

# Emanuel V. Gerhart: Churchman, Theologian and First President of Franklin and Marshall College.

by Charles Yrigoyen, Jr.

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Among the notable figures of Lancaster County who have made significant intellectual contributions which, in their influence, have reached far beyond the county boundaries was Emanuel V. Gerhart. While much of his life was spent elsewhere he distinguished himself here as a theologian, writer, educator and church leader. He was the first President of Franklin and Marshall College and for thirty-six years was Professor and President of the Lancaster Theological Seminary which celebrates its sesquicentennial in 1975. The following is a brief account of his life and accomplishments.<sup>1</sup>

## **Birth and Early Life (1817-1833)**

Emanuel Vogel Gerhart was born at Freeburg, Snyder County, Pennsylvania, on June 13, 1817. He was the son of Isaac Gerhart and Sarah Vogel. We know very little about the childhood of Emanuel. From the beginning, however, his life must have been bound up with the Christian faith and the life of the church to which his parents were devoted.

Isaac Gerhart was a minister in the German Reformed Church. He was described as "faithful, modest, quiet, and always cheerful. He was full of kindness, and always willing to accommodate."<sup>2</sup> Isaac's great-grandfather, Paul, an exile from France in 1680, settled in the Palatinate. Isaac's grandfather, Peter, migrated to America in 1730 settling in eastern Pennsylvania. Isaac was born on February 12, 1788, near Sellersville. Although his father, Abraham, a farmer, opposed his decision to enter the ministry, he began ministerial studies with the Reverend Samuel Helffenstein of Philadelphia in 1809.<sup>3</sup> He was licensed by the synod in 1813. Soon after he took charge of eight congregations in what is now Snyder County, Pennsylvania. Selin's Grove and Freeburg were the most important congregations of the group. While serving these churches Isaac traveled approximately 2500 miles annually. During his tenure in Snyder County, which lasted until 1819, he married Sarah Vogel, daughter of John George Vogel. The Vogels had come to America in 1770 from Nassau-Vasing, now western Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Poor health forced Isaac to leave the strenuous work of the Snyder County churches. In January, 1819, he moved his family to a four-charge circuit in the Lykens Valley of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. The parsonage was probably located at Millersburg.<sup>5</sup> As his health improved he was able to expand the circuit to eleven churches. He continued to serve these churches until 1843.<sup>6</sup>

Emanuel's early academic training took place under the careful supervision of his father.<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to determine when and under what circumstances he decided to enter the Christian ministry. There is no record of this information. We may surmise, however, that this important decision occurred with the encouragement of his parents.

### **Student Days at York and Mercersburg (1833-1841)**

When he was sixteen years old Emanuel enrolled in the Classical School of the Reformed Church at York. The school had been opened in 1831. A circular prepared by the trustees of the school described its philosophy. It read, in part:

We have now established in connection with the Seminary [then also located in York], a Classical School in which young men may be suitably prepared for admission into the Seminary, where they may obtain that preliminary instruction without which all their subsequent studies must ever be prosecuted under burdensome disadvantages and with irksome toil. We have a Classical School where the children of our lay brethren will be enabled to obtain such an education as will qualify them to pursue creditably the various callings of private and public life, or to engage in literary and scientific avocations, with all the advantages which minds early disciplined and well stored with fundamental truths must ever possess.<sup>8</sup>

In 1835 the Classical School was moved from York to Mercersburg, a small town in south-central Pennsylvania. In the same year

a committee of the trustees was appointed to petition the state legislature to recognize the institution as a college. The plan was to incorporate it as Marshall College in honor of the late Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall. The incorporation became a reality in 1836.<sup>9</sup>

During these years Emanuel was beginning to exhibit unusual scholarly and intellectual promise. We can trace the unfolding of his ability in the student notebooks he has left behind which cover the years 1833 to 1841.<sup>10</sup> The notebooks contain financial records of his student life, notes from some of the classes he attended, and original essays on a variety of subjects, e.g., ancient history, war, intemperance, and liberty. They indicate that he received basic instruction in Greek, Latin, history, philosophy, mathematics, and science. It has been suggested that with few exceptions the essays included in the notebooks were prepared for presentation to the Diagnothian Literary Society. Gerhart was a charter member of the society and remained one of its most enthusiastic supporters throughout his life.<sup>11</sup>

One of the notebooks lists a set of rules Gerhart adopted to guide his student life. Whether created by him or simply copied from another source the list is characteristic of the type of discipline he maintained throughout his life. He wrote:

2nd Make it a point to rise early . . . .

3d Accustom your thoughts to concentration in the particular subject of study . . . .

4th Let it be a rule to employ at least 12 hours of each day in close study.

5th Observe system in everything . . . .

6th Employ those hours which you have at your own disposal either in taking exercise, or in miscellaneous useful reading . . . .

7th Let your conduct always be dignified . . . .

8th Above all beware—yes, beware of the ladies . . . .

9th To conclude—let the acquirement of useful knowledge—and that only—be the prime object—be the sole object, of the student . . . .<sup>12</sup>

E. V. Gerhart was one of six students who graduated from Marshall College in 1838. One of his classmates later commented that he had displayed unusual talent in the sciences and philosophy during his college years. He was highly respected by his peers as one who was dedicated to sound learning.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Gerhart was a diligent student and applied himself closely to his studies. He seems to have had a clear conception of the object for which he came to college, and kept this steadily in view, as did his fellow-members of the class, all of them like himself, having the ministry in view.<sup>14</sup>

We cannot leave this stage of Gerhart's life without mentioning something about the teacher in the Classical School and Mar-

shall College who made a strong impression on the young student. He was Frederick Augustus Rauch.

Rauch was born in Germany in 1806. He studied at the University of Giessen, the University of Marburg, and later with the Faculty of Philosophy at Heidelberg University. He devoted much of his time to the study of the Greek and Latin classics. Unfortunate circumstances surrounding the procurement of a teaching position forced Rauch to leave Germany in 1831. He set sail for America where he hoped he would be free to pursue an unhampered academic career. After a brief teaching experience at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, he was offered the position of Principal in the newly organized Classical School of the Reformed Church. His qualifications for the post were beyond doubt. Rauch accepted the position and took up residence in York in 1832. When the school was moved to Mercersburg in 1835, Rauch accompanied it.<sup>15</sup> When Marshall College was incorporated he became its first President. He remained an influential teacher in both the college and the closely affiliated Theological Seminary, which moved to Mercersburg in 1837, until his untimely death in Mercersburg on March 2, 1841, at the age of thirty-four.<sup>16</sup>

Gerhart was one of Rauch's pupils from the time the latter arrived at the Classical School until his graduation from Marshall College. He had further work under Rauch in the seminary. At any rate, one can readily discern Gerhart's high regard for his teacher. He had determined that the contribution of Dr. Rauch to the institutions and students at Mercersburg would not be easily forgotten. Shortly after Rauch's death Gerhart wrote:

When pursuing his most profound speculations in the sphere of metaphysics, he never lost sight of the infallible standard of truth. To know that any conclusion or inference contradicted the Word of God, was always a sufficient cause for him to consider it groundless; and even too when he was unable to perceive the reason involved in its nature for pronouncing it false. Revelation was his touch-stone of moral truth. By it he examined the claims of every theory to belief. He set no value upon any disquisition that could not in one way or another be made subservient to Religion. Let us tread in his footsteps. His voice is now silent. We can no more listen to his lectures. His instructions have ended. As his memory is enshrined in our hearts, so let his spirit be exemplified in our lives.<sup>17</sup>

Later reflection brought forth this illuminating comment on Rauch's method of thought:

Rauch's prevailing method of thought was neither purely analytic nor purely synthetic, but elements of both were united in a genetic method. His analogies and illustrations were drawn from the realm of organized life, and from the growth of a plant rather than from the life of the animal.<sup>18</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that the large number of analogies and illustrations drawn from nature and used by Gerhart in his own writing may have been inspired by Rauch's pedagogical and literary style.<sup>19</sup>

An illustration of Gerhart's loyalty to Rauch occurred some years after his graduation from the Mercersburg institutions. It took place in connection with James Murdoch (1776-1856) who had published a book in 1842 titled, **Sketches of Modern Philosophy, especially among the Germans.**<sup>20</sup> One of the chapters in this volume attacked the thought of Rauch represented in his major work, **Psychology; or a view of the Human Soul: including Anthropology.**<sup>21</sup> Murdoch branded Rauch a "Transcendentalist and a Pantheist of the school of Hegel."<sup>22</sup> Murdoch called into question Rauch's right to be considered an evangelical Christian thinker. Gerhart interpreted Murdoch's attack not only as an assault on his deceased mentor, but also on his alma mater which had used Rauch's **Psychology** as a textbook for twenty years.<sup>23</sup>

In his informative examination of Rauch, Howard J. B. Ziegler has shown that Murdoch was correct in identifying Rauch's basic mode of thought as Hegelian.<sup>24</sup> Rauch was convinced that his Hegelian philosophy in no way excluded sound religious views. He shared with some of his continental contemporaries, e.g., Carl Daub, Philip Marheineke, and Karl Rosenkranz, the conviction that, "Hegelian Philosophy had a fundamental affinity with Christianity such as no other philosophy ever possessed."<sup>25</sup>

Gerhart was particularly troubled by Murdoch's assertion that Rauch's thought was incongruous with an evangelical Christian faith. He pointed out that two of Rauch's sermons printed in **The Mercersburg Review** adequately showed his evangelical spirit contrary to Murdoch's charges.<sup>26</sup> These sermons were not exceptions to the main stream of Rauch's philosophical and theological views. They were representative of his thought as a whole. Rauch taught, loved and died in the faith for which Murdoch asserted he had left little room. Rauch's view of the Christian faith was thoroughly evangelical. According to Gerhart his tutor's views in contrast to Murdoch's charges could be stated as follows:

The universe is not an emanation, but a creation. God has not flowed forth into man, but He is an objective personality, possessing infinite attributes. The highest revelation of God is given in Jesus Christ, who is the Savior from sin. Man is in a fallen condition, subject to the power of sin. Hence, he must be regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This can take place alone through faith in Christ; for faith is the soul of all religion. —Every point is fully sustained by the citations which we have adduced, when interpreted in their proper connection. Is this pantheism? Or do we not rather find in the allusions, recognitions and formal statements of Rauch's **Psychology**, both an assumption and a vindication of the Gospel of Christ, as held by the Presbyterian or Episcopal Church?<sup>27</sup>

Thus, in Gerhart's estimation, Dr. Murdoch's charges were "untenable and utterly groundless."<sup>28</sup>

In the same year that Gerhart published his critique of Murdoch he also edited and published a series of Rauch's addresses and sermons under the title, **The Inner Life of the Christian.**<sup>29</sup> More of Rauch's material, edited by Gerhart, was published later in **The**

There can be little doubt that E. V. Gerhart deeply respected Frederick Augustus Rauch. There was a reciprocation of this esteem which is evident in the following statement written by Rauch in 1839:

Mr. E. V. Gerhart is a graduate of Marshall College and has been a student in the Institutions of the German Reformed Church for more than six years. During this long connection with us his **gentlemanly and christian** deportment, his application and progress in science, and his generous and amiable character was such as to induce the Faculty to appoint him a Tutor in the Preparatory School of Marshall College. The warm affections of his Instructors will follow him through life with the most ardent wishes for his prosperity and usefulness.<sup>31</sup>

Upon his graduation from Marshall College in 1838 Emanuel V. Gerhart became a student in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at Mercersburg. At the time of his matriculation there were two professors teaching in the seminary, F. A. Rauch and Lewis Mayer. We have already noted the esteem Emanuel showed for Dr. Rauch. Unfortunately, however, he and Dr. Mayer were in disagreement over theological matters. Gerhart and four other students threatened to leave the seminary in 1839 because they believed that Mayer was in error concerning his views of the Trinity, the person of Christ, human depravity and the atonement.<sup>32</sup> There may have been additional reasons for the dissatisfaction of these students apart from doctrinal matters. Those, like Gerhart, who had been trained by Rauch were probably impatient with Mayer's slow and uninteresting lecture style. "Prof. Rauch was progressive and fresh in his teaching, up-to-date, ready with the latest views, while in the later period of his teaching, Dr. Mayer was non-progressive."<sup>33</sup> There was also a profound difference in philosophical approach between the two teachers. Mayer was grounded in the Lockean empiricism then popular in America. Rauch, of course, was schooled in Hegelian philosophy. This difference was a likely source of friction between Mayer and the students in Rauch's camp.<sup>34</sup> Though Gerhart and his fellow dissenters stayed on at the seminary, Dr. Mayer resigned in 1839 and spent the last ten years of his life quietly in York.

During the first year of his seminary work Gerhart held a teaching position in the "Female Seminary" in Mercersburg under the principalship of the widow of a seminary professor. In the fall of 1839 the trustees of Marshall College elected him to the position of Assistant Rector of the Preparatory Department. This department was chiefly designed to prepare students for the college as its name implies.<sup>35</sup> For two years he taught in both of these schools while he pursued his theological studies.<sup>36</sup>

Following Mayer's departure, John Williamson Nevin (1803-1886) was elected Professor of Theology in the seminary. Nevin, a Presbyterian, had been trained at Union College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He filled the Chair of Oriental and Biblical

Literature at Princeton Seminary from 1826 to 1828 while Professor Charles Hodge was studying abroad. Prior to his election to the faculty at Mercersburg in 1840 Nevin had been Professor of Biblical Literature at Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, since 1829.<sup>37</sup> Nevin brought with him to Mercersburg a considerable interest in German thought and a high regard for the German Reformed Church. He and Rauch were able to work together intimately until the latter's death about one year after they had first met. Nevin soon became a center of controversy in the Reformed Church when he published his anti-revivalist tract, **The Anxious Bench**, in 1842. The controversy surrounding him intensified and expanded when Nevin was joined by Philip Schaff (1819-1893) in 1844.<sup>38</sup> Together they promulgated what was called the Mercersburg Theology.<sup>39</sup>

Since Gerhart did not complete his theological studies until the fall of 1841 his student days overlapped Nevin's first year of teaching in the Theological Seminary. During this period there began a friendship between the two which grew over the years despite the fact that they were not always in theological agreement. Indicative of his admiration for Nevin is this passage written by Gerhart shortly after Nevin's death:

The secret of Dr. Nevin's notable history was his **godliness**. Great as he was in the different spheres of thought, he was still greater in the sphere of positive Christian faith. He has rendered manifold valuable services to the church into which he was transplanted, and his influence in the line of Christological Theology will tell upon generations yet unborn; but our chief cause for gratitude to God is this:—that in the course of His Providence He led into the fold of the Reformed Church a man of genuine spirituality, of godly simplicity, of moral heroism and of thoroughly upright character—a man along the pathway of whose life bloomed on either side the fragrant flowers of genuine goodness.<sup>40</sup>

The years of his schooling at York and Mercersburg were exceedingly important and gave Emanuel Gerhart the sound intellectual and scholarly foundation he would find useful for the balance of his life.

### **Teacher, Parish Minister and Missionary (1841-1851)**

Gerhart continued to teach in the Female Seminary and in the Preparatory Department of Marshall College after his seminary graduation. The **Weekly Messenger** notes that he was recommended by the synod Committee on Examination for a license to preach shortly after his degree was granted. The recommendation was adopted.<sup>41</sup> Gerhart described another facet of his activities following the licensing:

... I was required during my last year to take my turn in preaching before the students on Sunday morning. These services were held in the old Stone Church, owned jointly by the Reformed and the Lutherans, and situated on a back street at the western end of Mercersburg.<sup>42</sup>

During the latter part of May, 1842, Gerhart was received into the membership of the Classis of Mercersburg.<sup>43</sup> Within a few weeks he received and accepted a call to serve the Grindstone Hill charge in Franklin County. The charge consisted of four congregations.<sup>44</sup> He was not ordained and installed as their pastor until Sunday, August 24, 1842. Throughout the summer he fulfilled his teaching responsibilities at the two schools in Mercersburg and served the churches on the weekends. In September, at the close of the academic year, he resigned from his teaching positions to give his time entirely to the churches.<sup>45</sup>

On January 3, 1843, Emanuel was married to Eliza A. Rickenbaugh, a minister's daughter from Hagerstown, Maryland. The ceremony was conducted by Gerhart's friend and former teacher, John Williamson Nevin.<sup>46</sup> There is no information about Emanuel's courtship of Eliza or about her personal background.

Emanuel resigned from the Grindstone Hill charge around May 1, 1843, in order to accept a call to become pastor of the Gettysburg charge. His pastorate in Gettysburg lasted until 1849. We have an accurate record of Gerhart's last year in Gettysburg through the year 1850 and for the years 1854 through 1857 and 1859 through 1864 because his personal diaries for those years have been preserved.<sup>47</sup> The diaries contain a few lines written on each day of the year. There is frequent reference to Gerhart's physical condition, to his pastoral duties including the preparation of sermons, and to the books and articles which he read.

A typical entry indicates the tempo of Gerhart's pastoral activity in Gettysburg:

Friday, Apr. 2, 1849. Split wood before breakfast. Attending my horse till after 9. Wrote and studied. Baptized Mr. Miller's child at my house. Lectured on the suffering and death of Christ. Baptized Dr. Vandersloot's child. Home at 9. Got ready to start to Fayetteville. O Lord, go with me, keep me and help me.

The diaries show that Gerhart regularly read the denominational newspaper, **The Weekly Messenger of the German Reformed Church**, to which he later contributed much of his own writing. In addition he was a constant reader of **The Mercersburg Review**, the quarterly theological journal through which Nevin, Schaff and their companions circulated the views of the Mercersburg Theology, the **Kirchenfreund**, a German-language periodical edited by Schaff, and other theological literature. Gerhart's interest in theological study was constantly alive and stirring during his pastoral ministry as his diaries show.

The German Reformed congregation in Cincinnati, Ohio, issued a call to Gerhart to become its pastor which he received on April 9, 1849.<sup>48</sup> A week later he received an appointment from the Domestic Mission Board of the Reformed Church to become a missionary agent serving the Cincinnati congregation.<sup>49</sup> He struggled with the decision concerning these proposals. Finally, he wrote:

In the fear of God [I] determined to accept the appointment of the Board and call from [the] Congregation.<sup>50</sup> . . . .

With much pain [I] announced [to the Gettysburg congregation] my determination to go to Cincinnati; [the] people wept.<sup>51</sup>

A letter printed in **The Weekly Messenger of the German Reformed Church** described the circumstances and apprehensions associated with the move from Gettysburg to Cincinnati. Being delayed in traveling to Cincinnati because of a cholera epidemic there Gerhart wrote:

I left Gettysburg on the third of July, intending to make a short visit among my relatives before starting to Cincinnati. On the previous Sabbath I preached my last sermons to the loved people of my charge, among whom I had been laboring in holy things for more than six years. The last three years especially of this period of my ministry were passed very pleasantly and the evidences of usefulness seemed to be increasing. At no previous time had I more decided indications of the affection and confidence of the people, and consequently less personal inclination to remove, than when I tendered my resignation. As regards my charge therefore, I leave with feelings of pain and regret . . . . Of the prospects of the missionary enterprise which I have been induced to undertake, I cannot now speak with much definiteness. All I know is, that Cincinnati is a most important and promising field of labor . . . .<sup>52</sup>

The diaries and another printed letter tell the story of the actual journey to Cincinnati.<sup>53</sup> Gerhart and his family finally arrived at their destination on Saturday, August 25, 1849. The next day he located his church, was heartily welcomed by the people, and preached his first sermon to them.<sup>54</sup> On Monday he and his family moved into the parsonage.<sup>55</sup> He described some of his early pastoral duties in Cincinnati as follows:

I preach every Sabbath in the forenoon and evening in the German language. Besides I superintend the Sabbath School . . . . I conduct a prayer-meeting every Tuesday evening in the Church, which is well attended. On Friday evening, I meet a Bible-class which I commenced about the middle of September, at which from ten to twenty attend.<sup>56</sup>

A peculiar theological crisis developed in Cincinnati just prior to Gerhart's arrival. James I. Good describes the situation as follows:

Many of the Germans there were rationalists. The tendency there was toward the unionistic idea—the founding, not of a Reformed or Lutheran Church, but of an Evangelical or Union Church, such as had existed in Germany since 1817. It was proposed to transplant the Evangelical Church of Germany to America. Therefore most of the German churches in Cincinnati were Union (or, as they called them, Evangelical) churches. But as they were neither Lutheran or Reformed, they soon became almost anything. Their pastors soon went off into rationalism and the congregations followed.<sup>57</sup>

Gerhart characterized the rationalism he discovered in Cincinnati as a rejection of the plenary inspiration of the Bible, the total depravity of human nature, justification by faith, the divinity of Christ, and the vicarious atonement.<sup>58</sup>

Shortly before he commenced his own ministry with the Reformed congregation in Cincinnati there had been an attempt to

introduce a "semi-rationalistic" catechism into its life.<sup>59</sup> Gerhart severely criticized the rationalist position. For example, he was very unhappy with the way in which the rationalists found it easy to set Jesus' words in the Gospels, interpreted by individual reason, over against the rest of the biblical writers. He wrote:

The norm of all religious truth [for the rationalists] is not the Bible as interpreted by the general Church, but the words of Jesus Christ as recorded by the Evangelists. The language of Christ is subject to the reason of every individual. Every individual is at liberty to interpret it according to his best judgment. And his interpretation must be allowed to be the proper faith. He possesses what is requisite to salvation. Whatever sentiment or opinion, in the writings of the prophets and Apostles, that corresponds with his interpretation of the actual words that fell from the lips of Christ, may be received as truth; but whatever contradicts or differs from it, has no claim to confidence, and should be rejected as an error, to which these writers were as liable, all things being equal, as other fallible men.<sup>60</sup>

Gerhart was successful in building up his congregation in Cincinnati despite the poverty of its members. They could not even afford to purchase Bibles and literature for the church school.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, their size increased and they became very attached to their pastor.<sup>62</sup> While ministering to them Gerhart made two missionary journeys under the direction of the Board of Domestic Missions. The first trip was carried out in the fall of 1849 and took him through Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky, exploring the need for new congregations. He traveled 1850 miles on this excursion.<sup>63</sup> A second journey took place in 1850 and carried him farther west. The Cincinnati pastorate and missionary endeavors were interrupted in the spring of 1851 when Gerhart was offered an opportunity to enter the field of theological education. That field was to occupy the remainder of his life. Before we move on to consider that new stage in his life we must acknowledge once again the practical experience of the pastorate and mission work in which he had proven to be more than a disinterested scholar merely waiting for the most attractive offer to teach.

Dr. Gerhart, as a pastor, was large-hearted and sympathetic. He cherished a warm and abiding interest in the spiritual advancement of his people and was willing to serve them, to the best of his ability, for Christ's sake.<sup>64</sup>

### **College President and Seminary Professor (1851-1855)**

Following several years of difficulty and controversy the Ohio Synod of the Reformed Church was able to establish a college and seminary at Tiffin, Ohio, in 1851. These institutions, closely allied, bore the name Heidelberg College and Theological Seminary. Their major purpose was to supply a properly educated ministry for the expanding church in the west. B. S. Schneck was elected to the chair of theology of the seminary, but he declined the appointment. The synod then elected its own President, Emanuel V. Gerhart, to the

post of President of Heidelberg College and Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary.<sup>65</sup> The election of Gerhart was hailed as an event of great promise for the future of the institutions at Tiffin.<sup>66</sup> The news was disheartening, however, to Gerhart's Cincinnati congregation.<sup>67</sup>

Gerhart and his family moved to Tiffin in May, 1851, and he immediately took up the duties of his office. His formal inauguration took place on Monday, September 29, 1851. The title of his inaugural address was, "Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words."<sup>68</sup> Gerhart used the occasion to speak a warning to the church. He said:

What is the church now? The candlestick has, it is true, not been removed from all her places, but alas! the wickedness of infidelity and the insidious errors of rationalism have sapped her foundations and put out her light in some of the most lovely portions of her spiritual dominion.<sup>69</sup>

Gerhart argued that the church must not turn from the challenge which faced it. It must strengthen the love of its people for the scriptures and the evangelical truth of the Heidelberg Catechism.<sup>70</sup> Heidelberg Seminary must lead the way by teaching young men that Christ must be at the center of human life and the church's activity. ". . . the knowledge of Christ [is] the key to all correct knowledge of the doctrines, duties and ordinances embraced in the Christian Religion."<sup>71</sup> In this respect,

The Heidelberg Catechism is not only a system of religion in which Christ occupies a central position and sustains an organic relation to every point of the periphery, but it also exhibits religion under a concrete form—in the way in which it lives and works in the hearts and lives of those who are renewed by the Holy Ghost.<sup>72</sup>

The new President devoted himself to building up both the college and seminary, though his work in the latter occupied more of his time during the earlier days of his administration. He taught courses in dogmatics, homiletics, church history, Christian Evidences, Old Testament and New Testament Introduction in the seminary. He also taught logic, ethics, psychology, German and natural philosophy in the college. Despite the heavy teaching schedule he still found time for participation in community affairs and for the preparation of sermons, articles and public addresses.<sup>73</sup>

There were tangible results of his labor. In 1852 the cornerstone of the college's new academic building was laid. Shortly after it was occupied a library was established and a presidential house constructed. Enrollments in both the college and the seminary increased noticeably. In May, 1854, the synod's Committee on the Theological Seminary was able to report:

Prof. E. V. Gerhart, in full confidence of the entire Church, still continues to perform the duties devolving upon his office faithfully and earnestly. Eight students will be dismissed from the Seminary this summer, prepared for the office of the Gospel ministry.<sup>74</sup>

Gerhart proved to be a capable administrator, an excellent teacher, and an educator sincerely interested in students. Of the greatest

importance was his influence among the students. One of them wrote:

If I had never received a word of instruction from Dr. Gerhart in the classroom I should ever feel indebted to him for the invaluable lesson he taught me by his reverent manner of conducting the service in the sanctuary. Despite his mild manner he was constant and flexible in purpose. He surpassed as a preacher. In his delivery he was calm and easy, without excessive gesture, never offending by awkwardness or lack of propriety. He spoke fluently without notes, in the style of the classroom, his presentation was clear, logical and forcible.<sup>75</sup>

During Gerhart's tenure at Heidelberg there were important events occurring in the eastern section of the Reformed Church. The most important of these was the controversy surrounding the growing influence of the Mercersburg Theology under the leadership of Nevin and Schaff. This controversy, of course, was also felt in the western portion of the church, but not as intensely at first.

Related to the doctrinal questions raised by the Mercersburg Theology was the question of the liturgical practices employed by the Reformed Church. The major issue in question was whether there was a need to modify the older liturgies of the church, especially the Palatinate liturgy which had been the most commonly used, or to replace the older practices with a new liturgy. The Eastern Synod of 1849 appointed a committee to study the problem. It recommended the formulation of a new liturgy and a committee to draw up a proposal. Gerhart and other representatives of the Ohio Synod were appointed to work with the liturgical committee of the Eastern Synod in 1853. Gerhart occupied an important role in the work of this group. The result of the committee's labor was the "Provisional Liturgy" completed in 1857. When this proposed liturgy was published it set off a serious struggle between those who favored more formal liturgical practices, represented by the "Provisional Liturgy," and those who did not. Gerhart found himself in the middle of the swirling liturgical debate. It provided the opportunity to refine some of his own ideas about worship and the sacraments.<sup>76</sup>

Another incident of importance, especially to Gerhart, was the merger of his alma mater, Marshall College, with Franklin College located in Lancaster. Although the incorporation of the merged colleges was approved in 1850 the union was not actually effected until January 25, 1853, when the trustees of Franklin and Marshall College gathered for their initial meeting.<sup>77</sup> James Buchanan, later President of the United States, was elected President of the Board of Trustees.

It had been agreed that Franklin and Marshall College would be located in Lancaster. It was to open there for the spring session of 1853. This decision sadly terminated the relationship between the college of the Reformed Church and the town of Mercersburg. The Theological Seminary, however, remained at Mercersburg until 1871. The trustees of the college encountered some difficulty in



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the selection of a president for the new institution. John Williamson Nevin was offered the position. He declined, partly for reasons of health, but mostly because of his own personal intellectual struggles. Philip Schaff was the next choice of the board, but he was forced to decline when the synod refused to allow him to relinquish his seminary chair. Finally, the trustees turned to one who had proven himself to be a capable scholar and college administrator. They elected Emanuel Vogel Gerhart.<sup>78</sup>

Gerhart recorded his reaction to the election in his diary on

This forenoon [I] received official information of my unanimous election to the Presidency of Franklin and Marshall College. An incidental allusion by Dr. Bomberger to this subject, to which I made no definite reply, was the only indication that any one thought of me. O for wisdom from on high to direct me? Am I qualified? Can I elevate the institution? Can I govern it? Will it be right to resign my present post? Yet how shall I live honestly, as my expenses annually exceed my income? O Lord, help me to ascertain thy will concerning me!

It took six weeks for Emanuel to make his final decision to accept or reject the presidency. He had engaged in prayer, visited Lancaster to examine the situation, and sought the advice of his friends. After weighing the circumstances carefully he decided to accept the position. In one of the most lengthy and important diary entries he cited his reasons. Since this entry is crucial in understanding Gerhart at this juncture of his life it must be quoted at length:

1. The Eastern Church is the body or trunk of the German Reformed Church in America; the Western Church is a great branch. The principal work of the Church is to be done at present in the East. . . .
2. The dependence of the Eastern Church is on Franklin and Marshall College. The Seminary will be efficient in proportion as the College furnishes men. . . .
3. This College has been suffering from various causes. Dr. N[evin] has been too severe upon Protestantism; and felt too favorable towards the Roman Catholic Church. It has never been manned by the fathers and sons of the Church; but mostly by strangers, who were not in living sympathy with the people of our Church. . . .
4. . . . its prospects of success are better than before. It has a better location. It has more funds. It has more alumni. . . .
5. My unanimous election [is another factor]. . . . I have taken pains to enquire and as far as I discover, the election is cordially sustained throughout the Church. I must consequently regard the election as determined by the Providence of God.
6. This College is my mother. Whatever I am intellectually, morally, or spiritually I owe, next to my parents, in the Providence of God to this institution. . . .
7. The imprudence of Dr. Nevin has given occasion (though without sufficient ground) to Protestant denominations to fix upon us the charge of Romanizing tendencies. Strong prejudices are excited against us. Our enemies take hold of Dr. Nevin's imprudences and seek to destroy confidence in our Church and in Franklin and Marshall College. If I accept, this charge must die. My unanimous election evinces the fidelity of our Church to Protestant principles; for as far as I know I am regarded by those who are acquainted with me, as free from any predilections toward Romanism; and as sincerely devoted to sound Protestantism.
8. My labors in Tiffin are so numerous and various, my cares and trials so perplexing, that I find but little time to prosecute my philosophical, biblical, and theological studies; and in consequence I can do but little towards advancing any branch of science. . . . My location at Lancaster will afford me a better opportunity to do some of this work than I have ever had.
9. During the first three years of my residence in Tiffin ending

June 1, 1854, my aggregate current expenses have been \$565.59 more than the aggregate of my salary. In order to live I have been compelled to perform a great deal of extra labor, whilst my duties as Professor of Theology and President of the College are sufficient to occupy the time of two men. . . . How shall I sustain myself? How shall I pay my debts? My family is increasing; the clothing, education, etc., of my children are becoming more expensive. The cost of living is rising. . . . In consequence I have at times been forced to resist the temptation to enter upon a secular vocation temporarily.

10. My election has been the subject of frequent and earnest prayer. . . . Now I find that a sense of obligation to yield to the call is awakened in my bosom. . . . Such inclination, after having used all the means in my power to acquire accurate information and after carefully reflecting on the matter in all its relations, I believe is an answer to my prayer for divine guidance.

These reasons, not any single one, but all taken together, have brought me to the conclusion that it is my duty to accept the call to the Presidency of Franklin and Marshall College.<sup>79</sup>

The letter of acceptance was written on September 20, 1854. However, Gerhart and his family did not move to Lancaster until April 4, 1855. In the meantime he completed his academic and administrative duties at Heidelberg.

### At Franklin and Marshall College (1855-1868)

Upon his arrival in Lancaster Gerhart was met by a small group of his friends, Philip Schaff, professors Thomas C. Porter and Theodore Apple, and Henry Harbaugh. If he had been met simply by these friends and co-workers in the college and Reformed Church Gerhart would have been pleased. He was also confronted, however, by some perplexing problems which called for his immediate attention. Not the least of these was a partially constructed college building, the completion of which was jeopardized by the prospective insolvency of the contractor. There was also the resentment of many of the Marshall College alumni that Lancaster had been selected over Mercersburg as the site for the new institution.<sup>80</sup>

The inauguration of the new President took place on July 25, 1855. Referring to Gerhart's inaugural address the **German Reformed Messenger** said:

This was ably written and well delivered, and embodied a full discussion of the fundamental principle which should underlie and control a proper collegiate education. The address furnished abundant evidence, that the Trustees were not mistaken in their choice, when they called President Gerhart to preside over the institution committed to their care.<sup>81</sup>

Gerhart entered into his new position with the vitality and dedication which had marked his administration at Heidelberg. He was not only the chief administrator at Franklin and Marshall, but

also the Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy. Anxious to further his knowledge and competence as an educator he journeyed into the New England states to visit presidents and professors at Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth, Amherst, Yale and Union Theological Seminary. The diaries record that this trip began October 29, 1855, and ended on November 15, 1855. Aside from registering newly acquired insights into college administration the diaries of this period give brief reactions to theological conditions in New England as he found them.

Among the highlights of Gerhart's first year at Franklin and Marshall were the completion of the college building which was dedicated on May 16, 1856, and the development of a new endowment program for the college. The booklet which he wrote to publicize the details of the endowment program informed the reader of the needs of the college and proposed a financial campaign to fulfill these needs.<sup>82</sup> The needs included new facilities, additions to the faculty, smaller classes, increased faculty salaries, an enlarged library, and additional science equipment. An endowment fund of \$100,000 would insure the satisfaction of these requirements.<sup>83</sup> Aside from private and church gifts Gerhart proposed the sale of 800 four-year tuition scholarships at fifty dollars each which would supply endowment capital and offer a substantial saving to the purchaser since this amount was only half of the current tuition charge.<sup>84</sup> He presented a very persuasive argument especially directed to German farmers concerning why they should seek an education for themselves and their children. Education was important if they were to enjoy equal civil rights and privileges in America. The purchase of Franklin and Marshall scholarships would be an important step toward the realization of this educational goal.<sup>85</sup> In an earlier section of the booklet Gerhart had described the educational philosophy of the college under his direction:

We regard the religion of Christ as lying at the foundation of all sound doctrine. . . . Hence we teach the religion of Christ. The students are assembled in the Chapel every day for religious worship, consisting of singing, reading the Scriptures and prayer. This exercise occupies about twenty minutes. They are assembled once on Sunday, when regular public worship is conducted by one of the Professors. There is also an hour set apart on Sunday for special religious instruction for all those students who may choose to attend. In the Recitation Room we endeavor to carry forward each department of study in the light of the Word of God, and under the guidance of firm faith in Christ, as the way, the truth and the life; seeking to make all knowledge contribute to the formation of moral and Christian character.<sup>86</sup>

Gerhart personally shouldered the heavy financial burdens of the college. One source of financial embarrassment was forced by the Marshall alumni who insisted that the beautiful literary society halls which marked the Mercersburg campus be refashioned on the Lancaster site. The halls were built, but the Diognothian and Goethean societies could not bear the financial strain of their construction and maintenance. In order to prevent foreclosure on the halls Gerhart traveled from one congregation to another for months

seeking gifts which were sometimes so small they did not warrant the expenditure of his labor.

In spite of the demand of administrative duties Gerhart managed to collect and edit the volume of Rauch's addresses and sermons to which reference has been made above. This was published in the latter part of 1856. In 1857 he published his first book titled, **An Introduction to the Study of Philosophy with an Outline treatise on Logic.**<sup>87</sup> Although this volume did contain Gerhart's free translation of Beck's work on logic which had been published in Stuttgart in 1845 it also included much of Gerhart's own original material. It was dedicated, "To the memory of Frederick Augustus Rauch, who first led the author into the regions of thought in the faith of Jesus Christ . . . ."<sup>88</sup> The volume, written as a college text, met with diverse criticism.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, it became the earliest fundamental statement of Gerhart's basic thought. Emanuel also agreed to edit **The Mercersburg Review** with Philip Schaff in 1857. They announced that the journal would remain based on the Apostles' Creed, the "Christological principle," and the Heidelberg Catechism. It would continue to oppose rationalism and would devote itself to being the exponent of Anglo-German evangelical theology.<sup>90</sup> Gerhart remained editor until **The Mercersburg Review** was forced to interrupt publication for the Civil War. It resumed publication in 1867, but Gerhart did not reoccupy an editorial role. During the period of his editorship, however, he contributed more than fifty book reviews and nine major articles to its pages. He also wrote an important monograph which described the history of the German Reformed Church and defended the Mercersburg Theology which Gerhart himself had come to adopt.<sup>91</sup>

In 1857 Jefferson College presented Emanuel V. Gerhart with the honorary degree, Doctor of Divinity. Jefferson, located at Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, was a Presbyterian institution.<sup>92</sup>

In the meantime Franklin and Marshall continued to struggle for its life. In spite of persistent financial crises it somehow managed to remain open. There was justifiable doubt concerning the future of the college when the Civil War began in 1861. Would the financial pressures increase? Would there be an adequate supply of students?

Gerhart reported the state of affairs at Franklin and Marshall after the outbreak of hostilities. The students were resolved to support the Constitution and the Union. Although they were hostile toward the secessionists they treated loyal southerners kindly. On various occasions soldiers were quartered in the college building. Classes were held even when soldiers with pneumonia and other illnesses were being cared for in the halls of the building.<sup>93</sup> In a stirring patriotic article Gerhart asserted his own views that the sword could not be put down until the rebellion against the Union had been crushed.<sup>94</sup>

During the troublesome war years Gerhart continued to serve

the college, the Reformed Church and his country. On October 15, 1862, he was elected to a one year term as President of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church which met at Chambersburg amid unusual circumstances.

Just as the meeting of Synod approached, there was a general exodus of citizens from Chambersburg. The Rebels were in Hagerstown. The battle of Antietam relieved Maryland of the Rebel army. Five days before the Synod met, Stuart rode into Chambersburg and declared the citizens his prisoners. After Stuart's departure, Synod met in the town which four days before was occupied by a Rebel force of 1800 men, and continued its sessions for eight days.<sup>95</sup>

When Lee's abortive campaign thrust into Pennsylvania in 1863 and threatened the city of Lancaster the students at Franklin and Marshall were dismissed by the faculty. Gerhart described the confusion in the city and the flow of "refugees" through its streets on June 28, 1863.<sup>96</sup> He took part in urging men to enlist in the army. On July 1, 1863, he received news that an important battle was being fought at Gettysburg. On Monday, July 6, 1863 he joined a company of people who drove seven wagons loaded with medical supplies to the battle field at Gettysburg. He later wrote:

... on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I ministered to the wounded in the town [of Gettysburg] and camp hospitals. Indescribable want and suffering. Great neglect by the surgical department of U. S. On Friday leave Gettysburg on top of cars and come to York by 10 p.m.<sup>97</sup>

Tragedy struck the Gerhart household when Eliza died on January 14, 1864 after an illness of one year. She was forty-two. Three children survived her marriage with Emanuel: William R., who became a "solicitor of patents" in Lancaster; Robert L., who distinguished himself as a minister in the Reformed Church; and Virginia, an art teacher in Lancaster." In August, 1865, Emanuel married Mrs. Mary M. Hunter, a widow from Reading. Their union was not to last a year. On July 18, 1866, she died in Lancaster.<sup>99</sup> Both of these unfortunate events produced a great amount of personal distress for Emanuel and his children.

After the war Franklin and Marshall was able to emerge from financial danger. The Endowment Fund finally reached its goal of \$100,000. However, there was a new source of concern. The number of students enrolled in the college had decreased steadily during the war years. Undoubtedly the war itself had played a role in this condition. So had the rivalry of a new college at Mercersburg which owed its existence to the friends of Marshall College who had never been favorable to the merger and relocation in Lancaster. The trustees took immediate measures to stimulate the enrollment of new students. It was recommended that a preparatory school be established similar to the one of Mercersburg which had successfully provided students for Marshall College. It was also decided that the curriculum and faculty had to be reorganized. In 1866 the trustees of Franklin and Marshall moved in the direction of reorganization by electing John Williamson

Nevin President of the college and Professor of the Philosophy of History and Aesthetics. Nevin had been a professor at Franklin and Marshall since 1861. After Nevin declined the office of President, Gerhart persuaded him to reconsider indicating his willingness to assume a subordinate position. Apparently this was decisive in Nevin's final acceptance.<sup>100</sup> The trustees attempted to show that the change of chief administrators was not to be interpreted as a negative reflection on Gerhart's ability. They passed the following:

**Resolved**, that in the selection now made for the first chair in the Faculty of the College, we most explicitly disclaim the slightest reflection upon the administrative capacity, the literary ability, or full qualifications in every respect, of the Reverend Dr. Gerhart, the present incumbent of the chair. On the contrary, we esteem it a privilege to bear testimony to the wisdom, fidelity and efficiency with which he has always discharged the governmental functions of his office; as well as to the learning and rare skill in imparting knowledge and educating young men which he has displayed with such entire satisfaction in his professorate, during his twelve years of service as President of the College, and as incumbent of the important chair of Mental and Moral Science.<sup>101</sup>

In an address delivered at the opening of the academic year of 1866 Gerhart made the following remarks about the administrative reorganization:

My personal relations to Dr. Nevin have not only been fraternal but in every respect agreeable. Nothing has occurred to limit my proper freedom or render my position as President of the College in any wise uncomfortable. Yet I confess to some degree of embarrassment in my own mind which arose from a sense of the seeming impropriety that one who was my Professor in the Theological Seminary who had been President of Marshall College for twelve years and my immediate predecessor in office, and had been the first choice of the new Board when Franklin and Marshall was organized, should now occupy a place subordinate to myself. In this view of the case, it would have been a relief not to be President of the College at an earlier day; yet as my position, though peculiar, was established by others to whose judgment I had to defer, I could not reconcile it with my sense of duty to resign my office and accept an offer to serve the Church in another sphere. . . .

The relation of the Rev. Dr. Nevin to this College is different from that which any other man occupies. The College received the general type of its character from the first President, Dr. Rauch. Following him as President and serving for twelve years, Dr. Nevin developed and matured this type of thinking in its relations to antagonistic systems prevailing in philosophy and theology, and was the leader in the great controversies that sprung out of this moral movement. He exerted thus a moulding power upon the College and the Reformed Church which is deep and distinctive, and acquired an influence which is peculiar to himself. . . .

. . . the desire to place him in the most prominent and influential position was both natural and proper. In view of these considerations, I have not only acquiesced in the proposed change in the Presidency, but at the proper time and place did my part in effecting the change.<sup>102</sup>

Gerhart was to remain at Franklin and Marshall until 1868 completing a thirteen year association with the college. During this

period of his life he had exhibited further indications of his talents as an academician, administrator, church leader, and theologian. He was excellently qualified to accept the important position which called him away from the college in Lancaster.

### **Professor and President of the Theological Seminary (1868-1904)**

As previously noted the Theological Seminary had remained in Mercersburg when Marshall College moved to Lancaster to merge with Franklin College in 1853. The seminary had been able to preserve its reputation as an academic institution of high quality. The devoted and capable scholars who served on its faculty were keys to its continuing prestige. One of these men, Henry Harbaugh (1817-1867), was very capable. A theologian, philosopher, church historian, and poet, Harbaugh was elected Professor of Didactic and Practical Theology in 1864. His untimely death three years later left an opening in the faculty which demanded a man of sound thought and outstanding scholarship. A special session of the Eastern Synod was held in Harrisburg on March 3-4, 1868, in order to select a successor. Emanuel V. Gerhart was chosen.<sup>103</sup> Gerhart accepted the professorship and moved to Mercersburg. He was inaugurated on October 26, 1868. The title of his address on that occasion was, "The Historical Element in Theology."<sup>104</sup>

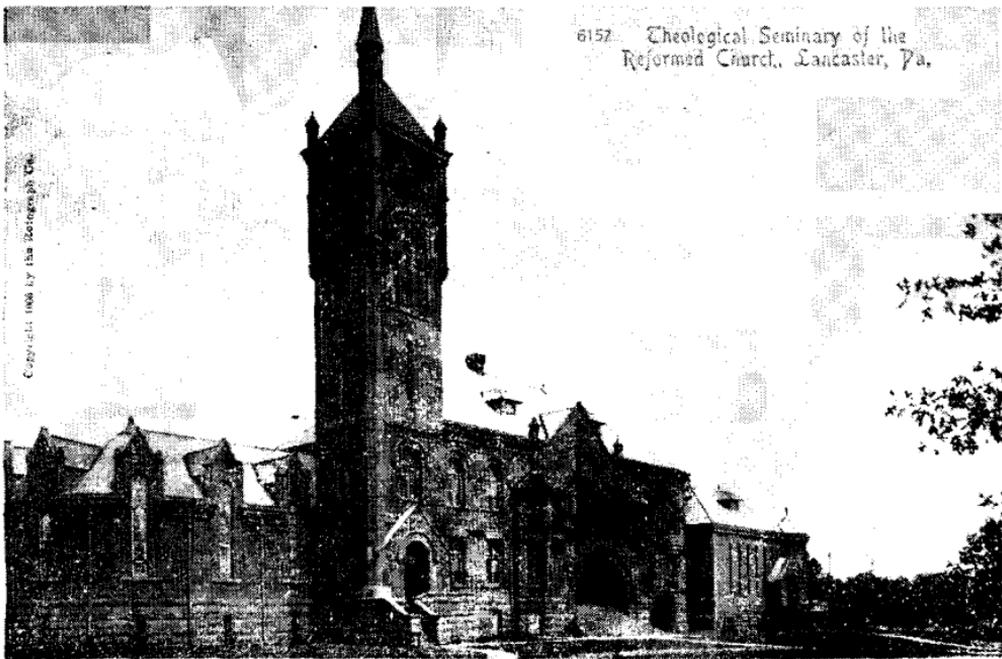
In the inaugural address Gerhart tried to make plain his belief that history is not only concrete, but also progressive. Each age becomes the basis of another which succeeds it. In terms of the development of theology this means that, **"the doctrinal position of any past age, cannot be made by itself the standard of sound doctrine for all future time, by a deliberate purpose of the Church."**<sup>105</sup> The churches which trace their origins to the Reformation cannot simply reproduce or employ the exact forms of sixteenth century faith and practice. The Protestant reformers never considered themselves the possessors of the last word or expression of the truth. Each new generation must assume its responsibility to bring about, "a purer and fuller development, and a better articulation of the revealed truth taught and believed in all previous periods of Church history."<sup>106</sup>

In 1869 Gerhart was elected President of the General Synod of the Reformed Church. During his term of office he was accused of being partisan in his rulings and in the appointment of committees.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, he proved a strong and fair leader through continuing controversy surrounding theological and liturgical questions. He was not adverse to disagreements emerging in the General Synod as we see from the following statement:

Controversy may indeed go on, nor is it at all desirable that it should stop, the issues being fundamental and, therefore, of cardinal importance, but conducted in the spirit of Christian love and confidence,

each side will be better qualified to respect and appreciate the views of the other, and the result cannot fail to be real gain to the theology and practical piety of the whole Church.<sup>108</sup>

Gerhart seemed firmly confident that given time and testing the theological and liturgical differences within the Reformed Church could be reconciled.<sup>109</sup>



Theological Seminary building erected 1893-1894 and still used. Santee Chapel is at left. The new Philip Schaff Library is located in front of the old library at far right.

Shortly after assuming his professorship at the seminary Gerhart was elected President of the Faculty, a position he held until the time of his death. As President he was an influential voice in the decision to move the seminary from Mercersburg to Lancaster in September, 1871. This change of location was effected with little opposition from any quarter of the church. Until its own building was constructed the seminary used the facilities of Franklin and Marshall. The college also provided some faculty members for the understaffed seminary for a brief period.

On December 29, 1875, Gerhart was married for the third time. His bride was Lucia D. Cobb, eldest daughter of Asahel Cobb, a Congregationalist minister from Sandwich, Massachusetts.<sup>110</sup> Lucia was to survive her husband, but while he lived she proved to be a fitting companion. The **Reformed Church Messenger** later said of her:

She joined heartily in the literary work of Dr. Gerhart, and followed

him with interest in his extensive reading in philosophy and theology as well as in works of a lighter vein. Her home on campus was a center of social life, and many a parting guest of distinction bore away precious recollections of warm hospitality dispensed with dignity and grace.<sup>111</sup>

The years at Lancaster proved to be exceptionally satisfying and productive for Gerhart. In recognition of his exceptional scholarship and devoted service to the Reformed Church and its educational institutions, Franklin and Marshall awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on June 23, 1887.<sup>112</sup> Gerhart was busily engaged in writing during this period. He contributed almost one hundred articles to the **Reformed Church Messenger** and more than thirty to **The Mercersburg Review** and its successors, **The Reformed Quarterly Review** and **The Reformed Church Review**. The most important of his printed works was the two-volume systematic theology titled, **The Institutes of the Christian Religion**. The first volume appeared in 1891, the second in 1894.<sup>113</sup> Some have said that these volumes not only summed up Gerhart's own theological thought, but also served as the fullest doctrinal expression of the **Mercersburg Theology**.<sup>114</sup>

The **Institutes** is a substantial work which contains more than 1600 pages. It examines the principal doctrines of Christianity from a Christological perspective, a methodology which Gerhart insisted on from the earlier days of his theological labors. Philip Schaff wrote the introduction at the request of Gerhart. He had written Schaff, "Among my life-long friends there is no scholar who is so widely known in America & Great Britain as yourself—none who could more effectively bespeak attention to the book, and awaken the presumption that it is deserving at least of serious consideration."<sup>115</sup> Though reviewers of the **Institutes** did not always agree with the theological positions taken in it they were generally complimentary in their reviews. There was general agreement among them that the **Institutes** made a unique contribution to American theological literature.<sup>116</sup> This opinion was not unchallenged particularly by some of the conservative leaders of the Reformed Church whose anti-Mercersburg views prompted their dissent. James I. Good, for example, alleges that the publication of the **Institutes** dealt the death blow to any merger of the Reformed Church with the Dutch Reformed Church. Conversations concerning union of the two denominations had been in progress for almost a century. Gerhart's views, according to Good, put an end to any serious negotiations because they were thought to be too Arminian by some of the Dutch Reformed Calvinists.<sup>117</sup>

The Theological Seminary at Lancaster grew under Gerhart's leadership and continued to supply ministers for the Reformed Church. There can be no doubt that he exercised a significant influence among the young men he taught in the classroom. One discovers numerous statements from his former students which point to this fact.<sup>118</sup> He also remained an effective preacher. The following description of his homiletical style was written by one who

listened to him often:

His delivery is calm, easy, without much gesture save of the hands, and while some would prefer more vigor or gesticulation, and more "fire" in delivery, he never offends by undue violence, awkwardness or lack of propriety. There is nothing superficial in his manner, or in his thought. . . . His sermons are delivered without notes, and his thoughts are clothed in language remarkable for fitness and accuracy, of which flow is even and smooth. . . . His preaching is positive rather than negative. . . . It is this emphasis upon the positive which enables him to use the Heidelberg Catechism in his sermons with so much force.<sup>119</sup>

Pen, pulpit and classroom were complemented by Gerhart's constant influence in synod and committee. In 1886 he was again elected President of the Eastern Synod.<sup>120</sup> In 1896, at the age of seventy-nine, he traveled to Scotland as a delegate to the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance which met in Glasgow. On the same trip he toured through England, France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Belgium, impressing his traveling companions with his keen mental and physical vitality.<sup>121</sup>

Gerhart's remarkable health began to wane at the turn of the century, but he continued to teach and administer the seminary until 1904. He was almost eighty-seven years of age when he requested the Eastern Synod to grant him retirement status as Professor and President Emeritus of the seminary. Before the synod could grant his request Gerhart suffered a nearly fatal accident on the steps leading into the seminary building. A package of books which he carried under his arm prevented serious injury by cushioning a fall. Within three days, possibly weakened by the fall, he became gravely ill and continued to grow worse until death came on May 6, 1904.<sup>122</sup>

## Conclusion

Gerhart's death filled the Reformed Church with sadness. It mourned the loss of one of its finest leaders and theologians, one who had loved it as a son.<sup>123</sup> Although he had never gained the notoriety of men like Nevin and Schaff, Gerhart made a significant contribution to American theological education and literature.

The Reformed Church honored Gerhart for his work while he was living. The **Reformed Church Messenger** devoted an entire issue in honor of his eightieth birthday.<sup>124</sup> It included many articles by friends and associates which examined various aspects of his life, e.g. Gerhart as a theologian, author, friend of the young, and preacher. There were posthumous honors also. A tablet in his memory was unveiled at the seminary on May 14, 1908.<sup>125</sup> The Eastern Synod meeting in Lancaster in 1917 celebrated the 100th anniversary of his birth.<sup>126</sup>

No words more aptly describe and summarize Gerhart's life than those of the **Reformed Church Messenger**:

Dr. Gerhart has labored in almost all the different spheres of church work. In one after the other he has successively moved with untiring zeal and loving devotion to her cause and for her development. As a minister of the Gospel, as a missionary, as a pastor, as a teacher and as an author, he has exerted a wide and beneficent influence and has been an honor to the Church and to himself.<sup>127</sup>

#### ABBREVIATIONS

GRM	<i>German Reformed Messenger</i>
MR	<i>The Mercersburg Review</i>
RCM	<i>Reformed Church Messenger</i>
RCR	<i>The Reformed Church Review</i>
RQR	<i>The Reformed Quarterly Review</i>
TM	<i>The Messenger</i>
WM	<i>Weekly Messenger</i>
WMGR	<i>Weekly Messenger of the German Reformed Church</i>

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A detailed account of Gerhart's theological insights will be found in my "Emanuel V. Gerhart and the Mercersburg Theology" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1973).
- <sup>2</sup> D. Y. Heisler, *The Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America*, IV (Lancaster: J. M. Westhaeffer, 1872), 105.
- <sup>3</sup> Heisler, *The Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America*, IV, 94-98.
- <sup>4</sup> Heisler, *The Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America*, IV, 98-99.
- <sup>5</sup> This was the address given by Emanuel when he enrolled at the Classical School. See H. M. J. Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg* (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1936), 14.
- <sup>6</sup> Heisler, *The Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America*, IV, 100-102.
- <sup>7</sup> George W. Richards, "Emanuel Vogel Gerhart, D.D." in *Old Mercersburg* (New York: The Journal of American History, 1912), 102.
- <sup>8</sup> Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*, 23. This volume also contains a description of the curriculum of the Classical School, 25-30.
- <sup>9</sup> Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*, 32-39, 50-81.
- <sup>10</sup> There are four unpublished notebooks in Gerhart's own handwriting which are available in the Historical Society and Archives, Philip Schaff Library, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
- <sup>11</sup> Richards, "Emanuel Vogel Gerhart, D.D.," 103. The Diagonthian and Goethean societies were at the heart of much of the intellectual activity before and after the incorporation of Marshall College and after its merger with Franklin College in 1853. See Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*, 229-284.
- <sup>12</sup> Gerhart, Unpublished Student Notebook #2. This section of the notebook was probably written in 1835.
- <sup>13</sup> G. W. Williard, "The Student Life of Dr. Gerhart," *RCM*, June 10, 1897, 2-3.
- <sup>14</sup> Williard, "The Student Life of Dr. Gerhart," 2.
- <sup>15</sup> Howard J. B. Ziegler, *Frederick Augustus Rauch: American Hegelian* (Manheim: Sentinel Printing House, 1953), 1-34.
- <sup>16</sup> When theological controversy forced the resignation of the sole professor of the Theological Seminary, Dr. Lewis Mayer, in 1839, Rauch shouldered the

- burden of the college and seminary until John Williamson Nevin was chosen to succeed Mayer. Nevin joined Rauch in Mercersburg in 1840. Ziegler, *Frederick Augustus Rauch: American Hegelian*, 32-33.
- <sup>17</sup> Gerhart, "The Relation of Religion to Science," *WM*, October 19, 1842, 1473. This material was delivered in an address to friends and alumni of Marshall College.
- <sup>18</sup> Gerhart, "The First President of Marshall College, Frederick Rauch, Ph.D.," *RCR*, VII (April, 1903), 151.
- <sup>19</sup> E.g., Gerhart, *ICR*, I, 53 and Gerhart, "Is Human Nature Religious?" *RCR*, XXVI (July, 1879), 377-391.
- <sup>20</sup> (Hartford: J. C. Wells, 1842).
- <sup>21</sup> (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1841).
- <sup>22</sup> Murdoch, *Sketches of Modern Philosophy, especially among the Germans*, 199-201.
- <sup>23</sup> Gerhart, "Dr. Murdoch on Rauch's Psychology," *MR*, VIII (April, 1856), 237. Gerhart does not mention why he waited fourteen years to print this rejoinder. See also Theodore Apple, *Recollections of College Life at Marshall College* (Reading: Daniel Miller, 1886), 273-283.
- <sup>24</sup> Ziegler, *Frederick Augustus Rauch: American Hegelian*, 75.
- <sup>25</sup> Ziegler, *Frederick Augustus Rauch: American Hegelian*, 82. Ziegler correctly points out that Gerhart was disturbed with Murdoch's allegation that Rauch was a pantheist. Nevertheless, Ziegler asserts, the claim that Rauch was "a Pantheist of the school of Hegel" has some validity. Ziegler wrote, "If 'Pantheism' means, simply, that God is All in All [the essentially real, the Absolute Idea], then Rauch's Hegelianism is pantheism. But the All in All of pantheism is not always understood as the Absolute Idea, and it is only when understood as such that it can give strong, if unorthodox, support to the doctrines of Christianity." Ziegler, *Frederick Augustus Rauch: American Hegelian*, 82.
- <sup>26</sup> Rauch, "Faith and Reason," *MR*, VIII (January, 1856), 80-94, and "Mary Weeping at the Sepulchre," *MR*, VIII (April, 1856), 221-235.
- <sup>27</sup> Gerhart, "Dr. Murdoch on Rauch's Psychology," 252.
- <sup>28</sup> Gerhart, "Dr. Murdoch on Rauch's Psychology," 254.
- <sup>29</sup> (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1856).
- <sup>30</sup> Rauch, "On Education," *MR*, X (July, 1858), 443-454, Rauch, "Every Man is the Lord's in Life," *MR*, XI (April, 1859), 222-231, Rauch, "Every Man is the Lord's In Death," *MR*, XI (October, 1859), 609-621, Rauch, "Goethe," *MR*, XII (July, 1860), 329-385, and Rauch, "Humility, the Basis of Moral Greatness," *MR*, XIII (October, 1861), 611-621.
- <sup>31</sup> Quoted in Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*, 106.
- <sup>32</sup> George W. Richards, *History of the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pennsylvania*, (Lancaster: Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1952), 206-211.
- <sup>33</sup> James I. Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: The Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 1911), 87.
- <sup>34</sup> Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century*, 88. Good said that Mayer's theology was not the christocentric type which was characteristic of Nevin and the Mercersburg Theology. He claimed that Mayer's position could be generally described as "that of the lower sublapsarian Calvinists." See Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century*, 89-91.
- <sup>35</sup> "Marshall College," *WM*, January 5, 1842, 1312.
- <sup>36</sup> Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*, 327-328.
- <sup>37</sup> Luther J. Binkley, *The Mercersburg Theology* (Manheim: Sentinel Printing House, 1953), 13.
- <sup>38</sup> Binkley, *The Mercersburg Theology*, 16-17.
- <sup>39</sup> See James H. Nichols, *Romanticism in American Theology* (Chicago: The

- University of Chicago Press, 1961). This is the most recent and comprehensive historical study of the development of the Mercersburg Theology.
- 40 Gerhart, "John Williamson Nevin: His Godliness," *RQR*, XXXIV (January, 1887), 19.
- 41 "Proceedings of Synod," *WM*, November 3, 1841, 1275.
- 42 Quoted in Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*, 328. Presumably the students referred to in this passage are those of Marshall College; there is no precise identification of any other student group which might have attended.
- 43 "Classis of Mercersburg," *WM*, June 1, 1842, 1394.
- 44 "Ecclesiastical," *WM*, July 20, 1842, 1422.
- 45 "Ordination and Installation," *WM*, August 31, 1842, 1447.
- 46 "Hymenial," *WM*, January 11, 1843, 1523.
- 47 The unpublished diaries are available in the Historical Society and Archives, Philip Schaff Library, Lancaster Theological Seminary. See also George W. Richards, "The Diaries of Dr. E. V. Gerhart," *Bulletin of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States*, II (July, 1932), 45.
- 48 Gerhart, Unpublished diary, April 9, 1849.
- 49 Gerhart, Unpublished diary, April 16, 1849.
- 50 Gerhart, Unpublished diary, April 25, 1849.
- 51 Gerhart, Unpublished diary, April 29, 1849.
- 52 Gerhart, "Correspondence," *WMGR*, August 22, 1849, 2897.
- 53 Gerhart, "Correspondence from Cincinnati," *WMGR*, September 19, 1849, 2913.
- 54 Gerhart, Unpublished diary, August 26, 1849.
- 55 Gerhart, Unpublished diary, August 27, 1849.
- 56 Gerhart, "Home Missions," *WMGR*, November 21, 1849, 2948.
- 57 Good, *Rev. E. V. Gerhart, D.D. as Professor of Theology at Tiffin, Ohio*, (no publisher, 1920), 10.
- 58 Gerhart, "The Rationalists in Cincinnati," *WMGR*, February 26, 1851, 3220.
- 59 Good, *Rev. E. V. Gerhart, D.D. as Professor of Theology at Tiffin, Ohio*. 10.
- 60 Gerhart, "The Rationalists in Cincinnati," 3220.
- 61 Gerhart, "Letter from Rev. Mr. Gerhart," *WMGR*, January 23, 1850, 2983.
- 62 Gerhart, "Letter," *The Western Missionary*, May 15, 1850, 2.
- 63 Gerhart, "An Account of an Exploring Tour by a General Agent," *WMGR*, January 30, 1850, 2987.
- 64 T. J. Barkley, "Dr. Gerhart as Pastor," *RCM*, June 10, 1897, 4.
- 65 A. S. Zerbe, "The First Seventy-five Years, 1824-1899," *Souvenir Booklet—Centennial, One Hundred Years of Reformed Church History in Ohio and Adjacent States* (No publisher, 1923), 29-45.
- 66 "The Convention in Tiffin," *WMGR*, December 25, 1850, 3183.
- 67 Gerhart, "The Mission at Cincinnati," *WMGR*, February 26, 1851, 3219.
- 68 Published in booklet form (Tiffin: Office of *The Western Missionary*, 1851).
- 69 Gerhart, *Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words*, 13-14.
- 70 Gerhart, *Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words*, 20. Gerhart found the Heidelberg Catechism a very satisfactory explication of the theology of the Reformed Church throughout his life. Like Nevin, he was quite willing to recognize that it did not include a speculative predestinarianism, but did clear the way for a proper Christology, ecclesiology, and view of the sacraments. For a description of the relationship of the Heidelberg Catechism to the Mercersburg Theology see Bard Thompson, "The Catechism and the Mercersburg Theology," in *Essays on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1963), 53-74. Gerhart lectured on the Heidelberg Catechism at various times throughout his academic career. Some of these lectures were published. See Gerhart, *Lectures on the Heidelberg Cat-*

*eschism*, 3 vols. (Lancaster: Lecture Printing Society of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, 1891). See also Gerhart, "The German Reformed Church, 12-14.

- <sup>71</sup> Gerhart, *Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words*, 23.
- <sup>72</sup> Gerhart, *Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words*, 25.
- <sup>73</sup> Zerbe, "The First Seventy-five Years, 1824-1899," 43.
- <sup>74</sup> Zerbe, "The First Seventy-five Years, 1824-1899," 43.
- <sup>75</sup> Quoted in E. I. F. Williams, *Heidelberg: Democratic Christian College* (Menasha, Wisconsin: The George Banta Publishing Company, 1952), 76.
- <sup>76</sup> Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century*, 322-403. Gerhart described some of the issues of the liturgical controversy in his article, "The German Reformed Church," *Bibliotheca Sacra and Biblical Repository*, XX (January, 1863), 61-64.
- <sup>77</sup> Klein, *A Century of Education at Mercersburg*. 332.
- <sup>78</sup> Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century*, 297.
- <sup>79</sup> Gerhart, Unpublished diary, September 14, 1854.
- <sup>80</sup> H. M. J. Klein, *History of Franklin and Marshall College 1787-1948* (Lancaster: Intelligencer Printing Company, 1952), 75-79.
- <sup>81</sup> "Franklin and Marshall College," *GRM*, August 1, 1855, 4142.
- <sup>82</sup> Gerhart, *Franklin and Marshall College and the New Endowment Scheme* (Chambersburg: M. Kieffer and Co., 1856).
- <sup>83</sup> Gerhart, *Franklin and Marshall College and the New Endowment Scheme*, 34-35.
- <sup>84</sup> Gerhart, *Franklin and Marshall College and the New Endowment Scheme*, 61-62.
- <sup>85</sup> Gerhart, *Franklin and Marshall College and the New Endowment Scheme*, 63-89.
- <sup>86</sup> Gerhart, *Franklin and Marshall College and the New Endowment Scheme*, 20-21.
- <sup>87</sup> (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1857).
- <sup>88</sup> Gerhart, *An Introduction to the Study of Philosophy with an Outline Treatise on Logic*, unnumbered page.
- <sup>89</sup> It was favorably reviewed in *GRM*, February 10, 1858, 2, and February 2, 1859, 1 and in *The American Quarterly Church Review*, XI (April, 1858), 163-164. Guarded reviews appeared in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, XL (April, 1858), 329-330, and *The New Englander*, LXI (February, 1858), 209-210.
- <sup>90</sup> "Mercersburg Quarterly Review," *GRM*, July 22, 1857, 4.
- <sup>91</sup> Gerhart, "The German Reformed Church."
- <sup>92</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of Jefferson College* (Pittsburgh: J. T. Shryock, 1857), 10.
- <sup>93</sup> Gerhart, "Franklin and Marshall College," *GRM*, May 22, 1861, 2.
- <sup>94</sup> Gerhart, "The National Question," *MR*, XIII (July, 1861), 486-488.
- <sup>95</sup> H. M. J. Klein, *The History of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States* (Lancaster: Rudisill and Smith Company, 1943), 243.
- <sup>96</sup> Gerhart, Unpublished diary.
- <sup>97</sup> Gerhart, Unpublished diary, July 11, 1863.
- <sup>98</sup> "A Biographical Sketch," *RCM*, May 12, 1904, 4.
- <sup>99</sup> "Died," *GRM*, August 1, 1866, 3.
- <sup>100</sup> Klein, *History of Franklin and Marshall College, 1787-1948*, 93-96.
- <sup>101</sup> Quoted in Joseph Henry Dubbs, *History of Franklin and Marshall College* (Lancaster: Franklin and Marshall College Alumni Association, 1903), 313-314.
- <sup>102</sup> Gerhart, Unpublished document in the Historical Society and Archives,

- Philip Schaff Library, Lancaster.
- <sup>103</sup> Klein, *History of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States*, 253-254.
- <sup>104</sup> Printed in *MR*, XVI (January, 1869), 125-148.
- <sup>105</sup> Gerhart, "The Historical Element in Theology," 146.
- <sup>106</sup> Gerhart, "The Historical Element in Theology," 146.
- <sup>107</sup> Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U. S. in the Nineteenth Century*, 495-496.
- <sup>108</sup> Gerhart, "The Spirit of the General Synod," *RCM*, January 5, 1870, 1.
- <sup>109</sup> Gerhart, "Status of the Western Liturgy," *RCM*, February 9, 1870, 1.
- <sup>110</sup> "Married," *TM*, January 5, 1876, 5.
- <sup>111</sup> "Death of Lucia D. Gerhart," *RCM*, September 26, 1912, 24.
- <sup>112</sup> *TM*, June 22, 1887, 10.
- <sup>113</sup> (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1894).
- <sup>114</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, ed. by James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 271n.
- <sup>115</sup> Unpublished letter from Gerhart to Schaff, January 16, 1890.
- <sup>116</sup> E.g. *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, XXII (January, 1892), 126-130, XXV (April, 1895), 269-270, and *Methodist Review*, VII (October, 1891), 829-831.
- <sup>117</sup> Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U. S. in the Nineteenth Century*, 612-614. Good goes farther. He blames the Mercersburg Theology generally for scuttling the possible merger. It must be noted that Good's writings reflect such an antagonism toward the Mercersburg Theology that they lose some of their merit as accurate chronicles of the history of the Reformed Church.
- <sup>118</sup> E.g. J. S. Kieffer, "Recollections of Dr. Gerhart," *RCM*, June 9, 1904, 5-7, George W. Richards, "The Diaries of Dr. E. V. Gerhart," 62, and Ellis N. Kremer, "Rev. Emanuel Vogel Gerhart," *RCR*, VIII (October, 1904), 565-575.
- <sup>119</sup> Ellis N. Kremer, "Dr. Gerhart as a Preacher," *RCM*, June 10, 1897, 1.
- <sup>120</sup> Klein, *History of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States*, 275.
- <sup>121</sup> W. V. Hensel, "Dr. Gerhart as Traveling Companion," *RCM*, June 10, 1897, 9.
- <sup>122</sup> "Editorial," *RCM*, May 12, 1904, 3-4.
- <sup>123</sup> "The Burial of Rev. E. V. Gerhart," *RCM*, May 12, 1904, 5. See also the funeral addresses of J. C. Bowman, J. H. Dubbs, and E. R. Eshbach, *RCM*, May 12, 1904, 5-7.
- <sup>124</sup> June 10, 1897.
- <sup>125</sup> See James Crawford, "An Address," *RCM*, June 11, 1908, 8-9.
- <sup>126</sup> Klein, *The History of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States*, 312.
- <sup>127</sup> June 10, 1897, 1.

#### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Charles Yrigoyen, Jr. was born in Philadelphia in 1937, and received his B.S. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1959. Three years later he earned his B.D. from the Lancaster Theological Seminary, and in 1964 a Th.M. from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1973 he received the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Temple University.

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