

Der Regenbogen

(The Rainbow)

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DAS HAUS STET IN GOTTES HAND
GOTT BEWAR ES FUR FEUER UND FUR BRA[ND]

O MENSCH BEDENCK DAS END
SO WIRST DU NIMER SUNDIGEN

IORG MATR

(The house is in God's hand
God protect it from fire and flame.

O man ponder thy end
Then willst thou sin no more.

(George Matter)

Our cover—

Hucksters of tourism like to turn Pennsylvania German barn stars into talismans to keep away witches. Far be it from us to deny that the Pennsylvania German people had their share of superstition—and used talismans as protection against evil—but it is certainly also worth pointing to the common practice of invoking God's blessing on a new house, either by means of a lintel or fireplace beam or by a written or printed poem of blessing. Examples of the latter are the delight of many collectors of our Fraktur; examples of the former are much less common.

George Matter (1724-1796) was one of the pioneers who erected a lintel such as his ancestors had done in southern Germany and Switzerland. Matter immigrated in 1751—and some of the persons who were on the *Edinburgh* with him turned up later as his neighbors in Manheim Township, York County. There George erected his home about 1764, near what is today Saint Paul's (Dubs') Union Church, a few miles southeast of Hanover, bordering what has become in the last few years Lake Marburg.

George's prayer for his house did not protect it from all destruction, however. One day, presumably in the early nineteenth century, the family then living on the farm were at work on the fields when they heard a sudden crash and saw a cloud of dust: the house had collapsed. In rebuilding, the oak beam, 8 by 8 by 52 inches, with the inscription was incorporated into the sill of an attic window of a new stone house. There it remained until December, 1962, when it was placed above the fireplace of Dr. and Mrs. F. Malcolm Wright near Hanover. The Wrights are building a new home in the summer of 1970 and the lintel will go along, this time to be placed above a door—and to shed its blessings for at least another two centuries.



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CHRISTOPHER SAUER AND HIS GERMANTOWN PRESS

BY

DONALD F. DURMBAUGH

(Dr. Donald F. Durnbaugh, professor of Historical Theology at Bethany Theological Seminary, Oak Brook, Illinois, delivered the following paper at the fourth annual meeting of The Pennsylvania German Society, Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, on May 9, 1970. Professor Durnbaugh's paper was so well received that we share it with our readers.)

The fame of the first Christopher Sauer (Sower), printer from Germantown, is secure. No longer is it necessary to alert an unknowing world to the achievements of the German-born mechanical genius. Early stalwarts of Pennsylvania-German historiography—the antiquarian Abraham Harley Cassel, the historians Oswald Seidensticker, Julius F. Sachse, Samuel W. Pennypacker, Martin G. Brumbaugh, and others—succeeded in their campaign to establish the significance of this colonial figure.¹

Today it is the exceptional study of the cultural history of eighteenth-century America which ignores Sauer's life and work. That it is still possible is shown by such a highly-esteemed book as Daniel Boorstin's *The Americans: The Colonial Experience*. Professor Boorstin manages

¹ Abraham H. Cassel, "The German Almanacs of Christopher Sauer," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, VI (1882), 58-68, and "Account of Sower's Newspaper" (unpubl. manuscript, Pennsylvania Historical Society); Oswald Seidensticker, *The First Century of German Printing in America, 1728-1830* (Philadelphia: Schaefer and Koradi, 1893), and "Die beiden Christoph Saur in Germantown," in *Bilder aus der Deutsch-Pennsylvanischen Geschichte* (New York: Steiger, 1885); Julius F. Sachse, *The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia; Stockhausen, 1899-1900); Samuel W. Pennypacker, *Pennsylvania in American History* (Philadelphia: Campbell, 1910), 327-363, and *Historical and Biographical Sketches* (Philadelphia: Tripple, 1883), 225-228; Martin G. Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1899), 338-437. See also the bibliographies in the important recent treatments, Felix Reichmann, *Christopher Sower, Sr. (1694-1758): Printer in Germantown* (Philadelphia: Carl Schurz Foundation, 1943); Edward W. Hocker, "The Sower Printing House of Colonial Times," *Pennsylvania German Society Proceedings*, LIII (1948); Anna Kathryn Oller, "Christopher Saur, Colonial Printer: A Study of the Publications of the Press, 1738-1758" (unpubl. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1963); and William R. Steckel, "Pietist in Colonial Pennsylvania: Christopher Sauer, Printer, 1738-1758" (unpubl. dissertation, Stanford University, 1949).

several chapters on the central importance of printers and printing without mentioning Sauer even in passing. Nonetheless, his description of the "publick printer" as a focus of cultural and political influence bears quotation:

For centuries to come the influential American "gentlemen of the press" would not be "gentlemen" at all by European standards. The ancestors of the American newspaperman were not essayists, wits, and professional writers, but primarily *printers*—craftsmen dealing in useful public information. They were not literati, whose habitat was the drawing room, the coffee house, or the salon. On the contrary, they were servants of the general public. . . . Their hands stained with printer's ink, they frequented the legislative assemblies and the marketplace to gather a salable commodity. Their printshops became forums and post offices, centers for news and opinions.²

One good reason why most American historians (unlike Boorstin) do not pass Sauer by on the other side of the road is his extraordinary combination of talents. He was a master of twenty-six trades by his own statement and given credit for even more by contemporaries. Trained as a tailor in the homeland, he must have there already developed a reputation as a man of parts, judging from the immediate and urgent proposition to manage a foundry which he received upon arrival in Pennsylvania. In America Sauer first earned his bread as a tinker and clockmaker, because of the lack of demand for his own trade, before going to the country to take up farming. After his return to Germantown he branched out into other skills. As early as 1739 he was described as "apothecary, surgeon, botanist, maker of small and large clocks, cabinetmaker, book-binder, editor of newspapers, maker of leads and wires, paper maker," etc.³

The variety of trades mastered in itself has assured that any serious investigation of colonial arts and manufactures needs to take Sauer into account. The catholicity of interests in his publications has had the same effect. This is witnessed, for example, by the attention recently devoted to Sauer in a discussion of early American writing masters and copy

² Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958), 335-336.

³ R. W. Kelsey, ed., "An Early Description of Pennsylvania. Letter of Christopher Sower, written in 1724 . . .," *PMHB*, XLV (1921), 243-254; D. F. Durnbaugh, ed., "Two Early Letters from Germantown," *PMHB*, LXXXIV (1960), 219-233. The Pennsylvania correspondent who described Sauer's occupations was writing to Christoph Schütz. The correspondence was printed in Gustav Mori, *Die Egenolff-Luthersche Schriftgiesserei in Frankfurt am Main . . .* (Frankfurt/M.: Stempel, 1926), much of which was published in translation in Edward Hocker, "The Founding of the Sower Press," *Germantown History*, Germantown Historical Society, II (1938), vi.

books. Similarly his early concern for providing medical aid and information has been recognized in studies devoted to this subject.⁴

The revival of interest in historical study of the complexities of Penn's "Holy Experiment" has brought with it renewed attention to Sauer, because of the active role he played in marshalling support for the Quaker politicians. He was credibly held able to command the vote of most of the German-speaking Pennsylvanians, and was thus able to swing several crucial elections. A political opponent complained in print that the Quaker party had "recourse to a German printer . . . who now prints a newspaper, entirely in the German language, which is universally read and believed by the Germans in this province."⁵

The writings of McMurtrie, Wroth, Mott, and Wittke will perpetuate knowledge of Sauer's importance as a printer and publisher, just as have the researches of Wright and Rumball-Petre, among others, on early American Bibles.⁶ This list could be extended with little effort to cover many of Sauer's other accomplishments. Despite this, most would agree with his recent bibliographer, Felix Reichmann: "Tradition credits him with the mastery of more than a score of different trades: immortality he won with the Sower press."⁷

It is in fact the press which most think of when the name of Christopher Sauer is mentioned. The printing of 1,200 superb copies of the first American Bible in a European language (1743), the issuance of the first successful German-American almanac and newspaper with readership from New York to Georgia, the many devotional and edifying works, the practical treatises on education, language, and money matters—these have been the basic elements of his place in history.

It was the press, as noted above, which gave him his political and social platform. But we must quickly add that it was the rugged integrity of

⁴ Ray Nash, "American Writing Masters and Copy Books," *Colonial Society of Massachusetts Transactions, 1952-1956* (1964), 343-412; Thomas R. Brendle and Claude W. Unger, "Folk Medicine of the Pennsylvania German," *Pennsylvania German Society Proceedings and Addressess*, LV (1935).

⁵ A good survey of this literature is found in the article by Hermann Wellenreuther, "The Political Dilemma of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, 1681-1748," *PMHB*, XCIV (1970), 135-172. Of those books listed, the most valuable for information on Sauer is Dietmar Rothermund, *The Layman's Progress* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1961). The quotation is from William Smith, *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania*, 2nd ed. (London: R. Griffiths, 1755), 26.

⁶ Douglas McMurtrie, *A History of Printing in the United States* (New York: Bowker, 1936), II: 68-83; Lawrence C. Wroth, *The Colonial Printer* (Portland, Me.: Southworth-Anthoensen, 1938), 30 ff.; Frank L. Mott, *American Journalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 29, 97-98; Carl Wittke, *The German-Language Press in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1957), 15-20; John Wright, *Early Bibles of America . . .*, 3rd ed. (New York: Whittaker, 1894), 28-54; and Edwin A. R. Rumball-Petre, *America's First Bibles* (Portland, Me.: Southworth-Anthoensen, 1940), 14-37.

⁷ Reichmann, *Christopher Sower*, 1-2.

the man which made his publications successful. There was no lack of attempts to establish German-language presses in Pennsylvania. Knauss rightly generalizes that all "pre-revolutionary German newspapers may be divided into two parts, the Sauer papers and those of his opponents."⁸ He was known to be a man of unyielding position, stubbornly independent and with sincere, if occasionally wrongheaded, morality. His descendant and champion A. H. Cassel expressed this well in regard to Sauer's newspaper:

The Simple it would teach, the Wayward instruct, the Bereaved console, the Profligate admonish, and the Impious it would censure, and no Station of Rank nor life could deter him from giving the most severe castigation to those whom he thought deserved it and on the other hand his Praises were seldom bestowed and never undeservedly, which were therefore valued and praised accordingly.⁹

It was this approach to life which impressed his readers and built the foundation of his fame. A curious but informative Radical Pietist publication published in Ephrata in 1812 thus acclaimed Sauer along with his like-named son as "known throughout the Western world as useful and excellent vessels for the advancement of Christianity."¹⁰

With this degree of recognition now generally acknowledged, we can cheerfully dispense with some of the myths and mistaken claims which have been associated with the name of Sauer. It could be that some of the elaboration placed around the portraits of the Pennsylvania-German heroes, including Sauer, by earlier writers came about as an understandable reaction to the recurrent sneer about the "dumb Dutch." To compensate for such criticism, some felt required to portray most German immigrant leaders as polished products of the continent and masters of rhetoric; while excusable in an earlier day when all ethnic groups were involved in such pietistic exercises, such exaggeration is no longer defensible. The accomplishments of the group in general and of Sauer in particular are sufficiently impressive on their own merits.¹¹

We can discard, for example, the still-heard claims that Sauer was educated at the University of Marburg and that he learned medicine at

⁸ James Owen Knauss, Jr., "Social Conditions Among the Pennsylvania Germans in the Eighteenth Century, as Revealed in the German Newspapers Published in America," *Pennsylvania German Society Proceedings and Addresses*, XXIX (1922), 8.

⁹ Cassel, "Account," quoted in Oller, "Saur," 143.

¹⁰ *Das Heutige Signal: Oder: Posaunen-Schall!* (Ephrata: Jacob Ruth, 1812), 26.

¹¹ Homer T. Rosenberger, *The Pennsylvania Germans, 1891-1965* (Lancaster: Pennsylvania German Society, 1966), 53 ff., describes the motivation behind late nineteenth-century writing on the Germans. Curiously, the index of the book has no reference to Sauer, although he is mentioned in the text on pages 55-56.

Halle. There is no record at either institution of such attendance, which Sachse pointed out two generations ago.¹² All of the contemporary records state unequivocally that Sauer was a master tailor. We have absolute confirmation of this in a recently-discovered autograph letter to the count of Wittgenstein stating his intention to migrate to the "Insul Pensilvanien" in 1724. The letter begins: "I, Johann Christoph Sauer, a master tailor by profession. . . ." A Wittgenstein census roll of 1713 lists Sauer as a tailor; he would have been eighteen years of age then, and the date leaves no time for formal education. His fame is not lessened by lack of higher education. Sauer made his way by his own mettle.¹³

The same 1724 letter clinches evidence earlier set forth that Sauer was not a native of Laasphe in Wittgenstein. He identifies himself as a resident at Laasphe (as opposed to a native-born subject) and as a stranger or foreigner at Schwarzenau.

It is also no longer necessary to raise the question whence Sauer received the type to begin his publications, after the publications of Gustav Mori in Frankfurt, made known here through the writing of Edward Hocker. By Sauer's own statement, not to be doubted given his well-documented ingenuity, he constructed his own press to use the Frankfurt type.¹⁴

That Sauer was in contact with the Pietists at Berleburg in Germany is certainly true and that there was printing done there is also accurate. That Sauer received a small press from Berleburg on which he began press work is very doubtful, however, given his own statement. It has been claimed that the press was secured by the aid of the Brethren, who were supposed to have helped to produce the famous Berleburg Bible. This is unlikely for two reasons. First, the initial book of the multi-volume Berleburg Bible was not issued until 1726, six years after the Brethren left that part of Germany. Second, the Radical Pietists there were among the most hostile critics of the Brethren and would not have let them participate in the work even if they had been qualified, which they were not.¹⁵

We can likewise lay to rest the statement that Sauer's publishing enter-

¹² Sachse, *German Sectarians*, II: 21. The claim is repeated although without much credence in Oller's dissertation, where it is mistakenly attributed to Gustav Mori. Brumbaugh, *German Baptist Brethren*, 345, is the source for many later descriptions of Sauer's alleged advanced schooling.

¹³ Werner Wied, "Zur Auswanderung Johann Christoph Sauers d.Ä. im Jahre 1724," *Wittgenstein* (1964), 1: 21-28. The earlier material on Sauer on Wittgenstein is found in D. F. Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer: Pennsylvania German Printer," *PMHB*, LXXXII (1958), 316-340. See also, Wilhelm Hartnack, "Christoph Sauer, Sen. kein Wittgensteiner," *Wittgenstein* (1961), 3: 122-123.

¹⁴ Mori, *Schriftgiesserei*; Hocker, "Founding of the Sower Press."

¹⁵ Brumbaugh, *German Baptist Brethren*, 354, 357.

prise began the denominational press for the Church of the Brethren.¹⁶ Sauer was never a member of the Dunkers and even if he had been, the press was clearly a private venture rather than a denominational agency. Such claims are anachronisms impressed on the historical record by those of the turn of the century who were eager to find a pedigree for their own quite justifiable publishing interests. Although sympathetic to the Brethren and their values, and often associated with them, Sauer refused to join any sect. He was fiercely independent in both religious and political views, as those who opposed him ruefully or indignantly reported.¹⁷

Of more interest than the repetition of what is generally known about Sauer or the pointing out of historical inaccuracies would be a look at several areas which demand clarification. Despite the many valuable articles and dissertations written about Sauer, and the hundreds of references to him in books, much remains to be done. We still lack, for example, the painstaking bibliographical work which would establish a complete record of the production of the Sauer press. There have been corrections and additions to the pioneer compilation of Seidensticker, and Reichmann's work was well done as far as it went, but no one has yet given the time to compare type faces in order to identify stray imprints or to collate extant copies for variant editions. A model of what is possible by this kind of meticulous labor is at hand in the study of the issues of the Franklin press.¹⁸

But this is not what is here to be discussed. At least four further areas need more probing. They center on Sauer's relationships to four persons, but actually point to broader questions. These are: Sauer's relationship to his wife Maria Christina, to Conrad Beissel, to Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, and to Benjamin Franklin. In terms of themes, these refer to Sauer's family, to his connections with sectarian religion, to his relations with churchly religion, and to his involvement in Pennsylvania society, respectively.¹⁹

First is the question of Sauer in relation to his wife. We know very little about Maria Christina Sauer. We do know that she married Sauer in Wittgenstein, that they had a son Christopher Sauer, Jr., born in

¹⁶ This assumption mars the otherwise important study by John Flory, *The Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1908).

¹⁷ For a full discussion of the reasons for stating that Sauer was never a member of the Church of the Brethren see the writer's article, "Was Christopher Sauer a Dunker?" *PMHB*, XCIII (1969), 383-391.

¹⁸ See Oller's dissertation for a good introduction to the state of the bibliographical work which has been done; an appendix is devoted to a list of titles now identified. C. William Miller reports on some of his findings in "Benjamin Franklin's Way to Wealth," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LXIII (1969), 231-246.

¹⁹ There is no satisfactory biography of Sauer which answers these questions. Brumbaugh intended to write one but never finished the project. Other recent studies have had special emphases.

Laasphe in 1721,²⁰ that she came to North America with husband and son in 1724, that she left Sauer to join the Ephrata movement about 1730, that she eventually rejoined first her son and then her husband in 1744-45, and that she died on December 14, 1752.²¹ This we know, but there is more that we do not know.

We are not sure of her maiden name. She is said to have been the widow of a Pastor Gross, who died about 1719 in Wittgenstein. The most detailed information on this is found in the diary of a Schwarzenau mystic named de Marsay. The passage referring to Sauer's wife as a widow was written in 1725. It also refers to a Mrs. Gruber as the mother-in-law of Sauer.²²

John Joseph Stoudt has suggested that Maria Christina may have been the daughter of the Inspirationist leader Eberhard Ludwig Gruber. According to Stoudt, Gruber had a daughter who married a "Pastor Gross." This would make Sauer the brother-in-law of Johann Adam Gruber, son of Eberhard Ludwig and an important leader of the Inspirationists in his own right before he came to Pennsylvania in 1726. This thesis is strengthened by the fact that Sauer bought land from the younger Gruber in Germantown upon which he erected his two-story house. He and Gruber were neighbors. The two men often communicated jointly with friends in Europe, acting either in harmony or in close knowledge of the other's views.²³

This attractive thesis has certain problems. For one thing, Sauer never refers to Gruber as a relative in his letters. Gruber often refers to Sauer as "Friend Sauer" which seems somewhat distant if they were in fact related by marriage. Records in Büdingen and Wittgenstein contain no reference to Eberhard Ludwig Gruber as having daughters. Johann Adam in one letter mentions a brother-in-law but this could also refer to the brother of his wife. A more intransigent fact is that in the same passage in Marsay's diary, the Mrs. Gruber is called a widow. This indicates that this Mrs. Gruber could hardly be identical with the wife of Eberhard

²⁰ At least two contemporary sources refer to the Sauers as having more than one child. One is in the Sauer letter edited by Kelsey, the other is a letter from the German Schütz in the Mori book. However, Kelsey's source is a copy, not an original, and the reference to children seems to be a copyist's error. Later in the same letter is a reference to his child in the singular. Also, Schütz' comment is prefaced by the admission that he did not know Sauer before the latter left Europe. He is passing on information from a third person. Mr. Herbert Harley has tried to make the case that Sauer had several children in an unpublished article, "The Four Children of Christopher Sauer I."

²¹ The dates for the birth of the son and for the death of Maria Christina Sauer are taken from the commonplace book of Christopher Sauer, Jr. See Brumbaugh, *German Baptist Brethren*, 353, 387.

²² Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 324.

²³ James E. Ernst, *Ephrata, A History*, ed. J. J. Stoudt (Allentown, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1963), 146.

Ludwig Gruber, for he did not die until 1728. That is to say, Marsay writing in 1725 could not be mentioning Mrs. Eberhard Ludwig Gruber as a widow.

There is some possibility that Marsay's diary, which exists only in the form of later copies, may be misleading about personal names. It is not impossible that Sauer could have married someone connected with Pastor Gross, but possibly not his widow. There is indeed a record of a Palatine pastor Johann Gottfried Gross who resigned his parish in 1710 as a protest against being required to admit unworthy church members to communion (a common grievance among Pietist-minded churchmen). According to the Wittgenstein local historian, Karl Hartnack, the name of the Palatine pastor who died in Wittgenstein in 1719 was Johann Gross. The name of the wife of Johann Gottfried Gross was not Maria Christina, but rather Anna Christina. However, this couple did have a daughter named Maria Christina, who was born on April 22, 1700. Could it be that this was the woman who married Sauer, rather than the widow? The ages fit better (his at 25, hers, 20) than would have been the case with a widow. Either way, it would be good to have more information on the identity of Sauer's wife.²⁴

This is the more necessary because of the problem of Maria Christina Sauer's leaving her husband to join the Ephrata Community. There was, of course, nothing unusual about wives leaving spouses in colonial America. Sauer's newspapers have recurrent advertisements of deserted husbands, announcing that they would not be held responsible for debts incurred by their unfaithful wives. Some of them had run away as many as six times previously!

The usual and most likely interpretation of her departure is that she was alienated from Sauer by the spiritual blandishments of Conrad Beissel, notoriously effective in attracting both single and married women to the rich devotional life of the Cloister. According to the Ephrata chroniclers, Maria Christina lived for a time by herself in eremitical isolation, after leaving her husband. This proved that a "man's spirit could dwell in woman's form."

As might be expected, the disgruntled monk Ezechieel Sangmeister added some racy details to the story. In his version, Maria Christina was enticed from Sauer by a Jacob Weiss, her "second husband," an interpretation accepted by Ernst in his history of Ephrata. This view may be strengthened by the comment of an informant who wrote to Germany in 1739 that Sauer got along nicely with a housekeeper after his wife

²⁴ Georg Biundo, *Die evangelischen Geistlichen der Pfalz seit der Reformation* (Neustadt/Aisch: Degener, 1968), 151; Karl Hartnack, "Schwarzenau an der Eder als Zufluchtsort Religionsverfolgter," *Archiv für Sippenforschung und Wappenkunde*, XVII (1940), 3: 47-48, 4: 70-75.

had left him. "He can spare his wife easily, and lives now much more quietly than when she was with him." This could also be the jaundiced attitude of a Radical Pietist who frowned on conjugal bonds.²⁵

Another debated point is what motivated the wife to return to her husband and who were the parties involved in the return. According to the *Chronicle*, it was Christopher Sauer, Jr., who urged his mother to come back, to which appeal was added as incentive the fact that the health of the mother was shattered by the harsh regimen of the Cloister. Others state that Dr. George de Benneville, the Universalist physician, was instrumental in the reconciliation.²⁶

It would be most desirable to have more clarity on such a central issue in Sauer's life as his relationship with his wife. This might help to explain, among other things, the unusually close bond which united Sauer and his son who, according to the record, agreed with him perfectly in all things.

This leads into the discussion of the relationship between Sauer and Conrad Beissel, one of the most powerful leaders of the German sectarians in America. There is more on the record in this instance. The two men became acquainted in Germany, when Beissel moved in Pietist circles of the same geographical area where Sauer lived. They had contacts in America as well. Israel Eckerlin wrote that he worked for a time in the Lancaster County area for Sauer, who took him to meetings of the Dunkers conducted by Beissel. (This was before the schism between the Beissel-led group and the Germantown Brethren.) That Beissel baptized Sauer along with Eckerlin is not accurate despite an ambiguous passage in the *Chronicon Ephratense*. For this reason a statement appearing as recently as 1967 can be rejected that "after several years of grovelling at the feet of the Vorsteher, Sauer rebelled and became a bitter foe."²⁷

While it would be reasonable to suspect that Sauer would harbor ill will toward the man most likely responsible for his wife's desertion, we find Sauer closely connected with Ephrata in the early activity of his press. The first book (as opposed to broadsides or pamphlets) which came from the Germantown printing house was an Ephrata hymnal, *Zionitischer Weyrauchs-Hügel* (1739). It was printed with paper sup-

²⁵ J. Max Hark, trans., *Chronicon Ephratense: A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists* . . . (Lancaster, Pa.: S. H. Zahm, 1889), 56; Ernst, *Ephrata*, 147; Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 329.

²⁶ *Chronicon Ephratense*, 56.

²⁷ William F. Steirer, Jr., "A New Look at the Ephrata Cloister," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* (Easter, 1966), 101-116. This article, while a useful corrective to some over-romanticizing of the Ephrata Community, shows little understanding of the religious motivation which made the Community possible and argues from an unexamined presupposition that assimilation into the pervading culture is the only viable option for a minority group.

plied by Ephrata. Members of the monastic community aided in its production, at least in proofreading if not in the actual presswork. Some contend that it was Ephrata personnel who actually initiated Sauer into the printing art, likely in the person of Jacob Gass. Sachse emphasizes greatly Sauer's dependence upon Ephrata, but with what justification is difficult to determine.²⁸

The printing of the hymnal provided the occasion for the famous quarrel between Sauer and Beissel. From the beginning of the press, Sauer made it clear that he would only print what he held to be true. He was horrified when he detected what he took to be blasphemous allusions in certain hymns. He quizzed an Ephrata leader about this and received the counter question whether he believed there could be only one Jesus Christ. Sauer fired off a letter to Beissel, who responded that he would not answer a fool according to his folly. The exasperated Sauer published details of the controversy. Small wonder that a letter to Germany of the time reported that Sauer's newly established enterprise "wird ihm saur."²⁹

Despite this, Beissel sought to lure the Germantown printer to his side, conscious of the value of a press in "order to make their congregation important and flourish" as Sauer expressed it. He was invited to a special love feast and communion at Ephrata, which rite was extended until midnight in the hope that Sauer might be won to the cause. Sauer held firm in his Separatist position, stating that just as he did not wish to join their ranks, he did not expect them to join his.³⁰

This would seem to mark another clear rupture between the two, but in 1743 Sauer used Ephrata paper in printing his Bible, and completed copies were bound at Ephrata for distribution in the hinterland. Sauer printed Ephrata-written books, and also included news about the Community in his newspaper. He was at pains to correct the slander, for example, concerning the defection of the Eckerlin brothers and Alexander

²⁸ Sachse, *German Sectarians*, I: 312-344; Ernst, *Ephrata*, 145-161; *Chronicon Ephratense*, 103-105: "The printer Saur had already in Germany become acquainted with the Superintendent [Beissel] during the awakening there. He considered him indeed to be a God-fearing man; but when Providence placed him at the head of a great awakening in Conestoga, the good man held him in suspicion of seeking to become a pope, to which there came yet a secret dislike for the Superintendent because the latter received his wife, who had separated from him, under his leading, and even made her sub-superintendent of the Sisters' House. . . . [Then follows a description of the quarrel.] By this occurrence the good understanding between the printer and the Community of Ephrata was interrupted for many years, and was not restored until the printer's wife, who had hitherto lived at Ephrata, went back to him again. From that time on until his death, he lived on good terms with the Superintendent and all the Solitary in the Settlement, and won for himself an everlasting remembrance among them by many deeds of love."

²⁹ *Abdruck einiger wahrhaften Berichte und Briefe eines sichern Freundes zu Germantown in Pensylvanien vom 17. Novembr. 1738* (Berleburg: 1739), 10.

³⁰ Durnbaugh, "Was Christopher Sauer a Dunker?" 387.

Mack, Jr., from the Community in 1745. Rumor had it that these men left Ephrata to get wives from the Moravians at Bethlehem, an unkind cut at both the celibacy of the Ephrata Brethren and the emphasis upon marriage among the Moravian Brethren.³¹

In 1750 Sauer sent a report to Europe on Ephrata in which he called Beissel a spiritual dictator: "I doubt if there was ever a pope who held everything as completely under his body and soul, life and mind as does Conrad Beissel." This indictment reveals a critical attitude, but on the other side is the record of gifts which Sauer made to the Community, and the cordial exchange of letters between the Germantown printer and the Ephrata recluse shortly before Sauer's death. In these Beissel expressed his respect and concern for fraternal oneness. More study is needed to provide a balanced picture of the relationships between these two strong-minded and important individuals.³²

Sauer's attitude toward Beissel is indicative of his general attitude toward religion. He respected religious faith but tended to be harshly critical of organized institutional forms. A confirmed separatist, he was deeply religious but saw religion as a matter between each man and his maker. Sauer came out of a European setting where religious rivalry had reached virulent heights. In organized religion he saw only selfishness, egotism, and subspiritual activity.

This explains the diligence with which he attacked the shortcomings of men of the cloth, who, in Sauer's mind, were cheating the gullible people. If there were to be church officials at all, thought Sauer, they should be completely on a voluntary basis. A man should go from the plough to the pulpit and then return to the plough, was the way he put it. Himself an incurably moralistic lay preacher in all that he did, Sauer was harshly critical of anyone who longed to set up a church establishment in America according to the European model. His attitude is expressed in brutal clarity in a long poem entitled *Ein freyes Geschenk* [A Free Gift] printed in his newspaper in 1744.³³

This attitude made inevitable friction with the Lutheran patriarch Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. The latter shared Sauer's dislike for the vagabond preachers who toured the rural areas of the colonies preying upon instead of praying for the people, until their faults were revealed. More often than not the exposé came in Sauer's publications. Muhlenberg wanted to remedy the situation by a tight organization of the ministers with support by the European church authorities. Although

³¹ Sachse, *German Sectarians*, II: 47; Felix Reichmann and Eugene E. Doll, eds., *Ephrata as Seen by Contemporaries* (Allentown, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1953), 39-41.

³² D. F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Brethren in Colonial America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1967), 120.

³³ *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber*, No. LII (Nov. 16, 1744).

Sauer never personally attacked men of the caliber of Muhlenberg, he did write up church quarrels as they happened, and failed to support editorially Muhlenberg's projects. Because of this editorial policy, Sauer has often been portrayed as a vindictive enemy of the churches.³⁴

In reports to Halle, Muhlenberg bitterly complained about the trouble Sauer was causing him. When the Charity School came along, the Lutheran pastor implored its leaders to set up a rival German-language newspaper to counter Sauer's influence. He said that he would have done this himself if he had had the financial backing.³⁵

Despite this basic antagonism, the record is not completely one-sided. There is evidence of more positive relationships. Sauer, for example, passed on to Lutheran and Reformed clergy free Bibles sent to him from Europe, although some of the same men did everything they could to inhibit the sale of Sauer's own Bibles. A European scholar recently referred to Sauer as an "ecumenical book agent" in connection with his work in distributing European religious literature. More study is needed of the relationship between Sauer and the Lutheran chaplain Anton Wilhelm Boehme in England. At times Sauer called for unity among the churches and for an end to sectarian rivalry.³⁶

A final consideration involves the relationship of Sauer and Benjamin Franklin. A comparison of these two men is natural. Both were craftsmen of humble origins, both largely self-taught, both concerned with public affairs. There are, of course, major differences. Franklin has not often been accused of over-interest in religious matters except as they affected the course of public affairs. Sauer, on the other hand, can only be understood through his intense religious convictions.³⁷

There were business dealings between the two men. Franklin's ledgers show transactions for paper purchased by Sauer and reveal that Franklin secured German type from Sauer, perhaps extra type not needed

³⁴ Reichmann, *Sower*, 8-9; Erich Beyreuther, *August Hermann Francke und die Anfänge der ökumenischen Bewegung* (Hamburg-Bergstadt: Herbert Reich, 1957), 172.

³⁵ Leonard Labaree and others, eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962 ff.), 5: 418 ff.

³⁶ Reichmann, *Sower*, 8.

³⁷ Rumball-Petre, *America's First Bibles*, 14-15, has a good estimate of Sauer's character: "The more I have thought about Christopher Saur, however, the more I am sure that if we moderns could meet and talk with the real man, neither his practical enterprise, his commercial acumen, nor his pioneer spirit would chiefly impress us. We should probably be startled to note a certain preoccupied or rapt quality about the man, and, on closer acquaintance, a quiet, deeply religious character to all he did and said. A bibliographical study of Saur is no place in which to discuss the man's religious views, but Saur's religion was so deeply a personal matter that we cannot form a just bibliographical estimate of him, or of his Bible, without using it as the key with which to unlock doors leading to the solution of matters we have not previously understood."

after the completion of the 1743 Bible. When this Bible was announced, Franklin's newspaper carried the release and his printing office accepted preprinting subscriptions for it. Sauer returned the favor in 1751 when Franklin and his partner Boehme printed the classic pietist work, Johann Arndt's *True Christianity*.³⁸

The sharpest disagreement between Sauer and Franklin came over the question of preparation for war. Franklin, impatient with the reluctance of the Quaker-dominated assembly to take steps to defend Philadelphia against the attacks of privateers in 1747, wrote his famous tract *Plain Truth*. He was successful in arousing the populace and soon had Philadelphians organized and marching. Sauer was so opposed to this activity that he published, and likely wrote himself, three separate pamphlets in 1747-1748, attempting to refute Franklin point by point. He thought this the more necessary as Franklin's publication had been translated into German and was influencing the German-speaking inhabitants of Pennsylvania.³⁹

Sauer's answer to the problem of Indian warfare, which also concerned Franklin, was to treat the Indians fairly and to trust in the Lord. For Sauer, killing in war was simply murder: "He should rather let himself be killed if he cannot escape than be willing to kill or murder. Oh Pennsylvania! Thou hast a merciful god as well as on earth a kind king, neither of whom commands thee to take up the sword."⁴⁰

Another sharp controversy involved the Charity School project in which Franklin was deeply interested. Franklin was, in fact, the father of the plan, for in his many writings he expressed grave concern about the Germanization of Pennsylvania. Michael Schlatter took up the idea of schools to teach English to the Germans when he travelled on the continent and succeeded in winning church support. With Franklin's aid William Smith, the ambitious Anglican divine, picked up the idea and secured the backing of a well-placed committee of English leaders. Although announced as a purely philanthropic enterprise, the Charity School idea had definite political motivation. This is now recognized by scholars without exception.

Sauer immediately saw through the charitable facade and organized resistance among the Germans to the plan. He wrote: "I have been wondering . . . whether it is really true that [Franklin and his associates] have the slightest care for a real conversion of the ignorant Germans in Pennsylvania. . . . Concerning Hamilton, Peters, Allen, Turner, Shippen, and Franklin, I know that they care very little about religion, nor do they

³⁸ C. William Miller, "Way to Wealth," 241-242; Seidensticker, *First Century*, 37.

³⁹ Steckel, "Pietist," *passim*; Labaree, *Papers*, 3: 180 ff.

⁴⁰ Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 173-175.

care for the cultivation of the minds of the Germans." Sauer's readers recalled Franklin's aspersions on the "Palatine boors" and failed to support the movement. The German Reformed pastors, who early favored the plan, soon came to regret their involvement.⁴¹

It would be useful to know what Franklin thought specifically of Sauer, but his published papers reveal few direct references. That Franklin saw him as a competitor is clear from the repeated attempts made to set up counter German-language printing offices. He no doubt would grant to Sauer a grudging measure of respect for the technical skill, business acumen, and political influence which Sauer displayed. Again, it would be good to have more detailed study of the relationships between these men.

A recent article about Franklin as educator emphasized the stubborn championship by Sauer of the rights of the Pennsylvania Germans. Wrote Sauer: "You have the right to all the liberties of our English born and you have a share in the basic laws of the land. . . . You are men endowed with reason. Let me call upon you once more to use that reason, to take courage, and to assert your freedom."⁴²

The obituary of Christopher Sauer by his son, with which we conclude these remarks, strikes the same note. His father, the son wrote, was

always kind and friendly to friend and foe. He boasted neither of his skilfulness nor of his mind, but rather remained humble. He at all times was concerned for the good and freedom of his country, and he would neither by presents nor by the flattery of those who are important, be influenced to ignore this. For this reason he finally brought upon himself the hatred of those both large and small who would have been glad to see the country become subjected physically to bondage and slavery and spiritually to darkness and shadow so that they could fish in troubled waters. Yet he feared their hatred as little as he sought their favor, and kept a watchful open eye and disclosed their counsels wherever he noticed them.⁴³

In such a time of trouble and turbulence as our own we could use men of the caliber of Christopher Sauer, "publick printer" of Germantown.

⁴¹ The best survey is Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "Benjamin Franklin and the German Charity Schools," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, IC (December, 1955), 381-387; this is virtually identical with the editorial notes in the Franklin papers. The older description is Samuel Edwin Weber, *The Charity School Movement in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1754-1763* (Philadelphia: Campbell, 1905). A recent article on the same issue is Bruce R. Lively, "William Smith, the College and Academy of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Politics, 1753-1758," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, XXXVIII (1969), 237-258.

⁴² Jonathan Messerli, "Benjamin Franklin: Colonial and Cosmopolitan Educator," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XVI (1968), 43-59.

⁴³ Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America*, 379.