services in the church in the absence of the pastor.

...In the week of prayer in 1867 a revival broke out in Swede Bend and a considerable number were brought to Christ. Thus a great change took place in the community, and Mr. Björk was no longer the only "Läsare" among the people...

A new pastor was now sent to the Lutheran Church in Swede Bend who came directly from the Theological Seminary. He did not take kindly to the situation in the church and sought to discredit the work of Mr. Björk as being dangerous to the souls and a hindrance to the sound development of the church. ...Thus a very noticeable friction developed among the people in the community. The friends of Mr. Björk now discussed openly the advisability of organizing a Mission Society similar to the societies they had already organized in several places in Sweden.

About this time a conference was arranged to be held in the Lutheran Church at Swede Bend for discussing the existing religious conditions in the community and if possible to prevent further difficulties. The Mission Friends took part freely in the discussion and expressed their disapproval of permitting unbelievers to become members of a Christian church. The pastors present, on the other hand, considered this principle necessary under the circumstances, and they were not willing to recommend a change.

...The Conference in reality led to the parting of the way between the Mission Friends and the Lutheran Church of Swede Bend, though the separation did not follow immediately." 85

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It seems strange that these immigrants did not organize a church at once. They hardly seemed accustomed to the freedom they enjoyed, and sought to work within the Lutheran Church structure. The first church was formed in Chicago in 1869, after a "Society" had proved inadequate and because of the criticism from ministers of the Augustana Synod.⁸⁶ This first church could almost be called an accident!

3. Two Synods Organized and United

The first synod that united the Mission Friend churches was formed in 1873 and was called the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Synod. It was the result of the victory of one of two conflicting opinions. One group had emphasized the necessity of uniting with some existing denomination to receive moral and financial support in the formative period of the Mission Friends in this country; the other had emphasized the importance of trusting in God and not seeking help from other denominations that were more or less worldly and from whom they could not expect any particular spiritual uplift.⁸⁷ Those in favor of forming a new group prevailed.

This new synod subscribed to the Word of God as the only infallible law concerning faith and practice. It also subscribed to the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian

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86. Bowman, Op. Cit., pp. 44-45.
87. " " " " pp. 79-80.

Symbola, and the unchanged Augsburg creed. This article of the constitution could not be changed. Bowman says further of the synod:

"The character of the Mission Synod was in all essentials Lutheran. The organizers were well informed regarding the teachings of the great Reformer, and they adopted the creed of the Lutheran denominations. It was not dogmatic differences that prevented the Mission Friends from uniting with other existing Lutheran denominations in America. On the contrary it was the apparent lack of spiritual life in the Lutheran denominations which caused the Mission Friends to stand aloof and then finally to organize an independent synod....

The ministers of the Mission Synod were from the outset self-made men who were in possession of very little theological training. ... All of them did, however, possess a good knowledge of the contents of their Bible, and they were well grounded in the writings of Dr. Martin Luther and other prominent theologians. ...

The fact that these ministers succeeded so well in spite of a deficient theological training and a meager general education, while well-trained pastors of the Lutheran Church in Sweden and America seemed to fail, caused some of the early ministers among the Mission Friends to frown on a thorough education for ministers. They seemed to believe that attending the "School of the Holy Spirit" was the only real requirement for a minister of the Gospel. This attitude on the part of some ministers of course caused many of the Mission Friends to despise theological seminaries and pastors who had received a thorough training for their life work. Not all of the first ministers among the Mission Friends, however, took this narrow view. ...

The Mission Friends at this early date were Lutherans both historically and in their views of theological questions. They differed from other Lutheran denominations in the emphasis which they placed on the necessity of spiritual life. They emphasized dogmatic matters less, and still as a rule they adhered closely to the Lutheran theology. ...⁸⁸

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When Waldenström in his theological stand on the atonement became known in America, the Mission Synod wished to follow him and to repudiate their subscription to the Augsburg Confession. They attempted this despite their constitution and were criticized for inconsistency.

In 1874 another synod was formed, the Swedish Lutheran Ansgarius Synod, largely under the direction of Rev. Charles Anderson, who had led the group that had been defeated in the formation of the Mission Synod. This new synod was formed of the Mission Friend churches friendly to the Lutheran General Synod, and with the intention of joining that Synod. Thus there were two competing synods in the Mid-west made up of Mission Friend churches.

These two synods finally united in 1885 but the path to unity was set about by many hindrances. One was the fact that the principle of permitting believers only to become church members had not been followed so strictly by some of the Ansgarius churches and this was objected to by the Mission Synod. Another was the rise of a free spirit which stressed the absolute independence of the churches. "Freedom" became a slogan in attacks on synods and denominations in general. Rev. J. G. Princell was a leader of this free group, no doubt influenced by his ejection from the Augustana Synod over his acceptance of Waldenström's view of the atonement. He also seems to have lacked a strong and true historic sense, for he and others with him

wished for the independence of the local churches in all matters, and cited the New Testament church as an example. Since denominations are not mentioned in the New Testament, they are unscriptural and harmful. He failed to note the strong historical sense evident in the Old Testament and out of which grew the New Testament Church. This free group had many followers and were instrumental in retarding the formation of a uniting organization of many of the Swedish churches until 1908 when these were united in the Swedish Evangelical Free Church.

Another factor retarding the formation of one synod of the two was the interest in the Second Coming. Stephenson says that Franson, founder of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, urged no organization because the time was too short before Christ's coming.⁸⁹

Despite these forces, many of them inherent in the freedom and individualism of pietism, the union was effected in February 1885 and the name given was The Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America.

4. The organization of the Mission Covenant Pietists

The denomination just formed was conformed to no creed but the Word of God as its rule for faith, creed, and conduct. It accepted Waldenström's view of the atonement. It had no liturgy or clerical vestments. It had no rule

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89. *Op. Ibid.*, p. 282.

to exclude pastors of other denominations from its pulpits. It practiced open communion. Laymen~~were~~ called upon for prayer and testimony. In organization it represented a compromise between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism.⁹⁰

At its inception a circular letter was sent by the Covenant to all the churches of the Mission Synod to make sure they had adhered strictly to the principle that only believers should be members of the churches. Members who lived carelessly were expected to be disciplined and if necessary to be separated from the church according to the Word of God.

C. THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSION COVENANT PIETISTS

1. Americanization

It must be remembered that the pietistic Mission Friends did not grow and develop in their denomination but in America. Therefore it is more informative to study the people in their new setting rather than study the denomination doctrinally or as to polity. This is only to say in another way that people make denominations perhaps as much as denominations make people, and that the whole social setting of people is of prime importance.

The Swedes have been Americanized more quickly than

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90. Stephenson, Op. Cit., pp. 284, 288.

any other immigrant stock.⁹¹ This adaptability accounts for the great amount of success with which the real pietistic experience has been passed on to the second generation, since the gap between the immigrant and his children was not as great as in some other nationalities. However, it must be noted that if individuals became Americanized in speech and other social habits, the church especially in the matter of language lagged far behind, another instance of the institution being behind the times.

The result of this lag had an adverse influence that may even have outweighed the influence of the Americanized home. Stephenson tells of the "Swede School" in which the catechism, Bible history, and reading were taught in the summers in some communities and says "The devil himself could hardly have devised a better instrument than the catechism for turning the youth against the Church and inspiring hatred for the Swedish language".⁹²

Americanization was necessarily superficial but it was nevertheless influential. One aspect was the position of women. The women appreciated the place and freedom in America, given to women even before the franchise, even though the men did not! This and other American "freedoms" caused a breakdown in the strong home structure of the

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91. Stephenson, Op. Cit., p. 397.

92. Op. Cit., p. 410.

pietists. No longer was the patriarch as sacred as before. The influence of this upon the young people was not simply in the realm of obedience, but because the father had had the deep religious experience and must have a great share in transmitting that influence to his family, any weakening of his prestige and hence his power had a distinctly religious influence. The father who could not disassociate his sacred old-world religious experience from the not-so-sacred customs often gave Christianity an unfavorable flavor for his children. Children who rebelled against old-fashioned parents often went the whole way and threw over all that his parents had of deep religious experience and old-world customs.

The Swedish pietistic immigrants were humble, uneducated, and lacked for peculiar reasons strong ties to their old home land. This must not be laid at the door of pietism but it profoundly affected pietism. Pietism was a protest movement against the Church, and the State, and hence a complete break was sought by the religious leaders who did not understand the necessity both of a break with the past and of continuity with the past. As pietists, the Swedes left their heritage without regret and came ready to find new paths and accustom themselves to the new ways in America. As Swedes, Stephenson states that they came ready to be led:

"The nineteenth century immigrants received their schooling when national feeling was at a low ebb and before the forces that revolutionized the entire social, economic, religious, and political structure in Sweden were understood. It is a curious fact that the children of a country with an honorable history and a high standing among the nations of the world should take little pride in their heritage and consider it an honor to be mistaken for Englishmen or Scotchmen".⁹³

When there is added to this important fact the continuance of this tendency under early leadership that arose from the ranks and hence lacked real appreciation of the literature or history of the land from which they came, it becomes apparent that the Swedish pietists were in an extremely vulnerable position both culturally and religiously. They were willing to break with the past. Their leaders did not know the past and so could not bring its values to the masses even if they so desired.

One aspect of America could not easily be copied by the Swedes, their imposing churches. Poverty was common. Church buildings were plain. The young people could not fail to be influenced by the churches of the Americans and hence by their people, many of them quite different from the pietists.

2. The Battle of the Faith

a. The Battle Ground and the Enemies

It has been suggested that the Americanization was

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93. Op. Ibid., p. 416.

superficial for the early immigrants from Sweden, but that it nevertheless had important results. Why it was superficial, it has not been stated. Nor has the expected effect of the ready absorption of America been suggested. America at the time of these immigrations, 1870-1890 or so, is not easily described or comprehended even by an American. To the immigrant the confusing pattern was perhaps not so difficult a life-problem as for his children. He had already established life habits and a Christian philosophy which even while it may have been limited was one which had organized his life and had helped make him a pioneer in a new land. For his children, however, even if they had surmounted the obstacles of being born of foreign parents, the American scene must have been a problem and a challenge.

A brief survey of the important aspects of the America into which these people were born is given by Oscar Cargill in his well-written preface to "The Social Revolt".⁹⁴ His viewpoint is that of a student of American literature, not of American Christianity. His survey deals with the period 1888 to 1914 and it is significant that he calls it the time of "social revolt". The previous age can be summed up under Mark Twain's phrase "The Gilded Age", from 1865 to 1889. It was a hollow age. It was the age of great immigration: from 1870 to 1890 over 8,000,000

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94. Cargill, Oscar, The Social Revolt, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1933, pp. 1-18.

immigrants came to America. It was the age of finance-capitalism. America came to full bloom in the years from 1860 to 1900. In that short time America went from no trusts, no holding companies, no underwriters, no telephone system business, no cash registers, to the place where laws were urgently needed in all places to regulate these things. The lag in social control was so great it is hardly imaginable.

This was an age, up to 1890, of free play in labor and industry. The age has been called the plunder period of finance capitalism, as over against the later socially minded period. Up to 1890 there was free land. After that, America became like the European nations and the optimism based on the open frontier was no longer possible. Mark Twain is a representative figure of the age expressing both the strength and limitations in his circumscribed vision, his optimism, and his romantic outlook.

After 1890 America entered the period of more serious handling of labor and business. Americans were facing their problems and amateur attempts at social control were made. "Progress" was still believed in but it needed help. The big names in politics were Bryan, Teddy Roosevelt, and Wilson. It was a day when solutions were sought for the growing poverty of the masses despite big business, and two general hopes were expressed, one in free land, by Henry George in Progress and Poverty, and the other in

technological advances, by Bellamy in Looking Backward.

This later period was pictured by Hamlin Garland in his farm stories that showed the farm offered no escape and was no utopia. Partly derived from this interest were the iconoclasts, and the muck-rakers. Also expressive of the surging needs and feelings were the Granges, the Populists, the Green-Backers. On the other side of the picture were those who made a success in picturing success, as the "Saturday Evening Post", the "American", and S. S. McClure's magazine. It was an age when the philosophy of "getting on" governed, and when the big city was glamorized and the small-town puritan morals attacked. It was the age of the American type of super-man in whom many people fondly saw the hope of the world, the Jack London type as against the Nietzschean Monster. This last hope was indefinitely linked to the optimistic interpretation put upon Evolution.

"Village morality" had been affected by the large incursion of foreign people in the twentieth century which taught a "cosmopolitan" indifference to evil, and the reforms having been backed by this morality, when the honest but incompetent people were placed in power under the reform, people felt that virtue must have practical limitations.

In addition to these more general tendencies suggested by Cargill, some more directly concerned with religion

may be noted. In America humanism with its affirmation of the worth of the world and of man was found. Rationalism demanded that religion be shorn of all superstition and much that was traditional, emphasizing the intelligence and a reasoned declaration of the Gospel. Modern science proposed the doctrine of the reign of law, of the law of continuity, and with great zeal taught the theory of evolution with permeating influences in all thinking. Democracy and social movements were having increasing place in the nation with consequent interest in the social, economic, political, national, international, and inter-racial problems.

b. The Educational Front

Such a brief and unsatisfactory summary of America in the fifty years which center on 1900 has only one value, it dimly indicates how difficult the years were for men to find their way to an ordered and fruitful life. To say that the Swedish pietists did not always measure up to these requirements is to cast no great condemnation upon them. Cargill notes that in the face of all the business rapacity and political corruption of the Gilded Age there arose no Jeremiah in all America to write against it. Surely the immigrants cannot be singled out as signal failures when this is true.

Yet there were basic reasons why the pietists should have great difficulty in the American culture. Some have already been suggested. One of these was the humble,

uneducated, non-intellectual character of the people and of their leaders. Stephenson writes, "The one conspicuous failure of the Swedish-Americans is their educational system. Very few of the immigrants had a cultural background, and many of them looked askance upon higher education as dangerous to piety and pure doctrine." 95 So not only were they lacking in training but they felt no need, in fact feared it. The record of the schools founded by the Mission Friends is not so meagre until it is realized that the purpose of them is for direct, practical training of almost a technical type. Pastors were in demand for their evangelistic ability and little stress was laid on educational work among the people.

In America such an attitude was bound to run into great difficulties. The American public schools offered the children an education often far beyond that of the parents, and did so from a scientific, rationalistic, and humanistic point of view. The children were thus placed in a position even more difficult than adolescents find themselves in in modern times; a great gulf was fixed and "the tragic thing about this was that some children regarded their parents as old-fashioned and considered their counsel and advice worthless". 96 When not very many of the leaders of these people had satisfactorily answered the

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95. (Ibid., p. 278.

96. " " p. 425.

questions that arose, it is not surprising that the children should have little respect for their father's religion.

To these difficulties caused by the inadequate facing of problems raised in American schools must be added the complete lack of historic continuity of the Swedish pietists. Theirs was a protest movement. They had cut the ties with the past both religiously and nationally. They now had to form an entirely new and comprehensive philosophy of life and organization of society based upon their religious convictions and to fit their new surroundings. With their limited resources and limited vision it is remarkable that any such great task was handled at all. In America it is difficult for anyone in a settled culture to maintain a Christian home. For the pietists it was more difficult, and the fumbling efforts to form a denominational union must be interpreted as an attempt to face this great social and religious problem. The success they achieved must be traced to the spiritual creativity of the great men who had a part in the Mission Friends at the beginning.

One saving factor in the early years was the poverty of the Mission Friends. Humility and longsuffering came more easily. The young men going to train for the ministry in the school at North Park, in Chicago, had a sense of direction, a feeling of mission, a real life purpose. An early instructor wrote in the North Park College "News" in 1926,

"Of course times were different, but we were happier then than now. Requirements were smaller; life was more natural. I often feel sorry for young people of today with all their quickly made money. It fosters demands where then they were only necessities. Much money tends toward materialism, and that has crushed empires, let alone individuals"....⁹⁷

However, when prosperity came and higher education became more general, the position of the Mission Friends was ever more difficult to hold. Its reflections upon the pietistic interpretation of Christianity were not always good and pietism had to go on the defensive. The Mission Friends are still today actively fighting evolution as propounded by Darwin, which is an illustration given without malice and intended only to show the limitations of the position.

c. The Doctrinal Front

The fight of faith has been desperately fought in the field of theology. The pietists from Sweden gave ground in letting the Augsburg Confession go because of the Waldenström theory of the Atonement. In place of a set creed the whole Bible is the creed of the Covenant.

This more inclusive and less restricting position was taken so that all who had experienced conversion and the sanctifying work of God could be united in one common brotherhood. It was a part of the "free" spirit. Where

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⁹⁷. Carlson, Leland H., A History of North Park College, Chicago, no publisher listed, 1941, p. 95.

God's Spirit had worked men did not need to question or set up rules of measuring rods.

However, as Stephenson points out, when the spontaneity is gone and institutionalism sets in, freedom too has a price put upon its head. No longer is the freedom of the Spirit of God sought after. Once ordinances and forms and standards have been set up by custom or by buildings and consequent investment of money, freedom must not be allowed to overthrow the established system. Even the Covenant has seen this happen. How strange that the vigorous workers for freedom from all man-made regulations should in turn establish and jealously guard an institution of their own making which had faint resemblances to the old from which it sprang as a protest but which had not been tested by history to demonstrate its usefulness and freedom from defects!

Consequently today, the Covenant, which has no set doctrinal statement of faith except the Bible, can be seen defending its "position" against attacks, having a theological bearing. To meet two of these attacks, in which the charges were that modernism had crept into the teaching staff of the seminary at North Park, the answer of the denomination was expulsion.⁹⁸ The reason quoted for this

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98. See Carlson, Op. Cit., pp. 332-334, also the 1928 Minutes of the Annual Conference. For details of later action which led to expulsion see the Minutes for 1934, and 1936.

action was "to protect our school and all our institutions against tendencies which lead away from our common and previous fundamentals".⁹⁹ That this is very much like the arguments of the Swedish State Church is apparent. That it could be inconsistent for a pietist did not seem to be so.

The Covenant has been in the process of building itself up as a denomination and has been greatly influenced in the process by liberal American denominations. Because pietists do not stress doctrine as much as life and experience, there has been much room for foreign doctrine and philosophies to creep in and there is a widespread suspicion today about the stand of the Covenant on matters of fundamental doctrine. Stephenson writes "The Mission Friend educational institutions are vastly different from the original conception in the minds of the fathers. The faculties have been recruited from graduates of American universities and such liberal divinity schools as Yale and Andover." 100

The point here is not simply divergence from the fathers. It can be stated in the question: Does the change in the schools and in the leaders reflect an earnest desire to perpetuate the good found in the pietism of the fathers, or has pietism been abandoned? The answer to

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99. Carlson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 334.

100. *Op. Ibid.*, p. 291.

this must be reserved, but the recent tendencies in the Covenant church seem to be back toward the type of architecture and the more formal service of the church from which they sprang in protest. The way back may be the way forward. It may not be the best way, however.

d. The Front of Secularism and Materialism

Christians in America have suffered much from secularism and materialism. The pietists with their attitude of aloofness from the world and negations for conduct which often were not fully understood in their basic importance, have been hard pressed on this battle front. At first materialism was kept away by poverty, but secularism came in through the school room and society.

As time passed and families raised their standards of living both of these destructive forces pressed ever harder. The lure of the city took many from the farms. The increase in the mediums of communication, cars, trains, books, magazines, radio, and movies pressed the claims of everything but God more strongly than at any other time.

The Covenant has been individualistic, yet the pietistic teachings have made individuals much like one person. However, the strain of individualism must always be met by strong individual development. As the days of the first strong protestors passed, the essence of the vital individual experience had to be transmitted or the next generation would merely acquire good habits without

any real meaning or vital basis. When there are many such habits to be passed on which run counter to the entire social pattern of the community where the second generation lives, the strain begins to tell. With the passing of the old folks and their restraining influence some of the regulations of life for a pietist were dropped. There was no basic reason for them. The whole outlook of a pietist was but dimly seen. The battle was at best a stalemate for many individuals who kept the habits but failed to catch the experience and whose conscience was not seared but whose fruitfulness in life was missing.

It must not be thought that this is only true of the pietist. But with his many restrictions all of a religious nature, in the midst of a secular and materialistic society, he was faced with more problems of conscience than a person of a different background.

That the pietist, who raises so many restrictive regulations for his life as a Christian, should at the same time limit himself intellectually and philosophically seems strange. But a man who has the most questions to answer seems to give the least thought to a consistent and full Christian philosophy of life. Much has been said about departmentalized Christian living. The pietist has been forced to departmentalize his life; he learns skills for his work, and he learns skills for Christian living. He lives in the world as a pilgrim but must make his living

in it too. The dangers of this kind of living are well-known. There is one strange comment that must be made, before this subject is closed. The pietist in America has sometimes solved his problems by departmentalizing: the genius of true pietism is that it seeks to make the Christian experience practical and effective in the whole of a man's life!

It would be hard to give any accurate estimates of the effect of these forces of America upon the Swedish pietists. If it were possible to ^{note} statistically ~~note~~ the change wrought by education with its many influences for good and evil, by liberalism and modernism, and by secularism and materialism, upon the Swedish pietists, it would have only statistical interest and be of passing value. It is important to note the peculiar force of these upon a movement in the Christian church in order that from it there may come instruction. That is more important than statistics!

If the discussion thus far has seemed one-sided in considering only the weaknesses of pietism, it is because the strength will be stated in the next chapter, and will be more fully distinguished if the weaknesses are kept in mind. These forces discussed are not forces easily vanquished, nor is the victory found in any one section of the Christian Church. It has been suggested that pietism has been weak. Its strength will be stressed also.

D. SUMMARY

1. General Characteristics

It will be helpful to follow the plan used in characterizing the German Pietists.

(1) The early attitude of the Mission Friends toward the Swedish Lutheran churches in America was that they were their spiritual homes. These immigrants were unaccustomed to American freedom and did not know of the Swedish Methodist and Swedish Baptist churches in America, or perhaps they would have felt at home in these. It did not take long until they realized that they must separate and form their own groups, if their principles of church organization were to be maintained. It is possible to say that they were true to the pietistic tenets in both instances, not seeking to separate, and seeking to form their own church group. In America Spener's little churches within the church became little denominations. This happened to the Mission Friends.

(2) The Mission Friends were democratic to the extreme of individualism in the early years. More recently, despite the congregational polity, there has been more dependence upon leaders and more regulation from above. The "free" spirit is not stressed, but loyalty to the Covenant. There remains a further

field of study to see how this democratic characteristic has expressed itself in other fields than religion. The Mission Friends were democratic and believed in democratic government, but it is not without reason that at least some of them did not exercise the democratic rights or live up to the responsibilities of a democratic state, due to the outlook upon the world as a place to tarry in as a pilgrim.

(3) The Bible was read widely and revered as the Word of God. In a real way these people were people of one Book, with the strength that gives and the weakness too. There has no doubt been a decline in recent years.

(4) The limited intellectual outlook of the majority of the Mission Friends has already been noted. The extent of this limitation needs to be noted. It included the feeling that there was no real need for education unless it was immediately productive in a trade. A minister needed only the same productive training. Liberal arts was introduced as a denominational aim in 1902, and four enrolled. An interesting statement by a minister interested in gaining supporters for North Park College was that the farmers had more concern for their pigs than

for their own children. As late as 1912 "general education" had to be defended against attacks in "Missions Vännern", an independent Chicago Swedish paper.¹⁰¹ In fact, Carlson's whole book seems to be a defense for fifty years of academic work! This may be exaggerated but is not completely beside the point. In 1919 Carlson notes that "culture" had to be defended.

Today this attitude has no doubt changed somewhat, especially among the leaders, but despite the pressure of higher educational demands the seminary requirements and consequently the denominations demands, are for two years college and three years seminary. However, the seminary is not on the post-graduate level as yet.

(5) The Mission Friends have been austere. This feature expresses itself most clearly in the prohibitions.

(6) Conversion and a changed or sanctified life are stressed by the Mission Friends. Revival procedures are important. Another stressed doctrine has been the Second Coming. There is a more recent change to an educational approach rather than the revival

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101. Carlson, Op. Cit., pp. 241-243. See his book for a general history, and as a basis for the above remarks.

approach which will seep down from the leaders in time. Church membership is for believers only. (7) Life has been unified to do the will of God, which is interpreted according to the narrow view that it is the will of God to work for piety in self and others. Hence the needs of the soul, not to better social conditions in a community, is the matter of prime importance.¹⁰² This narrow field has been further constricted by the limitations of language, but is being gradually widened.

Much could be written about the negative unification of life through prohibitions. Jansen writes: "They were absolute abstainers in the use of alcohol; they attacked the village dance and theatre". He adds in a footnote, "Some of the Swedish dissenters in the United States are also opposed to the Masonic lodge and other similar organizations. It is not unusual to be read out of the church if you happen to have joined the Masons".¹⁰³ In another place we read "The Mission Church is even more puritanical than the Swedish-American Lutheran Church, denouncing the theatre, dancing, moving pictures, fraternal organizations, and the use of

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102. Bowman, Op. Cit., p. 222.

103. Op. Ibid., p. 193.

liquor." 104 Stephenson notes that in addition to the above prohibitions, the novel, card table, and in some instances choir singing and instrumental music in church were anathema. 105

Carlson records the frowns upon sports in the college in 1916. 106 Tobacco became the next target for student demonstrations in the college at North Park after national prohibition was enacted. 107 Matter of dress, and the use of cosmetics by women have been the subject of sermons and made one of the marks of conversion and sanctification although the rank and file have not always seen eye to eye with those of these convictions.

(8) The ministers of the Mission Friends must have had the "inner call", and if this was present along with a consistent life, nothing else mattered much. Until recently education has not been stressed, and even today this stress is largely an attempt to build up the denomination and to put walls around its leadership. It is not so much what education as whose education that counts.

2. Less Desirable Characteristics

Under the German phase of pietism separate headings

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104. *Op. Ibid.*, p. 211.

105. Stephenson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 267.

106. *Op. Ibid.*, pp. 241, 243.

107. " " p. 296.

were given for less desirable tendencies of the latter days of the movement. It is possible to suggest that at least traces of these are found among the Mission Friends, but a true historical perspective calls for distance in time and so definitive statements will not be attempted.

In listing the prohibitions of pietism in the list of characteristics it would probably have been advantageous to separate some as less desirable and perhaps later. This is no doubt true as a judgment, but the fact of their being later is not so clear since it may be also at least partly explained by the advancement of the things prohibited to common use in society.

The one clear and most significant mark of degenerate pietism is the affectation of language when experience is lacking. At least the question may be raised if this is not the basic cause of the decline of the testimony meeting among the churches.

3. Comparisons and Contrasts of America and Europe

The political, social, and ecclesiastical structure of the New World is in sharp contrast to the Old, as a setting for pietism. Pietism was endemic in Europe, transplanted to the United States. In the United States pietists faced all the life-problems and more that had confronted the Europeans, and they did so without a stable social structure to guide them. It may be said that pietism was a corrective force within the Christian Church

in Europe but lost this channel for its spirit and activities when it was transplanted and so was forced to establish itself in its own right in the United States. Such a statement over-simplifies matters, however, for in its formative years in the States it was carried by men who built with the old guiding channels at least as faint blueprints.

This study has been limited to the Swedish pietists in the American phase. It would be more instructive to study the broader results of pietism in America if true generalizations were to be made about it as a force in American Christianity validating itself as a positive force as well as a corrective tendency. It is possible that if such a broad study were made it would be found that not all the Mission Friends were pietists, that parts of the Covenant shared in the movement while others did not, and that pietism in some way is held to by many of the divisions of the Protestant churches of America.

With this in mind it is possible to exclude both the pietists and the Mission Covenant in particular instances, and at different times, from generalized statements which will be made about pietism in a later chapter. The two are not believed to be necessarily and always identified with each other. The value of studying the one group has been that of illustrative material.

CHAPTER IV

PIETISM IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY

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CHAPTER IV

A. INTRODUCTION

It is quite obvious that theologians interested in doctrine and ecclesiastical dogma treat a subject much differently than do those who are interested in human personality and the psychology of religious experience and behavior. However, in the past, the light of psychology has not been light composed, like sunlight, of all the wave-lengths from short to long, capable of revealing different colors in the subject-matter. Rather, the light has been very restricted, with the results seen in show-windows, where a previously planned effect is achieved. A lesson from these window decorators could well be learned by the religious psychologists: the wrong light for some subject matter removes all form and color and beauty.

That this is not an unfair criticism of recent religious psychologists can be seen in the statement by Uren:

"The group of investigators who have given themselves to the scientific study of religious consciousness and its phenomena in the New World since 1899 have one thing in common, namely the naturalistic postulate that everything in the religious consciousness may, in the last analysis, be explicated in the terms of natural law. In all else

they differ..." 108

This study shall attempt to use a broader range of light-waves to permit any existing coloring in pietism to be seen. However, it must not be expected that the religious psychology of the pietists will here be deeply probed and described. The limits of this study will make the treatment broad and panoramic, with special attention given chiefly to those areas where the pietists have been most severely criticized. Criticism has not been leveled seriously at pietism's contribution to the Christian's relationship to God, but to men. The latter, with its various phases, will therefore be studied. This will also involve the personality of the pietist. The double emphasis will be upon the man and his personality adjustments as they are related to himself and to other men, not devoting the same study to the man's relation to God.

B. A SURVEY OF THE CRITICISM OF PIETISM

1. The Ritschlian Criticism

Emil Brunner and Arthur MacGiffert follow in the steps of Albrecht Ritschl in their criticisms of pietism. While Ritschl was largely unable to see any good in pietism, MacGiffert has many appreciations, which have appeared in this study in various places. Brunner does not list

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108. Uren, A. Rudolph, Recent Religious Psychology, New York, Charles Scribners Sons, 1928, p. 8.

appreciative criticisms.

Ritschl's work was to show that Pietism was a false revival of Catholic ideals of the Christian life within evangelical Protestantism.¹⁰⁹ Ritschl attacked the Pietist doctrine of justification, saying it was too subjective in that it was an "accident" of regeneration, performed or accomplished by God's analytic judgment upon the moral worth of the individual's faith. This seems to indicate that Ritschl felt the pietists had faith in their own faith, a species of "works" salvation.¹¹⁰ Ritschl also criticized them as pharisaical and legalistic, exercising self-willed mysticism, insisting on a crisis conversion. Another large criticism was that the pietists ignored the community in which they grew and adhered to the new "true community". They also, according to Ritschl, thought a specific manifestation of humility was possible and necessary, and in the working out of this yielded arrogant humility, like Catholic monasticism.¹¹¹

MacGiffert, in addition to his sincere appreciations, criticizes more sympathetically than Ritschl the pietists for their asceticism, which he says is a way to find God, but not the only way. He says their conduct was other-

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109. MacKintosh, H. R., Types of Modern Theology, New York, Scribners, 1937, p. 140.

110. Ritschl, A., The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, Translated by H.R. MacKintosh, and A.B. McCauley, New York, Scribners Sons, 1900, p. 84.

111. Op. Ibid., pp. 107-108, 119-120, 155-157, 580, 640.

worldly, they did not seek victory over the world, as did Luther, but escape from it. Their devotion was to another world. They distrusted human nature and despair-ed of the salvability of society. Because their chief interest was moral, not religious; in man's character and conduct, not man's relation to God; in holiness of life wrought by the indwelling Spirit, not in peace with God and consciousness of divine sonship; because of this the pietists were led to introspection with its dangers.¹¹²

Brunner says,

"In pietism, it [protest] was directed to the manner of appropriating salvation. Over against the catchword fides quae creditur (the faith that is believed) was set another, fides qua creditur (the faith whereby we believe).... Reflection now was occupied with religious ex-perience, with processes operated (!) by Scripture, the struggle of repentance, the process of conversion, the inward experience of love to Christ. But when once the main interest is fastened on subjective experience, the objective elements, i.e., the Word, dwindled to a mere means of stimulus--for what matters is the inward working. Such experience of God or Christ becomes increasingly independent of any objective revelation in history. 'Christ in us' becomes more important than 'Christ for us'. Thus Pietism veers towards mysticism".¹¹³

Brunner continues with the criticism that the pietist-ic doctrine of the New Birth is like Catholic "infused

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112. MacGiffert, A. G., Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, New York, MacMillan Co., 1921, pp. 1-15; Protestant Thought Before Kant, London, Duckworth Co., 1911, pp. 155-185.

113. Brunner, Emil, The Philosophy of Religion, translated by A.J.D. Farrer and Bertram Lee Wolf, New York, Scribners Sons, 1937, p. 41.

grace", and not the grace of the Reformers. He says, "The New Birth is a magical process which precedes faith".¹¹⁴

2. What About the Critics?

It is not the purpose of this chapter to answer these criticisms but some remarks about these men help to understand their criticisms and need to be kept in mind. MacKintosh says of Ritschl's History of Pietism that it is

"full of force and solid erudition although its authority has fallen off in recent years. Pietism was Ritschl's bête noire, and his more bitter opponents were in the habit of saying that if you wished to know how little real religion there was in the man, this above all was the book to read".¹¹⁵

MacKintosh says further that Ritschl hasn't proved his case against that personalistic type of mystical thought that is found at its profoundest in the pages of St. Paul and the Fourth Evangelist, and is indeed very much equivalent to the deepest and most intimate kind of personal religion, and it was this that Ritschl found unworthy in the Pietists.¹¹⁶

James Orr points out that A. C. MacGiffert finds legalism in the early believers, as seen in the Synoptic Gospels, Hebrews, Peter, and James. This is instructive

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114. Brunner, Emil, The Divine Imperative, translated by Olive Wynn, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1937, p. 103, and see pp. 100-103.

115. Op. Cit., p. 140.

116. Op. Cit., p. 146.

because MacGiffert is a "Ritschlian" and one of their stock criticisms of pietism is that it is legalistic. Orr notes also that Ritschl is opposed to "any doctrine of any inner immediate influence of God upon the Soul, resulting in direct communion with Him".¹¹⁷ In reply to this Orr says "we think of direct spiritual communion as the very essence of religious experience", and infers from the prophets of the Bible that this must certainly be allowed.

This much of the full white light of psychology enables us to see that there are three factors in noting criticisms: The criticism, the criticized, and the critics. The purpose of this brief review has been to place the critics before the light. The others whose works on pietism have been used in this study also have their criticisms. A brief listing of some of the defects will be sufficient. The pietists were described as bigoted, proud, ascetic, other -worldly, insisting not only on an experience of salvation but a set form of experience, familiar with the names of God in prayer, affected, legalistic, medieval, un-social, and so on. The critics never think to list the positive contributions, but they all have quite a list of defects in theology, church life, or personal behavior! What can be said about these criticisms and the critics?

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117. Orr, James, Ritschlianism, New York, A. C. Armstrong and Sons, 1903, p. 28.

This much can truly be said, that the criticisms lose sight of the people, of the persons involved. This can be demonstrated by a simple test: if all of these things are wrong in pietism, how then could it ever have begun or continued? There must be something yet to be disclosed that will explain pietism as well as point out its defects.

C. PIETISM IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY

1. Why Pietism at All?

There is little to be learned from most historical and critical writers about the why of pietism. In general, it is described as a protest movement, as a stage in the cycle of ups and downs in Christian church history. In the main these writers have lost sight of the human beings and society that is involved.

Let this question be stated as strongly as possible. If the critics were complete in their analysis, the only thing that could happen to pietism would be a steady decline in vitality and a slow but sure death. From their remarks it is easy to see why pietism failed when it did. It is not so clear why it began. Nor is it at all clear why such a growth should recur in England and Sweden in two succeeding centuries. And yet such a historical phenomenon cannot easily be dismissed.

The reason that it recurred cannot be that given

facetiously for the bumble-bee's ability to fly. It has been "demonstrated" by engineering principles that the bumble-bee cannot fly. But because he does not know this, he is uninhibited and flies very well! The people of Sweden, for one, surely knew that pietism could not work. They did not use it in ignorance. The reason is a similar one, perchance, to the bee in question; he flies because there are other factors involved that overcome his structural violations of flying laws. He has more power and speed than is estimated. Perchance there is also involved in the question of pietism and its occurrence other factors that overcome the structural defects of pietism as a system of Christian life.

This may give us a clue to the proper place of the criticism of pietism. Many of the defects no doubt are present, but they are not to be singled out as the primary concern of a student of the movement.

Psychology does not assume as great a load as some other branches of study. It does not so much intend to say whether or not pietism is right or wrong, as to ask, Why did it appeal? What did it do? Why did not it do more? In doing this its subject is always man, as an individual and as society. It deals with personality and its normal development and adjustment.

2. The Requirements of a Sound Personality ✓

Personality has been studied from many angles and

there are some general statements that can be made with assurance of general acceptance. Some need to be made here as a basis for further remarks.

(1) Personality must have a balanced development of intellect and emotion, and in behavior both must be given a proper share in direction and control. Any violation of a delicate balancing of these two forces results in maladjustment individually and socially. The most recent emphasis has been upon emotion. Rationalism has played havoc with personality and society. Emotion is being reinstated as a necessary element in normal personality.

(2) Another general statement is that religious belief has an important place in the formation of normal personality. Problems arise when religious belief or religious experience is reduced below normal.

(3) A third statement concerns religion. Religion is always emotional, never a philosophy. William James puts it well when he says,

"You see now why I have been so individualistic throughout these lectures, and why I have seemed so bent on rehabilitating the element of feeling in religion and subordinating its intellectual part. Individuality is founded in feeling;... When I read in a religious paper words like these: 'Perhaps the best thing we can say of God

is that he is the Inevitable Inference', I recognize the tendency to let religion evaporate in intellectual terms. Would martyrs have sung in the flames for a mere inference, however inevitable it might be?"¹¹⁸

It is not possible to eliminate the emotional aspects of religion without doing violence both to religion, and personality.

(4) A fourth general statement about religion. It is one of the most fundamental organizing energies of personality and behavior. When it is sound, personality will be sound. ✓

(5) Lastly, it may be said that unless personality is normally developed and experience well-adjusted, there will arise problems for the individual and for society which will call for a solution of some sort. ✓
Pressure of conscious and of these subconscious factors can become very great. The subconscious are all the more dangerous because of their subliminal nature.

Using these five simple statements and applying them to the history of pietism an answer may be found for its occurrence and subsequent recurrence in England and Sweden. ✓
In the study of the history of the movement in all three

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118. James, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience, New York, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903, pp. 501, 502.

countries certain long-standing conditions were noted. The majority of the people were in the lower class. As such they did not have individual freedom in relation to the state, the church, or society. The development of personality was therefore limited. In religion the lack of freedom was noted as well as the severing of doctrine from life and the great attention paid to orthodoxy and correct doctrinal statement and acceptance.

Was there a balance between intellect and emotion? Was religious belief normal and its expression in life balanced emotionally and intellectually? Or were there real problems present with great pressure calling for some solution? The answer is best given by surveying again what pietism did for its people, as it met their needs.

3. Pietism And Real Psychological Needs

What figure can be used to best advantage? Ames, discussing denominations, likens them to organisms which grow and develop structure, and gain momentum which enable them to persist. They continue to assimilate people of their class and type and spread over all the social areas where there is favorable soil.¹¹⁹ The question here is not whether his figure is mixed, but whether it is true.

Would it not be better to speak of a social group as

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119. Ames, E. S., The Psychology of Religious Experience, New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910, p. 386.

an organism, or of man as an organism, thinking of him both individually and collectively? Then these movements could be spoken of as the food for the development and life of the organism. In contrast to Ames then, not "inertia" or "momentum" enables a movement to persist and spread, but its "food-value". Then it is possible to speak of a need of man and discuss how well pietism met that need.

If a need of man is long suppressed, there is danger of attempts at drastic solution. If provisions are long withheld, there is danger of smuggling across the border the needed food. Violence may occur, there may be an unbalanced diet provided, and an over-dose may be taken by starving people. This figure should be instructive for the Christian Church whose Leader had compassion on the people and said "Give ye them to eat". There is a wholesome diet. In times of starvation almost anything will do. Pietism can be likened to a short-term emergency diet.

Pietism met a great personal need. That the need was great was illustrated in the history of the suppression of pietism in Sweden. It did the following things for its people:

- (1) It brought fellowship with God in a personal way through the yielding of the will to Him.
- (2) It restored the emotional element to life by restoring it to religious experience.

(3) It liberated the individual and gave a means of personality development.

(4) It unified life and gave it a goal.

(5) It brought people into warm fellowship with like believers.

(6) It stressed activity with high purpose and motive.

When these are seen it is apparent that pietism met real human needs. As James says "Religions have approved themselves; they have ministered to sundry vital needs which they found reigning."¹²⁰ This general statement surely is true also of movements within the Christian church as well. This explains to a large extent the bias in favor of pietism by those whose needs it met so well. Here was the salvation they had needed. Surely, they thought, it was suitable for all men alike.

When these needs are kept in mind it is possible also to evaluate more fairly the great value of pietism. Like food, it must be measured against what had been supplied previously. It is also always in relation to the individual himself that selection must be made. If the pietists do not rank high in relation to some other Christians, how do they rank in relation to their former life? Had they reached their own upper limit and were

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120. *Op. Ibid.*, p. 331.

they living in their own highest center of energy? 121

If this was true, then pietism was indeed a worthy Christian movement.

D. THE LIMITATIONS OF PIETISM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN PERSONALITY

The greatness of pietism as a real interpretation of the Christian message is not to be looked for in its emotional elements. You cannot leave religion in the emotion area only.

"That religion is rightly regarded as lowest which remains nearest to the merely instinctive level and has the fewest or weakest ideal and intellectual elements in it. At the summit of classification is to be placed that religion which yields the richest treasure of thought. This advance is not purely intellectual but also moral, as the ascending movement of regulative as well as interpretative ideas involves a progressive refinement and exaltation of emotions which become sentiments, animating and inspiring rational conduct." 122

Pietism boldly entered the realm of ideas with moral and ethical bearing. Yet in this very realm is to be sought not only the greatness but also the weakness of a religion or branch of Christianity. It is here that differentiation can be made.

1. A Yardstick of Measurement - William James

William James in his Varieties gives sound guidance

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121. James, Op. Cit., p. 239.

122. Sweet, Louis Matthews, The Verification of Christianity, Boston, Richard G. Badger, The Gorham Press, 1920, p. 44.

here. He says,

"We find that error by excess is exemplified by every saintly virtue. Excess, in human faculties, means usually one-sidedness or want of balance; for it is hard to imagine an essential faculty too strong, if only other faculties equally strong be there to cooperate with it in action. Strong affections need a strong will; strong active powers need a strong intellect; strong intellect needs strong sympathies, to keep life steady. If the balance exist, no one faculty can possibly be too strong--we only get the stronger all-around character. In the life of saints, technically so called, the spiritual faculties are strong, but what gives the impression of extravagance proves usually, on examination, to be a relative deficiency of intellect. Spiritual excitement takes pathological forms whenever other interests are too few and the intellect too narrow." 123

Using then these principles as guides James shows how devout love to God, purity, charity, and asceticism may all lead astray. If these principles and one more is applied to pietism it will yield important findings. The additional principle is the correlate of "religions have approved themselves; they have ministered to sundry vital needs which they found reigning". The correlate is "When they violate other needs too strongly, or when other faiths came which served the same needs better, the first religions were supplanted". 124 It must not be thought that by using

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123. Cp. Ibid., p. 340. My underlines.

124. Cp. Ibid., p. 331. My underlines.

this statement the philosophy of "the passing of the gods" is subscribed to. But there is great truth in this as this applies to pietism as a type of interpretation of Christian truth.

Summarizing the principles to be used: it is proposed as a thesis that the differentiation in religion is in the realm of ideas. Defects will occur if there is a lack of balance between the emotional element and the intellectual. The real deciding cause of defect is to be sought chiefly in the intellectual--interests too few and intellect too narrow. In addition, the need of the normal personality is both emotional and intellectual; over-supply or over-development in either realm will be harmful. With a low intellect a balanced emotional pressure must be maintained. The only way to increase the emotional pressure safely is to increase the intellect, in range and interest.

2. Intellectual Limitations

When this is applied to pietism as it has been illustrated in the previous chapters, striking observations about the characteristics of pietism may be made. It is first noted that pietism is not strongly interested in intellectual development. In fact there has often been denouncement of reason and philosophy and learning. On the other side, the stress was laid upon the emotional experiences of conversion, with a deep personal sense of

guilt stressed, and the corresponding personal sense of joy and peace which were to be abiding. Sanctification too was strongly emotional. Thus the great stress was upon experience and emotional elements in Christian life.

To this must be added a second important observation. The people whose emotional needs were thus met by this interpretation of the Christian Gospel were the common people whose interests were few and whose intellect, through no fault of their own in most instances, was narrow. This is aptly shown by the prevalence of superstition among them. Therefore in pietism you have a double weakness and danger for future development: an aversion to intellect, and a poorly developed intellect among its converts. Using the figure of starved men and an emergency short-term diet, you find under-developed people saved from death by a partial diet in which the energy food elements are over-balancing the tissue building.

It has been stated that religion is one of the strongest organizing energies for personality. Does not the great accomplishments of pietism with its limited resources and under-developed people demonstrate how strong is Christianity? If so much can be done with so little, there is surely greatness here.

3. Limitations in Their Conception of God

Turning now to specific applications of the principles to evaluate and suggest improvements for pietism as a

life-long diet, the first intellectual limitation is to be found in the pietists understanding of God. This is surely their strong point, and yet they did not have the grasp of God that Paul in his letters delineates so clearly. The God of the pietists is a present, saving, holy God. For personal religion they can hardly be excelled. But there are other aspects of personal religion involved in the concepts of God that are to be found in the Bible in addition to His saving and sanctifying work. God also is Creator and Law-Giver. Despite the presence of evil and sin He is in control and can be trusted and served. There is too much to be covered here for a full treatment, but since the idea of God will be revealed in the ethics and organization of personal living of the pietists, this suggestive criticism must be sufficient. The pietists surely had not exhausted the meaning of God, His provisions for men, and the extent and application of His will.

4. Limitations in Their Understanding of Man

Broadly speaking, the other area of intellectual limitation of the pietists is the understanding of man. They failed to appreciate the needs of man and his vital connections with society and history. Because they had grown to the adult level and then found in pietism ample supply for their real personal needs, they felt that this was full and proper solution. Their error was in thinking that because the emotional experiences met their needs,

it alone could meet the needs of other people in different circumstances, and that the intellectual needs of men were less vital than the emotional.

5. Limitations in Historical Sense

In this connection the criticism that the pietists ignored the "community" fits in well. They did. They lacked a historic sense. They wished to be cut off from their unsatisfactory past. They saw no real value in it. As adults they forgot the real needs of children which their old society and church had at least attempted to meet. They saw the need and benefit of freedom in order to progress, they did not see the necessity of continuity. They had risen to destroy, not to fulfill. That this was in part due to limited understanding of the Bible is evident, for in the Scriptures one finds liberty for the prophets but continuity also, and it was Jesus who said "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill". This understanding and grasp the pietists lacked.

It must not be forgotten that this is a defect common to man in all social areas. Rapid transition from static to dynamic civilization is always fraught with peril. New forms of society must be created to serve the continuing needs of men and society. Unless there is wise leadership which conserves the old superior elements and provides for a period of transition, there is great danger.

These are political and social truisms. They apply as well to the pietists. The pietists were especially weak both in leadership and in the rank and file at this point. They did not realize that theirs was a task of wholly re-organizing society until the task was forced upon them. It is doubtful if any society is conceived, planned, and organized in a rational manner. The pietists were not capable for such a great task. They lacked a Moses or a St. Paul. They failed to see that, as Sherrill puts it, liberty and control must exist.

"But having disavowed the Christian Church in the form that became an unbearable tyranny, Christians who left Rome, and their successors, have struggled since to create forms of the Christian Society which would provide adequate social control without again becoming spiritual despotisms. ... The advances made since the Reformation are coincident with emerging new forms of political structure, the democracies; for the same innate needs send men searching for both religious and political organization adequate for persons who have tasted freedom and made it consciously a part of the tradition. These advances have opened eyes which will not again close in resignation to any tyranny whatever, ecclesiastical or political or economic...

But saying this much is only to introduce the problem. For we now see that our liberties, as we understood and used them, have become a new monster that threatens to destroy us in a way more terrible than unimaginative rack and torch ever did. And until great societies, both religious and political, can combine these two rights, the right to liberty and the right to social control, and combine them in such exquisite fashion as to make a nurturing ground for free personalities--until that time the hard-won battle for freedom will have been a Pyrrhic victory, the victor being exhausted by

his conquest." 125

The history of the formation of the Mission Covenant church in America shows how pertinent such remarks are and how far from comprehending this great truth the leaders were. They were intellectually limited as they faced the greatest problem there is for man to solve--his social organization that will adequately meet the individual needs of men.

6. Limitations in Their Understanding of Christian Freedom

Pietism liberated the individual and allowed for personality development, with Christianity as the organizing force. It did good work in relation to the people before pietism came. But here too it was limited in its understanding of the needs of personality. It was limited too in its concept of the possibilities of personality. It was limited in its understanding of the "new creation". Its unification of life and its outlook on the world reflect these limitations.

Life was unified about the belief that there is no indifferent conduct, that all must be guarded, and that the unifying and controlling motive must be piety--edifying of self or the winning of others to Christ. This was felt to be the will of God, and the whole will. As a

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125. Sherrill, D.J. The Rise of Christian Education, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1944, p.294.

consequence all of life was brought under this motive, and it is here that the charge of asceticism is made.

The pietists had laid hold on an important element in developing personality. Only their narrow range of understanding of the possibilities of man and the will of God for his maturity in the measure of Christ made less fruitful this important insight. One illustration only needs to be given. It is no untruth that all of life counts, there are no indifferent elements and actions. The shading from indifferent action to ethical conduct is stated even by a man as far removed from pietism as Herbert Spencer. He notes that taking a stroll to the seashore and back has in it elements of ethical choice even as to the route taken, if for instance one route is longer than the other, and an important appointment has been made previous to the stroll.¹²⁶ For the pietists life was one appointment with God or man unto edification or piety. No wonder all action must be watched carefully! Such ideals are not to be laughed at today when psychiatry is seeking to correct for people the unbalance caused by unnoticed and forgotten "indifferent" actions.

But the pietists forgot that in this very thesis there lies great danger, unless man is truly seen and God's will fully understood. If all of action counts, may not

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126. Spencer, Herbert, The Data of Ethics, New York, Lovell, Coryell and Co., 1879, p. 5.

then the lack of development of one phase of personality, the intellectual, be of great importance? May it not be said that God wishes His people to be complete and attractive, in the measure of His Son, or shall we say Moses or St. Paul? On the other side, may it not be said that God will come to man not only by one avenue, but by all the means of communication, including the Word of God and the revelation and truth in nature? These elements the pietists did not see or appreciate.

7. Limitations of Their Activism

One more defect due to intellectual limitation may be ventured somewhat warily. The pietists stressed activity, practical training, practical Christianity, practical and productive labor in religion and secular life. There is similarity between the modern "progressive" educational philosophy and the pietist's life philosophy. There are many voices being heard crying out against the dangers in progressive education philosophy, not the least of which is the criticism that not all of a man's life must be active and productive by the "progressive" standards. There is need for thought that does not lead directly to action. There is need for far-reaching vision, for full comprehension of the meaning of "rich experience". So too for the pietists. Their activities were limited and when the emotional impetus to action was dried, there occurred a contraction of effort and a dimming of vision.

Activities without immediate results led to discouragement. Activities that were basic in the formation of persons and society but which were a long time in generating results were ignored. One illustration will serve to demonstrate this. The pietists accepted Francke, Spener, Wesley, Rosenius, and Waldenström, but they did not go about making more like them! They thought instead in terms of colporteurs and lay leaders. That these men without training were found and could be used is an illustration of the great need of the people and the desperate measures needed to meet the emergency. But emergency labor, or emergency food, should not be taken as the norm. The pietists suffered because their activities were in line with their limited understanding of man and of God.

E. THE CRITICISM OF PIETISTIC ASCETICISM

1. Self-Preservation and Self-Discipline

The charge of asceticism is such a common one and is felt to be serious by so many that careful attention needs to be given to it. There is no intention of defending improper asceticism or an improper understanding and application of it. The question that needs answering is: Why has it persisted, if asceticism has no value for humans? What light can be gained here?

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between

asceticism and what appears to be asceticism. James, in his discussion of the excess of Purity points out that while there is the church militant, there is also the church fugient, a flight from the disorder and distractions of the world in search of a unified life. External relations are dropped. Amusements first go, then conventional "society", then business, then family duties, until at last seclusion is the only thing that can be borne. This gives a stability and mental rest to these people.¹²⁷ This appears to be asceticism, but is rather the seeking for peace and freedom from choice. No doubt there were elements of this in the pietists, and as James traces it to a lack of broad intellectual power, it is applicable to them as an important criticism.

Yet there is great benefit and value in just such a system of Christian truth, partial though it may be, for the many people who cannot endure life as they find it. Shall there be no salvation at all for those who "find the outer world too full of shocks to dwell in,"¹²⁸ and can only unify life by withdrawing from it? It is not to the credit of the Protestant Church that they have no places comparable to the monasteries and communities of sympathetic people with an order of life that will help these people.

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127. Varieties, pp. 349-350.

128. Ibid., p. 296.

Perhaps this is too hard a judgment. Perhaps the best is preventive action. But still these people are with us and lost to all sorts of cults and un-Christian organizations.

Asceticism is not flight but rugged heroic facing of the world and the self. In distinction from the general concept of asceticism as flight, James truly points out that it is a serious facing of life.

"Yet I believe that a more careful consideration of the whole matter, distinguishing between the general good intention of asceticism and the uselessness of some of the particular acts of which it may be guilty, ought to rehabilitate it in our esteem. For in its spiritual meaning, asceticism stands for nothing less than for the essence of the twice-born philosophy. It symbolizes, lamely enough no doubt, but sincerely, the belief that there is an element of real wrongness in this world, which is neither to be ignored nor evaded, but which must be squarely met and overcome by an appeal to the soul's heroic resources, and neutralized and cleansed away by suffering. ...

In these remarks I am leaning only upon mankind's common instinct for reality, which in point of fact has always held the world to be essentially a theatre for heroism. In heroism, we feel, life's supreme mystery is hidden. We tolerate no one who has no capacity whatever for it in any direction. ...

Representatively, then, and symbolically, and apart from the vagaries into which the unenlightened intellect of former times may have let it wander, asceticism must, I believe, be acknowledged to go with the profounder way of handling the gift of existence. Naturalistic optimism is mere syllabus and flattery and sponge-cake in comparison. The practical course of action for us, as religious men, would therefore, it seems to me, not be simply to turn our backs upon the ascetic impulse, as most of us today turn them, but rather to discover some outlet for it of which the fruits

in the way of privation and hardship might be objectively useful." 129

Such surely was the temper of the pietists as they denied and outlawed many of the things to which the human is attached. The Swedish people were accustomed to hardihood. It was not a great step from the physical to the religious. Another element no doubt was their wish to sacrifice to God, and their poverty precluded any sacrifices but those of self-denial. Foremost was the real desire to discipline the body and the senses so that there would result greater spiritual service and more single-hearted devotion.

Asceticism has great personal value in its proper place. But when it ceases to be a discipline and becomes an end, when the various negations noted under the characteristics of pietism become marks of salvation, then there is no need to defend or sustain it. The course of its history indicates that there was not the proper understanding of the meaning and purpose of asceticism for it soon became an end in itself. Nor are the methods of treating the various prohibitions truly enlightening for they are simply forbidden. One looks in vain for principles to apply to the many vexing problems. One finds prohibitions, with only general and stock arguments.

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129. *Cp. Ibid.*, pp. 362-365.

2. The World

Pietism shunned the world. It has been criticized for it. What can be said about it? It must not be forgotten first of all that the pietists may have shunned "the world" and felt there was no hope for it or "society", but they were at their best warmly and sincerely concerned with the individual and his salvation. If this attitude shows an improper understanding of God and His purposes, what is to be said about a Christianity that works to save society but to a large extent ignores the individual and has no message for him? If there must be a choice the individual must come first!

Secondly, this problem of what to do with "the world" is not peculiar to the church as a social organism. The path between the pitfalls of working with any foreign government, regardless of complexion and intention, and with only the pure democratic governments is difficult for the United States for instance in China. In the realm of the church where moral issues are more keenly felt this difficult path has been sought after in every generation and none more difficult than that of the present. The pietists are accused of abandoning society and of losing any real Christian influence upon it. The choice is not an easy one: to abandon and remain pure, or to enter into and become contaminated. If the pietists did not do all

they should have done and if their negative attitude was impractical and unfruitful for continuing generations, this criticism should at least be made in sympathy for the real problem they faced, and also in recognition of the great moral and social good they did accomplish. They were like salt and leaven. Only when they came to organize their new society did their defects of broad understanding show themselves.

F. PIETISM IN RELATION TO AMERICAN LIFE

When the Swedish pietists came to America at the time when education and science were making such strides, and when there was so much opportunity for freedom and so much provision for any human need if only a man could look for it, there is no wonder that pietism was swallowed up. The thin starvation fare would hardly serve for a meal a day in contrast to the larger fare offered to men in America. Something resembling a complete diet for full living had to be provided or the churches limited by pietism would lose out. It is to be feared that given such a full menu, many of the immigrants have yet to find a balanced diet. No doubt this is true of a great many others in America: either the intellect is stressed, or the emotion. But at least the elements are here and there is freedom to use them. Under these circumstances it is

to be hoped that the Mission Covenant Church will not only recognize its task but do its best to accomplish all possible for the good of its people, not the organization. Above all else the genuine first-hand religious experience of the first-generation pietists must not be lost but must be passed on to succeeding generations. It is this vital element that must infuse all the others or all is in vain. Conservation must allow for dynamic life, for freedom. The ministration to the vital needs of men must be kept uppermost, a ministration deep and broad, balancing the emotional experience of salvation with the intellectual grasp and understanding of God and man that will lead to the redemption and maturity of human personality. Violation of the real needs of men even by pietists will call for drastic solution in time. Normal and wholesome development should be the aim of the Christian Church, not only the rescuing and feeding on an emergency basis of those who have been allowed to grow up starved within the church structure.

G. SUMMARY

No serious attempt has been made in this chapter to analyze the religious experience of the pietists. The interests have rather been with the broader picture and with the development of personality. Most of the critics of pietism fail to consider seriously the contribution

pietism made to the individual people. Instead the defects or the social effects of the movement are always voiced. In the attempt to keep the individual and his personality development in view most of these criticisms are found to be beside the point. Pietism could not spring up and occur twice after its appearance in Germany if there were not some basic human reason for it.

The reason suggested was that the people of the three countries considered had not been allowed to develop a normal, balanced personality in which intellect and emotion have proper place. Emotional elements supplied by pietism were desperately needed and quickly utilized to the great benefit of both individuals and society.

However, it was suggested also that pietism itself does not constitute a normal diet. It was limited intellectually and tended to over-balance personality development and so either deviate from normal or stunt the growth. This limitation was found both in the attitude of the pietists toward reason and in the limited training and its people.

This limitation was applied in specific areas to show how, when the pietists faced the major human problems of unification of personality and the relation to society and the world, they were handicapped.

The American scene was included since the great freedom in America and the great resources available for normal human development accentuate the limitations of pietism.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

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The thesis of this study has been that significant movements within the Christian church have a sufficient cause. Pietism has been demonstrated to have been a significant movement, as its history has been traced from its beginnings in Germany under Spener and Francke to its great manifestation in England under the name of Methodism, and in Sweden in the Mission Friend movement. That sufficient cause has been searched for with the aid of psychology.

There has been no intention to minimize the importance of God and of His working among men. But working under the assumption that God works through the normal channels of personal and social communication and development, only the human causes have been seriously sought after. With the aid of psychology and its observations about human needs and ways of meeting those needs the thesis was extended to say that the sufficient cause was a long-standing and desperate need of a great mass of people for a normal religious experience that included the emotional as well as intellectual elements and that allowed for individual freedom of expression.

Lest this thesis should color the material presented,

an attempt was made in the first three chapters to present a conventional historical survey of the development and course of pietism in the three European countries named. If the thesis be valid, the elements of human needs should appear in the usual history. Some of those elements may now be reviewed. The parallel social structure in the three countries has been noted. The rigid conformity of the lower class people to all the imposed regulations of state, church, and society, was stated. It was noted that this oppressive condition was one of long duration during which there were sporadic revolts and individual violent attempts at solution or alleviation. The history of this in Sweden was given in more detail. It was not stated in the historical chapters, but it may be noted here that there is a marked parallel between these occasional outbursts from within society, viewed as an organic unit, and the attempts at adjustment made by individuals whose lives are not in normal development and social adjustment.

Finally, there came a great turning to pietism in all three lands. The need was so widespread that there was no possibility of checking it, and it was so acute that an emergency diet was needed. To change the figure, it was the last desperate attempt of the social organism to right itself, just as there come at times similar crises

in a maladjusted personality. Any solution will do, even if it cuts the individual from the rest of society.

Pietism, with all its limitations and despite its criticisms, would do, for it met the need of the people at that hour.

The subsequent course of pietism was then noted in which there was either a decline or a further adaptation to the other needs of men. America was introduced as a check upon the social conditions of the European countries, and it was suggested that in America pietism, at least in the denomination studied, has dwindled, and has had difficulty in meeting American conditions.

In chapter four explicit statement of the thesis of the people's need was made and in the light of knowledge gained from psychology the achievements and limitations of pietism were assessed. It was found that pietism could be likened to an emergency starvation diet, but that for a normal life it was deficient in tissue-building. Pietism is weak in intellectual aspects and since this is a constituent part of a normal personality it is unable to produce the strongest and most mature Christians, as measured for instance by a man of St. Paul's stature.

There is much room for further study of pietism. For instance, there are marked parallels between pietism and pragmatism and humanism, when the human accomplishments,

aims, and limitations are studied.

Another interesting field of study bordering on pietism is the field of mysticism. The critics note the close connection apparent between the two. It would be of value to explore the causes from the human side of mysticism and to relate them to pietism. Can it be that there is a human cause to be found in the strange experiences of mystics? William James notes that in Protestantism, especially in evangelical Protestantism, there is little to do with mysticism. The mystics seem to come from the rigid church systems. Can there be a connection between this and the fact that Stephenson noted, that where the state church had the strongest hold, there the pietists were the most numerous and deeply moved? May it not be then that these mystical people are those in whom the normal elements of religious experience have been long suppressed and in whom there is over-compensation when the need is finally met? Then ought we not to pray for fewer mystics and pietists, and more normal Christians?

Finally, it must be noted that despite the assertions of some critics of Christianity in its institutional and ecclesiastical conservatism and ineffectiveness that it is moribund and that the New Testament life has long since died within its walls, there is yet vitality enough in a limited interpretation of it to meet the personality needs

of human beings in three succeeding centuries and in three different countries. If part of Christianity is the salvation of personality, what could not the fullness be?

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