

The Schmucker Myth and the Evangelical Alliance

by John Abernathy Smith

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the Evangelical Alliance was regarded by American Protestants as their most significant agency for promoting Christian unity. The Evangelical Alliance is best known toward the end of the century when, under the aegis of Josiah Strong, the American branch promoted national unity and social Christianity. The society emerged in 1846, however, as an expression of transatlantic unity among American, British, and continental evangelicals. It marked the culmination of two decades of visitations, transatlantic conventions, and other attempts to build bridges between Protestants in the United States and Europe, and its fortunes influenced later attempts to link American denominations with European religious bodies in international confessional alliances. Although the organizational conference in London foundered on the quite "American" issue of slavery, blocking full American participation in the transatlantic society until after the Civil War, the Evangelical Alliance was the central manifestation of a little noticed impulse for transatlantic solidarity which tugged at American Protestants during the middle of the nineteenth century.

The story of the transatlantic Evangelical Alliance and its sometimes independent American branch has proved difficult to unravel.

Not only have religious historians insisted that during most of the century the attention of American churchmen was focused on the perfection of their voluntary institutions and on the sectional crisis, but a myth has long persisted that Samuel Simon Schmucker, leader of the American party in the Lutheran General Synod, was the instigator of the organization. Two versions of the myth have been abroad. The first, dating from the 1870's, alleged that Schmucker was the "father" of the Evangelical Alliance. The second, product of recent scholarship, concedes that it is an error to call Schmucker the "father" of the transatlantic society, but still regards him as the most important participant in the affair. Neither version, however, fits the facts, and they equally obscure the extent of American interest in transatlantic enterprise during the middle of the nineteenth century. Until the entire fiction has been laid to rest, it seems all but impossible to understand the Evangelical Alliance, the process by which the Evangelical Alliance for the United States later assumed a national leadership, or the activities of Samuel Simon Schmucker in behalf of interdenominational unity at home and transatlantic Christianity.

The legend that Schmucker was the "father" of the Evangelical Alliance originated at the transatlantic conference of the society in New York in 1873 when the epithet was bestowed by F. W. Conrad, who had been afforded a place on the program as a Lutheran representative by Schmucker's death earlier in the year.¹ But Schmucker himself seems to have been ultimately, though unwittingly, responsible for the tradition. In 1870, before the Franco-Prussian War caused a three-year postponement of the meeting in New York, Schmucker published *The True Unity of Christ's Church*,² reiterating the scheme for confederation of American denominations which he originally proposed in 1838 in his *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches*.³ His interest in confederation had been rekindled by a conference convened by the Dutch Reformed in 1869 in behalf of a National Council of the Evangelical Denominations in the United States.⁴ When plans for a National Council faltered, Schmucker tried to keep the movement alive by linking it to the Evangelical Alliance. Schmucker had participated in the organization of the Evangelical Alliance in London in 1846 and had given the original invitation for a transatlantic meeting on American soil.⁵ He had attended the reorganization of the American branch in 1867 after years of inactivity, and, amid the mounting enthusiasm for a transatlantic meeting in New York, he sought to reconcile the idea of an American confederation with the structure of the Evangelical Alliance.

To vindicate his idea of confederation and link it as closely as possible to the origins of the Evangelical Alliance, Schmucker quoted a laudatory reference to it by the Scottish evangelical, David King. King had called attention to the *Fraternal Appeal* in his contribution to *Essays on Christian Union*⁶ and again noticed Schmucker's positive influence in a sketch of events leading up to the London conference of 1846:

On the other hand the leadings of Providence presented uncommon facilities for Christian union. The asperities of party, which, in former ages, had obscured and almost concealed the catholicity of the church, had become softened and diminished. The principle of toleration, which had once no open friend, had no more a declared foe; and this single change strongly indicated a great revolution of sentiment. Religious and benevolent societies, embracing Christians of different denominations, maintained their ground and increased in strength, showing the stability of the foundation on which they were reared. Interesting movements had taken place expressly for the promotion of brotherhood, and the diffusion of its blessings. To notice a few examples, and to begin with the *remotest*—much praise is due to Dr. Schmucker of America, for his zealous endeavors to associate Christians of different denominations across the Atlantic, and to concentrate their energies on efforts of common intent. Whatever may be thought of his scheme of union, all Christians must admire the spirit by which it was dictated and rejoice in the *practical good of which the proposal and discussion of it have been confessedly productive.*⁷

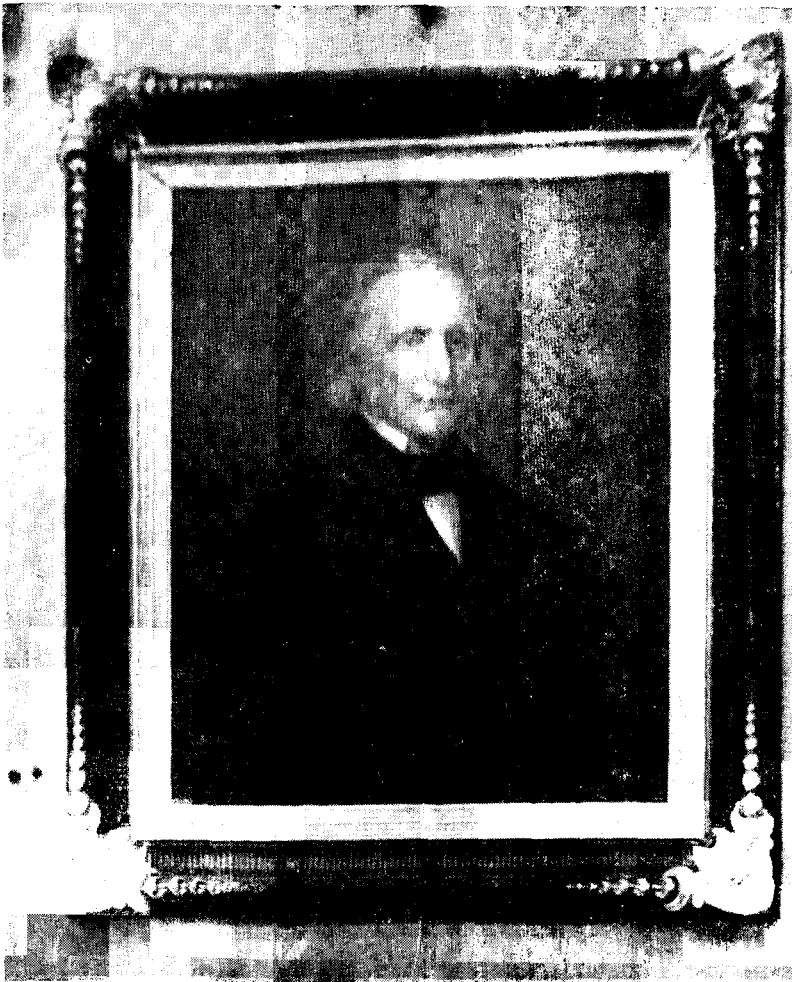
Although Schmucker quoted verbatim, except for emphasis, from the version of the *Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance* circulated in 1846, King only gave his text its final form in 1851 when, in preparation for another meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, he extended his essay to include the events of the organizational conference itself. Inserting a subheading, "MOVEMENTS TOWARD UNION ABROAD," before his examples, which named not only Schmucker, but Swiss, a Pole, and a Frenchman,⁸ King made clear that his reference to Schmucker's work "across the Atlantic" meant "on the other side of the Atlantic" rather than "transatlantic" and that the nonitalicized "remotest" meant "farthest removed" as much as it did "first" or "earliest," crediting Schmucker with a seminal proposal for a confederation of American denominations but not with originating the Evangelical Alliance. Schmucker did not attend the conference of 1851, and he seems to have been out of touch with the declining American branch during the period. He may never have seen the later rescension of King's *Historical Sketch*. Even so, Schmucker himself never claimed that King had called him the "father" of the Evangelical Alliance. That conclusion was reached only by his friends and cited by them as fact after his death.

The creation of the myth of Schmucker's paternity can be observed in part. On June 17, 1870, the *Gettysburg (Pa.) Star Sentinel* commented on a discussion in a Pittsburgh paper about whether the Evangelical Alliance had been first suggested by William Patton or Scotland's Robert Balmer, whose speech at the Westminster Bicentenary spurred the completion of *Essays on Christian Union*. "It is doubtful whether the honor of originating the Alliance belongs to either of the distinguished gentlemen," ventured the *Star Sentinel*. Quoting Schmucker's citation of King's remarks as proof, the local paper proudly concluded that "doubtless the earliest agitation of it was by Dr. Schmucker of Gettysburg."⁹ Later that fall the *New York Observer* listed Schmucker as "one of the fathers" of the Evangelical Alliance—itself a true statement but also

one subject to misinterpretation. John Gottlieb Morris, a Lutheran divine who accompanied Schmucker to London in 1846, seems to have furthered the confusion at Schmucker's funeral. George Diehl, author of one of the earliest biographical essays on Schmucker, quoted Morris as saying on that occasion, "Many years ago, I heard Dr. King, an eminent dissenting clergyman of England, in a public address at London, ascribe the paternity of the Evangelical Alliance to Dr. Schmucker." Actually, there is disagreement about what Morris said. The *Lutheran Observer* reported that Morris quoted King as ascribing the "fraternity" of the Evangelical Alliance to Schmucker. If Morris' biographical sketch of Schmucker in his *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry* represents anything like the text of his eulogy, he was more circumspect than either auditor allowed: "I heard Dr. King, an eminent dissenting minister, openly declare on the platform in London that to Dr. Schmucker belongs much of the credit of originating and promoting that great movement."¹⁰ In any case, when F. W. Conrad assumed Schmucker's place on the program in New York, he accepted as fact that King had called Schmucker the "father" of the transatlantic organization. Since no one arose to challenge Conrad's statement, the myth that Schmucker was the "father" of the Evangelical Alliance has remained.

Unfortunately, Schmucker's relationship to the Evangelical Alliance cannot be put into perspective merely by recounting the accidents by which he was acclaimed its "father." In his useful edition of Schmucker's *Fraternal Appeal*, Frederick K. Wentz, though repeating the claim, has conceded that the designation is "inaccurate if not incorrect."¹¹ Abdel Ross Wentz's recent biography, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, has dispensed with the assertion altogether. Yet neither author seems to have understood the misapprehensions embodied in the claim. Continuing to regard Schmucker as the most eminent participant in the London conference, both have turned a contemporary account of how Schmucker unsuccessfully urged an "ecumenical" plan of organization in London into the judgment that, if not the "father" of the Evangelical Alliance, Schmucker was a far-sighted pioneer, who in defeat in London blazed a trail toward the councils of churches of the twentieth century ecumenical movement. A. R. Wentz has fancied that Schmucker voyaged to London to lay "a definite proposal" for an "ecumenical confederation" before the conference though without success. The elder Wentz speaks of "three points of difference" which developed during consideration of Schmucker's proposal, and he portrays the Lutheran clergyman as fighting passionately for an organization of "ecumenical" scope, for "ecclesiastical communion" among the highest judicatories of the denominations, and for the "United Creed" contained in the *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* and in his *Overture for Christian Union*.¹²

The larger part of A. R. Wentz's story lacks foundation. Although the "Apostolic, Protestant Confession" was an important element of Schmucker's *Fraternal Appeal to the American Church-*



The Rev. Samuel Simon Schmucker, D.D.

Photo courtesy of A. R. Wentz Library, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.

es, there is no evidence that Schmucker presented it in London. The confessional statement of the Evangelical Alliance was drawn in England months before Schmucker's arrival for the conference. The American delegates supported an important amendment to the doctrinal "basis," but the "American" amendment did not pertain to Schmucker's confession. The contrary evidence is that Schmucker supported the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance in London and that after 1846 he was concerned less and less about his "Apostolic, Protestant Confession." In 1848 he commended the basis of the Evangelical Alliance to his own General Synod as a plat-

form for denominational confederation in America, and in the final version of the plan he presented in *The True Unity of Christ's Church* he dropped the "Apostolic, Protestant Confession" altogether.¹³

Nor does Schmucker seem to have made an issue of confederation involving "ecclesiastical communion" among denominational judicatories although this, too, constituted an essential element of his *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches*. Schmucker carried some kind of credentials to London, but they were at best semi-official since the General Synod had never appointed him to attend the Evangelical Alliance.¹⁴ Such credentials could only have certified that he was a leader of the denomination and a member of the committees of the General Synod on Christian union and, more important in this context, on foreign correspondence. Other Americans claimed similar accreditation, but none was a delegate from the highest judicatory of his denomination. William Passavant and Robert Baird bore credentials respectively from the Lutheran Pittsburgh Synod and the Presbyterian Synod of New Jersey. George Peck was sponsored by the Oneida and Black River Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Benjamin Kurtz and John Gottlieb Morris, in addition to membership on the General Synod's committee on foreign correspondence, were elected by an interdenominational conference of clergymen in Baltimore.¹⁵ The British hosts had decided in advance, however, that persons would be accepted in the conference as individuals only and not as representatives of ecclesiastical bodies. Although protesting other preliminary decisions by British evangelicals, the American visitors do not appear to have raised the issue of their credentials or worked to have them recognized. At no time did the confederation of denominational bodies become an issue in the London conference. Schmucker himself could scarcely have promoted this aspect of the *Fraternal Appeal* since the cornerstone for the "ecumenical" scheme which he presented to the conference was the creation of the society from among "those persons" throughout the world who believed in its objectives.

Only on the matter of the "ecumenical" scope of the Evangelical Alliance is A. R. Wentz's story of Schmucker's designs in London substantiated by contemporary evidence. Both Wentzes draw in this regard upon James William Massie, a leading member of the Congregational Union of England and Wales and author in 1847 of an account of the London conference. Singling out Schmucker among the American delegates for praise as one of the "promoters of the object for which the conference was convened." Massie claimed that the Lutheran leader was "most solicitous that the Alliance should assume an oecumenical, rather than a local or topical form; that it should be coextensive with the universal church, and catholic as evangelical Christianity; that its symbols should correspond with the dominion of Christ, and that its organization should comprehend all nations, kindreds, and peoples."¹⁶ Massie's remarks do not, how-

ever, support the conclusions reached by the Wentzes that Schmucker presented elements of the *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* in London in an effort to give the Evangelical Alliance the shape of a modern ecumenical council.

To understand Schmucker's "ecumenical" plan, it is necessary to examine the events prior to and during the London conference. According to Robert Baird, the project began with Leonard Bacon of New Haven, who in the fall of 1843 enlisted the aid of Baird and William Patton. As agent of the Foreign Evangelical Society with scores of European contacts, Baird was asked to transmit the proposal to Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigne, Swiss pastor and ecclesiastical historian in the Evangelical Academy at Geneva. Patton, whose first transatlantic voyage to secure closer relations between American and British evangelicals dated from 1825, was commissioned to bring the plan to the attention of the British through his friend, John Angell James of the Congregational Union.¹⁷ With the ground thus prepared, Bacon published his scheme in the spring of 1844 in the *New Englander and Yale Review*, calling for "an 'ecumenical council,' such as never yet assembled since the apostles parted from each other at Jerusalem." Bacon was convinced that such a gathering of evangelical Christians at London, Geneva, or Edinburgh would "electrify the Protestant world" and would be of inestimable value in appraising the state of evangelical religion around the world.¹⁸

The context of Bacon's proposal was the organization of the Christian Alliance, a later component of the American and Foreign Christian Union. Bacon's articles in the *New Englander* as well as the letters and writings of Horace Bushnell tell how this small society grew out of an appeal by Italian exiles in New York for aid to their countrymen suffering religious persecution. What might have been constituted as a Philo-Italian Society turned into a more comprehensive union of American evangelicals because of the conviction expressed by Leonard Bacon that the transitory problem of Roman unrest against papal government promised a vaster opportunity to complete the Reformation by extending it "into regions from which it has been, in other ages, too successfully excluded." The organization of the Christian Alliance also bore on the rising nativist fears of Roman Catholicism and on the continuing drive to save the West from popery. "We can unite Protestants in a movement to complete the Reformation in Italy when they could not be united against Romanism in our own country," observed Horace Bushnell about the necessity for the Christian Alliance. Although never large or wealthy, the Christian Alliance prospered in the 1840's and became as broadly representative of the evangelical denominations as any union missionary society of the period. Bacon inaugurated his project of a transatlantic meeting of evangelicals in a bid to enlist British and continental support for the Christian Alliance, and, after the Christian Alliance won notoriety from papal condemnation, American evangelicals became increasingly eager to turn their organization into an international venture.¹⁹

Schmucker had little, if anything, to do with Bacon's proposals. The *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* was one of a spate of books and articles which appeared in the United States during the 1830's and 1840's on the subject of Christian unity,²⁰ and it is too much to suggest that Bacon was merely representing Schmucker's views even in the call for a "full conference of evangelical ministers of various denominations from various parts of the United States" which accompanied his proposal for a transatlantic conference. Both editions of the *Fraternal Appeal* had cautioned against a general delegated convention of American churchmen as a means of establishing a confederation among denominations.²¹ During anniversary week in May, 1839, Schmucker did take part in the organization of an American Society for the Promotion of Christian Union, which may have attracted others who later figured in the history of the Evangelical Alliance. The American Society for the Promotion of Christian Union met, however, no more than once or twice before expiring.²² It was only after the appearance of Bacon's article that Schmucker began to work for the projected meetings in New York and London. In the spring of 1845 the Christian Alliance, by then anxiously awaiting a British invitation, elected Schmucker to its European committee,²³ and the General Synod named him to an enlarged committee on foreign correspondence. He also persuaded the General Synod to authorize a committee on Christian union with himself as chairman.²⁴ Later in the year he published his *Overture for Christian Union*, appealing again for an American confederation and projecting a convention to further the plan during the anniversaries of 1846. The *Overture*, which was signed by Bacon, Baird, and Patton, also endorsed "occasionally, though not statedly, a universal or oecumenical Protestant convention, like that proposed to be held in London in 1846."²⁵ Here, apparently, was Schmucker's first declaration of support for an "ecumenical" conference of evangelical Christians. Schmucker himself never claimed to have done more, and it is interesting to note that in London at a critical juncture in the proceedings he evoked the name of Leonard Bacon as an early proponent of the meeting.²⁶

Bacon's contacts did their work well although the proposed conference was delayed by British disagreements over the means for calling the meeting. Merle d'Aubigne, after presenting the scheme to Swiss evangelicals in 1844, promoted it in Scotland when he visited the Free Church there in 1845. When James received Patton's letter suggesting a transatlantic conference in 1845, he appended it to his article for *Essays on Christian Union* and approved it as parallel to a plan of his own, growing out of his campaign in the Congregational Union for evangelical unity against "Popery, Puseyism, and Plymouth Brethrenism" and an unexpectedly successful interdenominational rally in Exeter Hall in 1843.²⁷ The cause of evangelical unity in Great Britain took a decided setback, however, when a tempest in the Church of Scotland led to the Free Church schism, and early in 1844 James advised Patton to expect delay. Beginning with English Independents and Scottish Presbyterians on the oc-

casation of the Westminster Bicentenary, the movement was revived, less as a protest than as a manifestation of solidarity amid division. To insure the largest possible participation, a careful sequence was plotted for calling a meeting of British evangelicals in Liverpool in October, 1845. There British evangelicals decided to form an Evangelical Alliance with a widely representative membership from among those who could subscribe an eight-point declaration of evangelical belief and to appoint a committee to convene an international meeting in London the following summer.²⁸

The new organization came under immediate attack in Great Britain and caused consternation among Swiss and Americans who had been involved in negotiations for the international convention. Merle d'Aubigne communicated Swiss uneasiness about the unilateral action of the British in forming an organization and adopting a creed.²⁹ The Americans were even more disturbed. Leonard Bacon, believing that Patton's schedule would prevail, was preparing a trip to London in 1845 to be on hand for "the great Protestant convention,"³⁰ but instead of an invitation, the year brought news of an exclusively British society along different lines from the Christian Alliance. Horace Bushnell, who was in Europe during the winter of 1845-1846 on behalf of the Christian Alliance and cooperation with Swiss and British evangelicals, was so disheartened by British actions that he returned home before the London convention.³¹ His reports were so discouraging to Bacon that the New Haven clergyman remained at home in 1846, and except for his voyage to London in 1851 to try to recover the original design, Bacon did not figure in the subsequent history of the Evangelical Alliance.³² Fears were confirmed early in 1846 when the British invitation arrived, suggesting that, in order to prevent a reopening of the controversies that had plagued the inauguration of the British society, the American sponsors of the conference would be received as "foreign corresponding members" of the existing organization.³³

The willingness of American evangelicals to go to London under the circumstances is evidence of their overriding interest in transatlantic projects. More than seventy made the voyage—as Presbyterian Thomas Brainerd remarked, "the first time so many British and American clergy have met since the Pilgrims left for Plymouth."³⁴ Their leaders were not without plans, however, for countering the British position. Robert Baird called a meeting of prospective delegates in New York in May, 1846—the only fulfillment of the national meeting promised by Schmucker's *Overture*—and there the Americans laid foundations for a strategy to be followed in London. They determined to go to London and attempt to reconstruct the Evangelical Alliance, which many continued to call the Christian Alliance,³⁵ into a genuine transatlantic society. In particular, they agreed to accept the doctrinal statement, notwithstanding their own preference for so-called "catholic basis" societies, provided it could be understood or amended so as to include an eschatological statement.³⁶

When the British invitation finally arrived, Schmucker abandoned his scheme for a national meeting and sailed to Europe for a preliminary tour of Germany; there is no apparent evidence that he was in close contact with other American delegates when these decisions on strategy were made or that he was much concerned about the conference before his arrival in London.³⁷ A number of American delegates, including Schmucker, did reach London in time for the final sessions of the provisional committee just prior to the transatlantic conference. There they discovered a more explosive issue than their concerns about the scope and doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance. During the spring the provisional committee had resolved not to invite slaveholders to the convention. But their action had come too late. Men like Schmucker, who had inherited slaves from his second wife,³⁸ had already departed when notice of the resolution arrived. Other Americans, holding to the conditions of the original invitation, ignored the resolution and proceeded to London. In July the provisional committee decided that the American visitors should be asked to sign the Liverpool basis upon their arrival in London and that their attention should also be directed to the Birmingham resolution expressing the desire not to have slaveholders at the conference. This action seems to have crystallized the Americans' disposition to act in concert. In an article erroneously attributed to Schmucker by A. R. Wentz,³⁹ Gorham Dummer Abbot told how most American delegates agreed to sign the Liverpool basis while protesting its inadequacies and objecting to the Birmingham resolution on slaveholding. His report for the *New York Observer*, which came to be regarded as a semi-official apology for the Americans' course of action, indicated that the delegates from the United States instituted daily breakfasts to hammer out their positions. Information that the Americans were indeed acting in concert was widely circulated in London, and on several occasions American delegates were forced to deny on the convention floor that their remarks represented more than their private opinions—an apparent confirmation of the usual American disposition to act in concert.⁴⁰

The American delegates scored an early victory when, despite the adverse circumstances created by the slaveholding issue, they obtained a voice in the deliberations of the provisional committee and were assigned leading positions on other committees and in the convention, giving substance to the German complaint that "the American colleagues had the lion's share of the intercourse and influence conceded to foreigners."⁴¹ Installed in their positions of influence, the American delegates persisted in their resolve to add a ninth eschatological article to the doctrinal basis. After first winning a victory in the committee for what was popularly known in London as the "American" amendment, they pressed their success into the full convention. Samuel Hanson Cox, prominent New School Presbyterian, became identified as the spokesman for the American delegates on the issue, and, as one of the parliamentary managers of the committee's report, he helped guide the revised

By the time the convention opened, the question of the scope and structure of the Evangelical Alliance seemed on the way to being solved to the Americans' satisfaction. In June the provisional committee, perhaps in response to American objections, did away with the proposal that visiting evangelicals be enrolled as corresponding members of a British organization and adopted a plan for constituting the Evangelical Alliance out of "those persons in all parts of the world, who shall concur in the principles and objects adopted by the Conference." Collateral national branches were to be provided in Great Britain, the United States, North Germany, South Germany, and Switzerland with provision for the later addition of other branches.⁴³ This was the plan whose adoption Schmucker moved in the plenary session on behalf of the leadership of the convention and the American delegates. Up to the time Schmucker moved the adoption of the broadened plan of organization, the American visitors had successfully kept the issue of slaveholding out of the proceedings despite the Birmingham resolution and the presence in London of William Lloyd Garrison who had come in anticipation of a fray.⁴⁴ But Schmucker's scheme was challenged by a British amendment, "excepting slaveholders," which was seconded by Joshua V. Himes of Boston, publicist of Millerite doctrine and an abolitionist. As the result, the convention was thrown into a disruptive debate.⁴⁵

A committee, including Schmucker and a number of other Americans, was appointed to resolve the impasse. Their report, condemning slavery along with a number of evangelical sins, was unexpectedly received late on a Saturday evening and gaveled through the convention over the protests of the few Americans present at that hour.⁴⁶ Regrouping over the weekend, thirty-two American delegates, including Schmucker, signed a protest drawn by Sidney E. Morse of the *New York Observer*.⁴⁷ When the chair ruled that the committee's report had indeed been substituted for Schmucker's motion on membership rather than standing as an innocuous addendum to the plan of organization, Morse presented his charge that the British had acted in bad faith in their invitation and, in the words of Thomas Smyth of South Carolina, carried "the war into the enemy's territory." Winning reconsideration, the Americans, except for men like Himes, fought in "one compact determined phalanx," but in the end they were forced to accede to a compromise which allowed the organization of national branches to proceed while postponing a larger society until some future conference.⁴⁸

On the basis of the evidence, the "ecumenical" plan which Schmucker unsuccessfully urged in London had little to do with the *Fraternal Appeal*. Although Massie claimed that Schmucker was "solicitous that all his long cherished ideas should be considered, and his theory be brought to the test," he mentions none of the trappings of the *Fraternal Appeal* and scarcely implies that Schmucker introduced that scheme into the deliberations.⁴⁹ Nor

do the minutes of the London convention indicate that Schmucker defended his *Fraternal Appeal* there, and, indeed if he had, he would have put himself in the embarrassing position of disparaging the motion on organization he did present at the very moment when it was under attack by the antislavery forces. Schmucker seems never to have attached the argument of the *Fraternal Appeal* to any but a scheme for the confederation of American denominations except in so far as *The True Unity of Christ's Church* suggested that the long-awaited step toward international organization be taken just as Schmucker promised when his motion was defeated in 1846.⁵⁰ The "ecumenical" plan which the Lutheran clergyman advocated in London appears not to have been his own or even of American origin although it was deeply rooted in Bacon's dream of a transatlantic convention of evangelicals and in the preconvention strategy of the American visitors. The reports of Massie and Gorham Abbot indicate that Schmucker was acting on behalf of a broader spectrum of American opinion,⁵¹ and it is impossible not to regard Schmucker along with Cox and Morse as one of the spokesmen for an "American" position. Viewed in this way, Schmucker's "ecumenical" plan remains an important aspect of the vision and politics of transatlantic evangelicalism, but not, as the Wentzes have supposed, a proof of Schmucker's dominant leadership of the Evangelical Alliance or of his far-sighted attempts to make that organization resemble the World Council of Churches.

Massie himself, though a friend of transatlantic enterprise, became embroiled in the debate over the slaveholding amendment, and it was probably his disappointment with many of the American delegates which caused him to idealize Schmucker. Massie recorded the opinion that Sidney Morse was an "insidious adversary to frank fellowship." He termed Robert Baird a "proselytizing voluntary," and he disliked William Patton because "he never forgot or suffered his hearers to forget he was an American and whatever touched his countrymen touched him."⁵² Although Schmucker presented an "American" position and signed the protest, he remained relatively aloof from the debate over slaveholding—doubtless due to the embarrassment of being a slaveholder though not by choice, but also for the strategic reason that he remained the parliamentary spokesman for the "ecumenical" plan in the event the controversy over slaveholding had been settled. Massie, who does not seem to have recognized the fact that Schmucker was a slaveholder, fixed on the Lutheran divine all that he regarded as good about transatlantic endeavor and attributed to him the entire responsibility for the "ecumenical" plan. He thereby provided a shred of evidence for the continuation of the myth that Schmucker was the leading spirit of the Evangelical Alliance.

The controversy over slaveholding followed the American delegates home, and at the anniversaries in 1847 they failed to erect more than a token national organization. Schmucker participated in the fiasco, but thereafter he appears to have lost interest and

to have left the fortunes of the American branch to those who had first championed the transatlantic venture. For three years Robert Baird edited the *Christian Union and Religious Memorial* in its behalf, and in 1851 he and Leonard Bacon led a delegation of Americans back to London in another unsuccessful attempt to form a transatlantic society. Baird continued to visit meetings of the Evangelical Alliance when it embarked on its series of conferences in the Protestant centers of Europe, and in the 1860's William Patton seems to have still been a liaison with the British leaders of the organization.⁵³ Bacon and Baird played important roles in merging the Christian Alliance with the Foreign Evangelical Society and the American Protestant Society to form the American and Foreign Christian Union, which announced that it was undertaking "the work of a grand EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE."⁵⁴ It was indeed the only Evangelical Alliance the Americans had until after the Civil War.

Although the myth of Schmucker's role in the Evangelical Alliance can be held no longer, his voyage to London and part in the conference are still significant and ought to be of increased interest to historians. In foregoing the meeting announced in his *Overture* in behalf of the unity of American denominations and in moving the "ecumenical" plan at the London conference, Schmucker responded in the same way as Bacon, Baird, and Patton to the lure of evangelical cooperation across the ocean and participation in the affairs of European Christianity. The whys and hows of this impulse deserve investigation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

- ¹ *History, Essays, Orations, and Other Documents of the Sixth General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, Held in New York, October 2-12, 1873*, ed. Philip Schaff and Samuel Irenaeus Prime (New York: Harper, 1874), p. 174.
- ² *The True Unity of Christ's Church; Being a Renewed Appeal to the Friends of the Redeemer on Primitive Christian Union, and the History of its Corruption, to Which Is Now Added a Modified Plan for the Reunion of All Evangelical Churches, Embracing as Integral Parts, the World's Evangelical Alliance, with All Its National Branches* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1870).

- ³ *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches with a Plan for Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Gould and Newman and Taylor and Dodd, 1839; rpt. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965). The volume was first published as "Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches with a Plan for Catholic Union," *American Biblical Repository*, 11 (1838), 86-131, 363-415, and as *Appeal to the American Churches with a Plan for Catholic Union* (New York: Gould and Newman, 1838).
- ⁴ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church in America*, Vol. XI, 1866-1869, pp. 420-421, 581-582, 583; "Evangelical Council," *New York Observer*, 47 (1869), 269, 338; Schmucker, *True Unity of Christ's Church*, pp. 40-49.
- ⁵ *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall, London, from August 19th to September 2nd, Inclusive, 1846* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1847), p. 288.
- ⁶ King, "Union among Christians Viewed in Relation to the Religious Parties of Scotland," in *Essays on Christian Union* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1845), p. 232. This and other British references to Schmucker's work do not imply that an edition of the *Fraternal Appeal* was published in England in 1845 as William A. Lambert asserted in "An Unpublished Letter of Dr. Hodge to Dr. S. S. Schmucker, on Christian Union," *Lutheran Church Review*, 18 (1899), 209. It is possible, however, that the book had been abstracted in British religious journals; see Romeo Elton to Schmucker, June 5, 1841, in Schmucker Papers, Lutheran Theological Seminary Library, Gettysburg, Pa.
- ⁷ Schmucker, *True Unity of Christ's Church*, pp. 31-32; King, *Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance* (London: Macintosh, 1846), p. 3.
- ⁸ King, *Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance, Consisting of Two Papers Read in Freemasons' Hall, London, August 19, 1846, and August 20, 1851* (Glasgow: S. and T. Dunn, 1851), pp. 7-8.
- ⁹ Clipping in *Evangelical Alliance, U.S., Miscellany*, 6 scrapbook vols. in Union Theological Seminary Library, New York, Vol I.
- ¹⁰ *New York Observer*, September 22, 1870, quoted in Frederick K. Wentz, "Introduction," in Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* (1965), p. 32n.; Diehl, "Dr. S. S. Schmucker," *Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, NS 4 (1874), 50; E. S. B[reidenbaugh?], "Prof. S. S. Schmucker, D.D., LL.D.: The Funeral Service," *Lutheran Observer*, 41 (August 8, 1873), 6; Morris, *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry* (Baltimore: J. Young, 1878), p. 125.
- ¹¹ F. K. Wentz, "Introduction," in Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* (1965), p. 32n.
- ¹² *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 285-292.
- ¹³ *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1848*, pp. 12-13; Schmucker, *A Safe and Practicable Plan for an Advisory Union among All Evangelical Denominations: Fraternal Appeal to the Friends of the Evangelical Alliance and of Christian Union Generally, with a Provisional Sketch of a Plan for a General Protestant Union; Respectfully Submitted to Highest Judicatories of the Several Evangelical Denominations, in the United States* (Gettysburg, Pa.: J. E. Wible, 1872?).
- ¹⁴ Henry N. Pohlman to Schmucker, February 16, 1846, in Schmucker Papers.
- ¹⁵ George Henry Gerberding, *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant* (Greenville, Pa.: Young Lutheran Co., 1906), p. 139; Henry Martyn Baird, *Life of Robert Baird* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1866), p. 230; *The Life and Times of George Peck, Written by Himself* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1874), p. 267; *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, Appendix, pp. xxx-xxxii.
- ¹⁶ *The Evangelical Alliance: Its Origin and Development, Containing Personal Notices of its Distinguished Friends in Europe and America* (London: John Snow, 1847), p. 274.

¹⁷ [Robert Baird], "Editorial Remarks: Our 'Homily'; the 'Presbyterian' and 'Independent,'" *Christian Union and Religious Memorial*, 3 (1850), 132; Robert Baird, "Address on the History, Present State, and Prospects of the Evangelical Alliance Cause in the United States," in his *Progress and Prospects of Christianity in the United States of America* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1851), p. 51n.; H. M. Baird, *Life of Robert Baird*, pp. 228-230; H[orace] B[ushnell], "The Evangelical Alliance," *New Englander*, 5 (1847), 118-119; "William Patton," *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 6 vols. (New York: Appleton, 1887), IV, 677.

¹⁸ [Leonard Bacon], "Romanists and the Roman Catholic Controversy," *New Englander*, 2 (1844), 253-254. The article is authoritatively attributed to Bacon by his son, Leonard Woolsey Bacon, in *A History of American Christianity* (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1897), p. 408n.

¹⁹ [Bacon], "Romanists and the Roman Catholic Controversy," pp. 254-255; Mary Bushnell Cheney, *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell* (New York: Harper, 1880), p. 106; B[ushnell], "The Evangelical Alliance," pp. 118-119; *The Christian Alliance: Address of the Rev. L. Bacon, D.D., and Rev. E. N. Kirk, at the Annual Meeting of the Christian Alliance, Held in New York, May 8, 1845, with the Address of the Society and the Bull of the Pope against It* (New York: S. W. Benedict, 1845), pp. 38-48.

²⁰ The \$200 prize "for the best Tract or Treatise on Dissensions in the Churches" won by Pharellus Church for *Religious Dissensions: Their Cause and Cure* (New York: Gould and Newman, 1838) attracted no fewer than twenty-seven manuscripts (p. iii). This striking figure attests to the number of books and articles being written on the subject during the period. In addition to Church's and Schmucker's, the most important of the books were Noah Worcester, *Causes and Evils of Contentions Unveiled in Letters to Christians* (Boston: Gray and Bowen, 1831); Abraham Van Dyck, *Christian Union: An Argument for the Abolition of Sects* (New York: Appleton, 1835); [William Augustus Muhlenberg], *Hints on Catholic Union by a Presbyter* (New York: Protestant Episcopal Press, 1835); Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, in Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, as Pleaded in the Current Reformation*, 1st ed. with variant title (Bethany, Va.: M'Vay and Ewing, 1835), 2nd ed. Bethany, Va.: Forrester and Campbell, 1839); Thomas Harvey Skinner, *Thoughts on Evangelizing the World* (New York: J. S. Taylor, 1836); Darwin Harlow Ranney, *The Evangelical Church; or True Grounds for the Union of Saints* (Woodstock, Vt.: Mercury Press, 1840); Thomas Hubbard Vail, *The Comprehensive Church; or Christian Unity and Ecclesiastical Union in the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Hartford, Conn.: Huntington, 1841); Benjamin P. Aydelott, *Incidental Benefits of Denominational Division: An Argument for Christian Union* (Cincinnati: G. G. Jones, 1846).

²¹ Schmucker, *Appeal to the American Churches* (1838), p. 98; Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* (1965), p. 184.

²² Schmucker, *True Unity of Christ's Church*, pp. 14-16.

²³ *The Christian Alliance*, p. 48.

²⁴ *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, 1845, pp. 32, 35, 38-40.

²⁵ *Overture for Christian Union, Submitted for the Consideration of the Evangelical Denominations in the United States* (Gettysburg, Pa., 1845), rpt. in Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* (1965), pp. 209, 210-212.

²⁶ *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 287-288.

²⁷ Leonard Bacon, *Christian Unity* (New Haven, Conn.: Foreign Evangelical Society, 1846), p. 41; "Christian Unity: Reveiw of Bacon's *Christian Unity*," *New Englander*, 6 (1846), 133; "D'Aubigne on Christian Unity," *New York Observer*, 22 (1844), 197; "Dr. Merle d'Aubigne's Remarks before the Free Church of Scotland," *ibid.*, 23 (1845), 125-126, 129; "Appendix" to James, "Union among Christians Viewed in Relation to the Religious Parties in

- England and Wales," in *Essays on Christian Union*, pp. 223-225; "Transactions of Congregational Churches: Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales," *Congregational Magazine*, NS 6 (1842), 434-436; James to Secretaries of the Congregational Union, May 31, 1842, in "Proposal for a General Protestant Union," *ibid.*, 458-462; King, *Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance* (1851), pp. 8-11.
- ²⁵ James to Patton, June 27, 1843, in Robert William Dale, *Life and Letters of John Angell James, Including an Unfinished Autobiography* (New York: Robert Carter, 1861), pp. 418-421, the date of which questions Robert Baird's chronology; James to Patton, January 27, 1844, *ibid.*, p. 421; David King to R. W. Dale, *ibid.*, p. 412; King, *Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance*, pp. 11-21; *Conference on Christian Union: Narrative of the Proceedings of the Meetings Held in Liverpool, October, 1845* (London: J. Nisbet, 1845).
- ²⁶ C. Brade and J.-H. Merle d'Aubigne to Edward Bickersteth, November 19, 1845, in Thomas Rawson Birks, *Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1851), 11, 271-272.
- ²⁷ To Sarah Wisner, July 4, 1845, and to Benjamin Wisner Bacon, July 18, 1845, in Bacon Family Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn., Container 6.
- ²⁸ Bushnell to wife, October 4 and 8, 1845, and March 2, 1846, in Cheney, *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell*, pp. 138-139, 166.
- ²⁹ [Bacon], "Evangelical Alliance," *New Englander*, 10 (1852), 309-330. See also William Patton to Bacon, February 20, 1846, Bacon Family Papers, Container 6.
- ³⁰ From Edward Bickersteth et al., in "The Evangelical Alliance," *Protestant Quarterly Review*, 3 (1846), 264-272. I find it unlikely that Schmucker was "personally invited" apart from the general circular as suggested in A. R. Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, p. 285.
- ³¹ From Brainerd, August 30, 1846, quoted in Mary Brainerd, *Life of Thomas Brainerd* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1870), p. 213. On the number of delegates attending, see *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, Appendix C, pp. lxxvii-xcvii, and Gorham Dummer Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," *New York Observer*, 24 (1846), 158. Some names on the official roll may represent proxy signatures to the doctrinal basis, but my count does not include wives or other delegates from the western hemisphere.
- ³² Darwin Harlow Ranney, *The Christian Alliance at Home, or Sectarianism Defined and Corrected* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1846), p. 18; Gorham Dummer Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," *New York Observer*, 24 (1846), 153; George Peck, "Christian Alliance: Review of Authorized Proceedings and Final Resolutions of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall, London, on August 19, 1846, and Following Days," *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York), 29 (1847), 151-160.
- ³³ "The London Union Convention," *New York Observer*, 24 (1846), 70; *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, Appendix, p. xxvi; H. M. Baird, *Life of Robert Baird*, p. 230.
- ³⁴ The letter from Benjamin Kurtz and John Gottlieb Morris to Schmucker, in Peter Anstadt, *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.* (York, Pa.: P. Anstadt and Sons, 1896), p. 257, informing Schmucker of the impending slavery controversy while he was yet on the continent, assumes Schmucker had had little acquaintance with developments concerning the Evangelical Alliance since his spring departure.
- ³⁵ Anstadt, *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker*, p. 302.
- ³⁶ A. R. Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, p. 301. The articles on "The World's Evangelical Alliance" beginning in the *Lutheran Observer*, 14 (1846), 26-27, are clearly indicated as reprints from the *New York Observer* where they are signed by Abbot.
- ³⁷ Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," pp. 153-154; Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters, and Reflections* (Charleston, S. C.: Walker, Evans, and Cogswell, 1914), p. 360; *Report of the Proceedings of the Confer-*

ence Held in Freemasons' Hall, debate following p. 386. The document in Lutheran Theological Seminary Library, cited by F. K. Wentz in his "Introduction" to Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* (1965), p. 24n., which records the minutes of an American meeting in London, confirms the American delegates' practice of assembling together to discuss issues at the convention although Schmucker's paper "setting forth certain great principles on the subject of union among Evangelical Christians throughout the world" does not seem to me to provide evidence that Schmucker presented a version of the *Fraternal Appeal* in London.

- ⁴¹ Massie, *Evangelical Alliance*, p. 416.
- ⁴² Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," p. 154; *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 77-193.
- ⁴³ *Proposed Evangelical Alliance* [Papers Adopted by Select Subcommittee, June 9, 1846] (London: MacIntosh, 1846), p. 6.
- ⁴⁴ Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life Told by His Children*, 4 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1889), III, 164-168; Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," p. 154.
- ⁴⁵ *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 286-338; on Himes, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 479-480. A. R. Wentz in *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, pp. 289-290, has found confirmation of his position in a note signed "E. S.," which he believes was passed to Schmucker at this juncture by Edward Steane, British Baptist and important member of the conference; the argument seems to me to be weak although his identification of the initials is plausible.
- ⁴⁶ *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 370-385; John Bailey Adger, *My Life and Times, 1810-1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), p. 362.
- ⁴⁷ Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," p. 154; *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 402-405. There is no evidence to support the contention of Anstadt in *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker*, p. 303, that Schmucker authored the protest.
- ⁴⁸ Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes*, p. 360; Adger, *My Life and Times*, p. 362; *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 386-504.
- ⁴⁹ Massie, *Evangelical Alliance*, p. 277.
- ⁵⁰ *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference Held in Freemasons' Hall*, pp. 460-461.
- ⁵¹ Abbot, "The World's Evangelical Alliance," p. 154; Massie, *Evangelical Alliance*, pp. 274-278.
- ⁵² Massie, *Evangelical Alliance*, pp. 401-406.
- ⁵³ "The American Evangelical Alliance," *New York Observer*, 25 (1847), 79; Baird, "Address on the History, Present State, and Prospects of the Evangelical Alliance Cause in the United States," pp. 40-49; H. M. Baird, *Life of Robert Baird*, pp. 259-274, 286-287, 309-312; [Bacon], "Evangelical Alliance," pp. 309-330; Robert Baird, *State and Prospects of Religion in America, Being a Report Made at the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in Paris, August 25th, 1855* (London: E. Suter, 1855); *Proceedings of the Geneva Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, Held in September, 1861*, ed. Gavin Carlyle (Edinburgh: For the Evangelical Alliance by A. Strahan, 1862), pp. 191-200; "The Evangelical Alliance and the American War," *New Englander*, 21 (1863), 288-315.
- ⁵⁴ "The Christian Union and Religious Memorial," *Independent*, 1 (1849), 24; "The Evangelical Alliance," *ibid.*, 29; "Editorial Remarks," *Christian Union and Religious Memorial*, 2 (1849), 321-323; quotation from *Fifth Annual Report of the American and Foreign Christian Union*, 1854, p. 18; Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), pp. 262-272.