

Biographical Annals of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania; Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of Many of the Early Settled Families. Illustrated. Chicago: The Genealogical Publishing Co., 1905.

Rev. George Keiser, a native of Perry County, Pa., and son of **Jacob** and **Catherine (Ritter) Keiser**, was born March 6, 1822. When he was eight years of age his parents came to Cumberland County, where they spent the remainder of their lives. The father died, however, in Perry County, in 1833. **Jacob** and **Catherine Keiser** had children as follows: **Leah** (deceased) was the wife of **John Swartz**. **George** is the subject proper of this sketch. **Susan**, deceased, was the wife of **Jacob Kochenderfer**. **David** is a resident of Cumberland County; his deceased wife in maidenhood was **Annie Bender**. **Rachel**, widow of **David Kochenderfer**, resides in Carlisle. **Jacob** resides in Omaha, Neb.; his wife, now deceased, was **Sophia Edgington**. **John C.** is deceased; his wife, who was **Sarah Humer**, lives in Carlisle.

George Keiser has been twice married, first, on Feb. 13, 1845, to **Rachel Bear**, who bore him five children, three of whom reached maturity; **David B.**, of Houston, Texas; **Catharine**, deceased wife of **Jacob Brown**; and **Emma**, wife of **Frank Langheine**. The mother of these children died in March, 1863. The present wife of **George Keiser** was before marriage **Mary Steiner**, and they were married April 21, 1867. **Mr.** and **Mrs. Keiser** are the parents of three children: **Edwin S.** resides in Lancaster, Pa.; **Ella M.** is at home; **George W.** is living in Carlisle.

George Keiser united with the Reformed Mennonite Church in the year 1857, and was ordained a minister in the year 1860. A reference to the year of his birth will remind the reader that **Rev. George Keiser** has rounded out his four score years, and during this time he has for more than half a century devoted himself to the cause of Him "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The following is the creed of the Reformed Mennonite Church, prepared by Bishop Elias H. Hershey, of Lancaster County. Pa.:

The Church of Christ originated on the day of Pentecost, with the effusion of the Holy Ghost. This divine endowment, in persons willing to forsake sin, works the change of temper and life denominated the "new birth," which is manifested by being peaceable, harmless, passive under injuries and wrongs without ever resenting aggression, humble and pure in life, just in all transactions, loving our neighbor as ourself, united in faith and doctrine, reproving all unfaithful worshippers by withdrawing from their worship.

Such was the character of the primitive Church, according to history, until about the beginning of the fourth century, when world rulers united the Church with the State, and, by compulsion, made many of their subjects Christian formalists. From that time we find a class of believers differing from the formalists in rejecting infant baptism, and asserting baptism on faith, leading spiritual lives separated from the world by abstaining from a fleshly walk and worldly irregularities from vain ambition, idle amusements, pride, folly, and from all unfaithful worship, being strictly non-resistant, and maintaining the doctrine that Christians take no part in worldly government. Their position provoked the same persecutions which the Head of the Church and his early adherents suffered. At times they are unnoticed, then they appear prominently, according to the tolerance of worldly rulers. They are variously called Poor Men of Lyons, Waldenses, Albigenses, Berengarians, Petrobroscians, Henricans, Leonists, Mennonites. Menno

Simon, in the year 1524, became a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, which priesthood, and the connection with the Church, he renounced, Jan. 12, 1536, and associated with persons of one heart with him, at whose solicitation, and under the impulse of love for souls hungering for the pure Scriptures, he yielded himself to preaching and writing for the propagation of sound Gospel doctrines. His labors prospered against violent opposition. There are many branches diverging from the origin cited, holding some of the views of those early believers.

The Reformed Mennonite Church had its beginning through a number of Mennonites, in the early part of the nineteenth century; being impressed that Menno Simon had soundly interpreted the Scriptures, they withdrew from their church to restore the practice of his teachings, being in full accord therewith, and believing that the support given them by the shedding of much innocent blood in Europe, between the years 1524 and 1781, was a martyrdom in behalf of doctrines founded on the Gospel Doctrines. They believe in the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration, that the New supersedes the Old, and is the true text-book for the Church; that the Holy Ghost is the sure interpreter, without the necessary aid of advanced human learning; that conversion is a gift of God, bestowed upon all who by divine light are willingly led to abhor sin, that they may turn to righteousness, the change being the nature of God born in them, by which they lead new lives; that the clergy are to be exemplary leaders, not arbitrary lords; that through the love of God in them Christians are always in fellowship, as was the first State of the Church; that there can be only one visible Church, separated from professions maintaining the doctrine of divided organizations; that the Church as a body is required to separate from the company of members who again persist in sin, or commit gross violations, by avoiding them in church communion, in secular dealings, in eating social meals, in customary social intercourse, without respect of persons, or regard to social relations, for their spiritual reformation, and to preserve the purity of the Church, and to cause all to fear sin. Matt, xviii; i Cor. V: 2 Thess. iii; that Christians do not vote, hold office in civil government, sit in judgment to pass civil or criminal sentence, do not litigate, do not have ownership in chartered corporations, do not use deadly weapons in war or self-defense to destroy the tares, Matthew xiii; do not indulge in worldly pastimes and frivolous plays, in dancing and foolish conversation, Ephesians V; do not make vain display in raiment, but clothe with modest apparel, i Timothy ii; are exemplary in their deportment to fill the high station assigned them of being chosen out of the world, and being the light of the world they display in walk and conversation the virtues of grace.

Ordinances. They are regarded as testimonies, not saving means. Circumcision commanded to Abraham was a token of the covenant God had made with him, and was typical of regeneration. Ro. ii. The baptism of John in Jordan was a testimony to repentance, foreshadowing a state in which "all flesh should see the salvation of God," under the higher administration of Christ, who was to save his people from their sins. It was an act of righteousness, because an act of obedience, as all obedience is righteousness, though our works of obedience do not save us, they are truly a fruit of having been saved. It is the entire consecration and submission of all our will power to the Divine will that gives God power in us to save us, and to bring us under His control. This power the Savior promised to His disciples, to be given only after his ascension to the Father. Luke xxiv, 49.

The baptism commanded in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, expresses a full union with the Godhead, indicating our adoption as full heirs, by faith, annulling the baptism of repentance. Acts xix.

Baptism is associated with faith in the Scripture examples as an expression of faith, the saving virtue being ascribed to faith. By faith the malefactor on the cross had the promise of Paradise without baptism. He had no opportunity after he had repented, and confessed faith, to be baptized, or to confirm his faith by works; the promise rested on his sincere confession and appeal. Baptism has not more virtue to save us than obedience to any other commandment, yet, believers, when they have opportunity, will observe baptism and every other commandment, as a fruit of faith, for by works faith is made perfect. James ii.

Not having merit to save, we understand why baptism is treated indifferently as to form. "The true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth," not seeking merit in forms, regarding the outward ordinances as symbolizing inward conditions, understanding that no particularity in forms is urged in Gospel teaching, lest we might become religious formalists, instead of spiritual worshippers. Spiritual worship involves the whole life given in service to God. The breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup is commanded as a commemorative ordinance bringing to mind the sacrificial offering on the cross, impressing solemn obligation to divine love, inspiring the heirs of redemption with a willing obedience to all Gospel teachings, leading us near to God in contemplating his mercy to a fallen world. The manner, time and frequency of observing it being not particularized is likely to direct more attention to its spirituality. The washing of feet is indicative of the divine cleansing, and of the mutual aid members of the Church extend to one another by blameless example, kind admonition, brotherly reproof, and every service of humility and love. It portrays the fellowship and unity in the household of faith, confirmatory of the doctrine of oneness prominent in the Gospel message, leading in its observance to contemplation.

The kiss of charity is understood to be a social salutation in acknowledgment of the fervent love believers bear to one another, and is practiced when they meet, by each sex separately to denote peace.

Principles. While they strive diligently to conform, in their outward life, to all New Testament teachings, they seek no salvation in anything outward, believing the function of the Spirit will prompt all outward actions, as an indwelling presence. They recognize God in things temporal as well as in things spiritual, that God in the Old Testament age prescribed worldly government, and used worldly rulers as his agents to accomplish his purposes. It was said unto Pharaoh that God raised him up to show his power in him, though he destroyed him. God established civil statutes by Moses, which he refutes by Christ, in saying, "Ye have heard that it hath been said. An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you. That ye resist not evil." Matthew v. The fact that Paul says, "the powers that be are ordained of God," as applying to worldly government, signifies that they are comprehended in his infinite plan. Every good tendency in mankind emanates from God, and works human amelioration and beneficent ends. It is an active principle in worldly affairs, formulating government for the good of mankind. Governments are good or bad in proportion as this influence prevails.

They regard regeneration as the higher and fuller influence of the spirit of God wrought by Christ's coming formulating the kingdom or conditions in which the mind and spirit of Christ hold sway, evincing its practical effects in the visible Church by "transforming every faithful member to the image of God's Son." To be loyal to their Head, the believers in Christ cannot take part in the kingdom "out of which he has chosen them," nor obey worldly rulers, in demands

conflicting with "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." They will rather suffer "as lambs to the slaughter." To give tribute, honor and fear is commanded, yet the authors of this teaching" proved by their example that they meant as far as the Divine law allows, for they continued preaching against the prohibition of the authorities, and suffering for it.

Understanding the Scriptures to teach a responsibility, resting on every member of the Church to reprove sin known to them, they cannot commune with disorderly members, but must as a spiritual duty labor for their reformation, and see "that the wicked are put away" from the Church, when amendment does not follow.

Separation from discordant worshippers, they believe, is based on the principle that fundamentally mankind are created to be in social accord; that the disturbance of this law through sin is overcome by the Redeemer who came to destroy the works of the Devil to restore the love of God through the Holy Ghost, giving ascendancy to the fundamental life in us, that "love may knit together our hearts." This principle pervades the teaching of our Savior and the Apostles, in their earnest advocacy of oneness, and in their condemnation of disunity. Agreeing with their doctrine, we must reprove divisions, and live in unity as taught by our Savior, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The observances taught the church demand unity of action.

They believe, therefore, in one United Christian Church, in fulfillment of Scripture injunctions and types. The idea of outward ordinances suggests agreement, the appeal "to the Church," in disposition, forbids division, Matthew xviii: "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" teaches the unbroken tie to all observers, John xiii; the prayer, "that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me," is significant of unity, John xvii; the condemnation of divisions points to the same truth flowing from divine love. Christ uses the natural vine as a type of Christian system and unity bearing uniformity of fruit, demonstrating- that when one branch ceases to receive the life of the vine it is like a soul ceasing to abide in Christ, the spiritual character withering and the carnal life springing into fruitfulness, dooming the soul to death, which is the "wages of sin," John XV. The temple built by Solomon at Jerusalem is used as a type of the Church, "ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house," I Peter ii. The natural body is used as an illustration. For as the body is one and has many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so is Christ. One member does not say to another, I have no need of thee. God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the Head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love, i Corinthians xii: Ephesians iv. The figures here drawn accord with Gospel teaching throughout, being confirmatory of the effect of God's love working harmony among the redeemed, displaying the impulse of the Creative Mind transforming the passive creature into the "likeness of God," who is blessed forever. Amen.