

# Johann Adam Gruber

## *Pennsylvania-German Prophet and Poet*

**J**OHANN ADAM GRUBER (1693-1763) is one of the least-known figures of colonial Pennsylvania, yet he played a significant role among the German element in the religious history of the first half of the eighteenth century. He was a prolific writer and poet and had numerous works published both in Europe and America. Before coming to Pennsylvania in 1726 he was a prominent leader in the unusual religious movement known as the Community of True Inspiration. This group later migrated to the New World where it established the well-known Amana Community in Iowa, one of the longest-lived and most successful of the many American religious communitarian experiments. In a recent study of Pennsylvania-German poetry Gruber has been called the "most important unattached religious leader in Colonial Pennsylvania," and in all probability the most gifted of the German poets, excepting only the talented but enigmatic leader of the Ephrata Community, Conrad Beissel.<sup>1</sup>

Johann Adam Gruber was born in the Duchy of Württemberg in 1693, the only son of a Lutheran clergyman, Eberhard Ludwig Gruber (1665-1728).<sup>2</sup> After losing a position in Grossbottwar (be-

<sup>1</sup> John Joseph Stoudt, *Pennsylvania German Poetry, 1685-1830* (Allentown, Pa., 1956), lxiii, 30. Gruber's poetic gift, humble occupation as a textile worker, and widespread correspondence invite comparison with his contemporary Gerhard Tersteegen, the great Reformed mystic of the Lower Rhine, with whom Gruber exchanged letters.

<sup>2</sup> The primary printed sources on the Grubers and the general history of the Inspired movement are: [Paul Giesbert Nagel], "Kurze Historie der Inspirirten und Inspirations-Gemeinden; Auf Teutsch: Der Propheten-Kinder . . .," *J.J.J. XVI. Sammlung. Das ist: Der XVI. Auszug aus denen Jahr-Büchern der Wahren Inspirations-Gemeinschaften aufrichtig und wahrhaftig heraus geschrieben, und von der Gemeinschaft ans Licht gestellt* . . . (n.p., 1772), 238-251; [Paul Giesbert Nagel], "Kurtze Historie der so genannten Inspirirten und Inspirations-Gemeinden, Auf Teutsch: Der Propheten-Kinder und Propheten-Schule," *J.J.J. XVII. Sammlung* . . . (n.p., 1776), 233-268; "Von Br. Eberhard Ludwig Gruber was wenigens zu melden, als der den 11. Christmonat dieses Jahrs 1728. seinen Kampf und Lauf und Lebens-Jahre seeliglich vollendet," *J.J.J. XVIII. Sammlung* . . . (n.p., 1780), 104-114, hereinafter

tween Stuttgart and Heilbronn) for sympathizing with dissenters from the state church, Pastor Gruber was permanently dismissed in 1706 from his pastorate at Grosspapen because he refused to administer the sacraments to his parishioners indiscriminately. He found refuge from the censure of the church in the small territory of Ysenburg-Büdingen east of Frankfurt/Main, one of the few areas in the Holy Roman Empire which afforded a measure of religious toleration in the eighteenth century. Here he earned a meager living for himself and his family as a farmer in the village of Himbach.

In an autobiographical statement, which is undated but which must have been written sometime between 1715 and 1717, young Gruber described his boyhood in a typically Pietist manner. The period before his religious conversion was one of great failings and backsliding, despite occasional resolutions to reform. Although adults praised him as a quiet, mannerly, and pious boy, inwardly he was full of turmoil and rebellion: "Even though I was punished by my conscience from within, and by my dear parents, especially by my dear father, from without . . . there was still no serious awakening or progress within me."<sup>3</sup>

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cited as E. L. Gruber's obituary. These rare books were published by the Community of the True Inspiration in Germany, and consist of the collected "prophecies" of the early leaders. The initials "J.J.J." stand for "Jesus, Jehova, Jmmanuel." A detailed history was written in Iowa by Gottlieb Scheuner, an Inspirationist, covering the period through 1818: *Inspirations-Historie . . . der Wahren Inspirations-Gemeinden . . .* (Amana, Iowa, 1884). The basic secondary works on the Inspired in Europe are both by Max Goebel: "Geschichte der wahren Inspirations-Gemeinden von 1688-1850," in J. Niedner, ed., *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie* (1854), 267-322, 377-438; (1855), 94-160, 327-425; and (1857), 131-151; and *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphälischen evangelischen Kirche* (Coblenz, 1860), III, 126-165. The former will hereinafter be cited as Goebel, "Inspirations-Gemeinden," and the latter, Goebel, *Geschichte*. The standard work on the Amana Community is Bertha M. H. Shambaugh, *Amana: The Community of True Inspiration* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1908).

<sup>3</sup> *A und O! Was schriftlich verwahrt, wird endlich hier durch den Druck offenbahrt; und ist die Gnädige und innige Erkenntnis und Bekantnisz nebst Wahrheitsvollen Kennzeichen und Gründen von der Göttlichkeit der wahren Inspiration, welche Br. Johann Adam Gruber, der Brüderlichen Gemeinschaft von eigener Hand hinterlassen; da er im Jahr 1726. mit den Seinigen nach Pensilvanien abreisete* (n.p., 1782), 6, hereinafter cited as Gruber, *Erkenntnisz*. Copies of this rare volume of one hundred pages have been seen in the Wittgensteinische Synodal-Bibliothek, Laasphe/Lahn (WSynBibl Laasphe), and the Universitäts-Bibliothek, Bonn/Rh. (UBibl Bonn). The former is part of a collection gathered from the Inspired of that area by the Reformed Superintendent Winckel, the latter from the collection acquired by the library from Max Goebel, who had secured it from the Inspired in Neuwied. There is a complete collection of Inspired publications and many manuscripts in the Amana Community archive in Iowa.

As a youth he was apprenticed to the Württemberg court apothecary "An der groszen Linden" in Neuenstadt. After a year and a half, however, his father brought him back to Himbach because the environment was not conducive to his spiritual growth. Johann Adam was then taught the weaver's trade in his father's house, where he could be kept under closer control. Father Gruber himself wrote, ". . . I kept him under exact and usually severe discipline and supervision."<sup>4</sup>

The stories of fellow weavers roused in Johann Adam a desire to see the world as a journeyman. One evening in April, 1714, he had a serious argument with his father and the next morning left home without his parents' knowledge or permission. Failing to find work in Hanau and Frankfurt, he prepared to travel on to Nürnberg. But, through a series of events which both father and son considered providential, he was led to return home. The prodigal humbly begged for forgiveness, and the father, in his joy at his son's return, resolved not to be so strict with him in the future.<sup>5</sup>

It was at this stage in Gruber's life that he came into contact with the Inspired. The movement had originated after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the violent Camisard uprising in the Cévennes area of France against the brutal Catholicizing program of King Louis XIV. The desperate situation of the radical Huguenots provided the psychological basis for a contagious series of extreme physical convulsions, which terminated in speaking in tongues and ecstatic prophecies. These latter were usually taken down word for word by scribes, because those affected had no recollection of their speeches after regaining normality. "French prophets" was the name by which some remnants of the outlawed group were known in England, where they had fled for refuge. In England, however, they were rejected by their fellow Huguenot refugees, who would have no part of their radical messages, and other dissenting groups, including the Society of Friends, were soon disillusioned in them. Although they made very little lasting impact in England, they did influence the

<sup>4</sup> "J.J.J. Eberhard Ludwig Grubers . . . Treulich-abgefassete Erzählung, wie sich die sonst so überl-angesehene [*sic*], und hin und wider verschreyete Inspirations Sache in seiner Seelen Legitimiret habe . . .," f.13, hereinafter cited as E. L. Gruber, "Erzählung." This is a manuscript copy of a statement (which was later published) in the Fürstlich Ysenburg-und Büdingisches Archiv, Büdingen, Kulturwesen 29/212 (FYBA Büdingen).

<sup>5</sup> Gruber, *Erkenntnis*, 7-8, and E. L. Gruber, "Erzählung," ff. 13-15.

beginnings of the Shaker movement, which later established numerous communities in America.

A group of the prophets also traveled extensively in Germany, seeking followers among the religiously disaffected. They were most successful in Halle, the Pietist citadel, where they won their first German adherents despite the opposition of August Hermann Francke. Three brothers named Pott, all students at Halle, themselves received the gift of inspiration and began delivering prophecies with attendant manifestations. By 1714 the Potts had found their way to the Ysenburg area, where all radical movements of the time arrived sooner or later. The elder Gruber had heard of the new movement from Pietist friends who were impressed with the prophets, but was himself much opposed to it. He could not see how anything so repellent as their seizures could have a divine origin. Were these not, rather, the workings of the Anti-Christ! He was grieved to see that his children, especially Johann Adam, were captivated by the exciting strangers.

By coincidence, on November 13, 1714, the twenty-one-year-old Gruber was at the house of a neighbor when the Inspired held one of their impromptu meetings there. He saw and heard the eldest brother Pott, Tobias: "The words of the Lord which he spoke, powerfully penetrated me and seemed to me to be very majestic, and otherwise, his testimony appealed to me very much."<sup>6</sup> Two days later, the group came to the Gruber home, where, after great travail of soul, the elder Gruber finally became convinced of the genuineness of the prophecies. He, too, received the gift, and was to become one of the two outstanding leaders of the movement in Germany. On the next day, November 16, the prophets formed the "Meeting for United Prayer" (*Versammlung zur Gebäths-Vereinigung*), which is considered to be the birth of the Community of True Inspiration. One reason for the success of the Inspired in this area was the general decline of spirituality among the separatists living there; the dramatic innovation of the prophets answered a need. Well-grounded in the Bible as the separatists were, they had no trouble in identifying the convulsions of these prophets with those of the Old Testament, whose messages, indeed, were often accompanied by strange motions, and

<sup>6</sup> Gruber, *Erkenntnis*, 9.

with the glossalia that had accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.<sup>7</sup>

Johann Adam was so moved by these events that he wept for several days without stopping. When the group met again he was relieved of this burden, only to begin the typical palsied trembling (*Bewegungen*) which accompanied the prophecies of the Potts. Of this new experience, he wrote that it seemed "very strange at first, because I greatly feared false spirits, but yet, I had a secret joy within me at the same time."<sup>8</sup> His convulsions lasted all that night, all the next day, and into the evening, when he was led to make his initial prophecy, at first one word at a time, and then a two-hour-long message. He had become an "Instrument" (*Werkzeug*) of God.

In his own description of these marvelous events, Gruber listed ten reasons why the inspiration must be of God, including the tremendous change which had occurred within himself. His experience was also influential in removing his father's last doubts concerning the validity of the inspiration.<sup>9</sup> Gruber was to keep this gift of prophecy for more than three years, eventually losing it during a dispute with his father over the direction of the movement.

The reaction of the civil authorities was, not surprisingly, one of annoyance. It has ever been the lot of prophets to be considered troublemakers and fanatics. The officials of the Count of Ysenburg-Büdingen felt that the Inspired were abusing their privilege of asylum, since elsewhere the slightest deviation from the state church was grounds for severest punishment. The local official of the count reported on March 3, 1715, that despite an earlier warning the group "more than ever practiced an alarming tumult and disturbance in those homes where they live and were gathered together, to the great burden and liability of the owners, with shocking leaping, raging, crying, and shouting 'Woe! Woe!' and prophesying the most alarming judgment of God on town and country." Worst of all, the Inspired dared to deliver these warnings of damnation to the authorities and even to the count himself. The young people of the area were becoming excited, and were beginning to be affected by the prophets.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*; E. L. Gruber, "Erzählung," ff. 1-13.

<sup>8</sup> Gruber, *Erkenntnis*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-26; E. L. Gruber, "Erzählung," ff. 22-23, also published in English translation in Shambaugh, 226-227. See also Scheuner, I, 13-14.

When the local official ordered the prophets to leave the county within twenty-four hours, they protested. Finally,

. . . as I thereupon noticed that Gruber's son appeared to be about to have one of their usual paroxysms, I bade them good night. At the same time, I admonished the elder Gruber to control his son, and not permit him to pursue this disorderly conduct. However, he defended everything to the extreme, and considered all of their activity to be entirely divine. He could not influence his son in these matters, much less contradict him, and other similar protests without any basis.<sup>10</sup>

Young Gruber's importance to the Community of True Inspiration can be seen from the fact that he was the Instrument chosen to pronounce the "Twenty-Four Rules of True Godliness," which, from the date of revelation on July 4, 1716, to this very century, have been the foundation of the movement. Evidently first printed in 1822, the rules have been used as the basis of faith which all new members accept, as do the young people of the communities in a kind of confirmation service. The rules are in the form of a covenant between God and his true followers, calling them to a separated and profoundly devout life.<sup>11</sup> During the first years of the movement, Gruber was especially called upon to detect and exorcise "false prophets" against whom the "true prophets" were very zealous. Later, an overseer was delegated to assume this function.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the hymns of the Inspired were written by Gruber, and appear in their hymnal *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel*, first published in 1718 in Switzerland and later reprinted many times both in Europe and America. The numerous Sauer editions were the standard song-books for the Pennsylvania-German sectarians.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it was

<sup>10</sup> Specie Facti, A. Quans to the councilors, Mar. 3, 1715, FYBA Büdingen, Kulturwesen 29/212.

<sup>11</sup> J.J.J. 1 ter Beytrag zur Fortsetzung der wahren Inspirations-Gemeinschaften . . . Enthaltend: 24 Regeln der wahren Gottseligkeit und des Gnaden-Bundes mit Gott, so die Glaubigen in denen Gemeinden zu beherzigen haben; Vom Herrn bezeugt, durch J. A. Gruber anno 1716. . . . (Büdingen, 1822), copies in UBibl Bonn and the British Museum; also published in English translation in Shambaugh, 267-276.

<sup>12</sup> Shambaugh, 235. A Swiss prophet named Hans Ulrich Giezendanner, for example, was completely humbled by Gruber in September, 1716, at the Castle Ronneburg in Ysenburg and exposed as acting from human rather than divine motivation. Paul Wernle, *Der schweizerische Protestantismus im XVIII. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1923), I, 189.

<sup>13</sup> *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel der Kinder Zions* . . . (Schaffhausen, 1718); Shambaugh, 306-307.

Gruber who wrote a small volume of moral instruction for the children of the Inspired: *Children's Voice, or Guide to the Child-like Praise and Youth-Exercises of the Child, composed through the Impulse of the Spirit by One who longs for the Childlike Spirit of Christ in Sincerity of the Heart*.<sup>14</sup> First published in 1717, and again in 1821, it became the basis for the education of all children in the Communities of True Inspiration in America.

Gruber's early desire for travel was now to be gratified. The call of the Lord was often heard in the prophecies, directing certain of the prophets to undertake long journeys throughout Germany and even into Switzerland. Such trips were not to be undertaken lightly, for traveling was strenuous and hazardous in those uncertain times, and the prophets journeyed, as did the apostles, by foot. The warnings of impending doom which they delivered to town councils and clergy often brought them immediate arrest and, usually, rough treatment. Traveling companions and scribes were always sent along, so that every word uttered in the prophecies (*Aussprachen*) could be preserved. After the Instruments had lost the gift of prophecy or had died, these manuscripts were read in gatherings of the Inspired, and attained the status of Holy Writ.<sup>15</sup>

During one of Gruber's trips in Germany, he and Blasius Daniel Mackinet (who also later came to Philadelphia) met two rabbis in Prague on January 30, 1716. The elderly Jews asked Gruber how the word of the Lord came to him. His description of the remarkable condition which enabled him to speak for the Lord was recorded by Mackinet:

The *Werkzeug* or the Prophet feels at first in his innermost being a gentle and pleasant glow which gradually becomes more intense and also fills the external body. Thereupon results an inflation of the nose, a trembling of the whole body, often attended by kicking with hands or feet and shaking of

<sup>14</sup> *Kinder-Stimme oder Anleitung zum kindlichen Lob und Jugend-Uebungen der Kinder, durch den Trieb des Geistes verfasst von einem, der nach dem kindlichen Geist Christi in Aufrichtigkeit des Herzens sich sehnet* (n.p., 1717); the second edition adds "Von J.A.G." A copy of the latter is in Bonn. See Shambaugh, 191, for a facsimile of the title page of the first edition. Another Gruber publication was *Gebeth des Herrn, nebst der göttl. Antwort darauf* (n.p., 1718).

<sup>15</sup> Many of the *Aussprachen* were later printed and are the primary source for the history of the movement, since trips, places, and persons attending meetings are added to each record. The facsimile of a title page of one of the publications containing such prophetic utterances by Gruber is found in Shambaugh, 33.

the head. And in the centre of this internal fire the word of the Lord is born; and the Prophet is enabled through the *Bewegungen* to pronounce the word of the Lord without fear or awe, as it was born in him, at times syllable by syllable, at times word by word, now slowly now rapidly, so that the Werkzeug had no choice of its own, but was used solely as a passive instrument in the hands of the Lord.<sup>16</sup>

Mackinet also gave a description of his own:

With regard to the *Bewegungen* the *Werkzeuge* were not alike, although they were all moved by one Spirit; there was considerable difference in regard to their gifts and convulsions. When they had to announce punishments and judgments of God, they all did it with great force, majestic gestures, strong *Bewegungen*, and with a true voice of thunder, especially if this occurred on the public street or in churches. But when they had to speak of the love of God and the glory of the children of God, then their motions were gentle and the gestures pleasing; but all, and in all attitudes assumed by them, spoke they with closed eyes. Often they had, previous to the *Bewegungen*, a feeling of its approach. Again they were seized suddenly, often at their meals, by day and by night. At times they were aroused from their slumber and had to testify, frequently on the public highways, in fields and forests. In short they were instruments in the hands of the Lord and had no control over themselves.<sup>17</sup>

Probably the longest and most difficult of Gruber's many journeys was made in 1716-1717 through southern Germany, Alsace, and most of Switzerland.<sup>18</sup> He was accompanied by Mackinet and Heinrich Sigmund Gleim. Their itinerary in Switzerland took them from Schaffhausen through Winterthur, Bern, Biel, Yverdon, Lausanne, Vevey, Thun, Zürich, and back to Schaffhausen. Their first contacts were with the scattered circles of Swiss Pietists, some of whom welcomed them, while others made it clear that the Inspired were not wanted. In Schaffhausen their arrival ended in the defrocking of six young Swiss pastors and students of theology, who

<sup>16</sup> Shambaugh, 239.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-237.

<sup>18</sup> A detailed account of the trip and Gruber's *Aussprachen* during it was published in 1718: J.J.J. Busz-Weck-und Warungsstimme, welche der Geist der wahren Inspiration in dem Dietzischen, Zweybrückischen, Elsass und in der Schweiz insonderheit erschallen lassen im Jahr 1716. und 1717. durch Johann Adam Gruber . . . (n.p., 1718); copies seen in UBibl Bonn, WSynBibl Laasphe, Fürstlich Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburgische Bibliothek, Berleburg, and Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Théologie de l'Eglise évangélique libre du Canton de Vaud, Lausanne. A facsimile of the title page is given in Shambaugh, 20.



had been under suspicion of Pietism for some time. Their refusal to avoid contacts with the Inspired gave the authorities the needed excuse to punish them.<sup>19</sup>

In Zürich the prophets were moved to predict God's drastic judgment upon the city fathers for their many and obvious sins, which did not please the sturdy Swiss at all. Gruber and his companions were immediately seized, tried, and sentenced. They were placed in iron collars, whipped out of town, each receiving sixty-two lashes, and banished forever.<sup>20</sup>

It was late in 1717 that Gruber and his father had differences over the direction of the Inspired movement. Johann Adam refused to accept the authority of his father's leadership and shortly thereafter lost the gift of prophecy. He married about 1720 against his parents' will. His wife, whose first name was Elizabeth, seems to have been an overbearing person, to whose wishes Gruber acquiesced. When a wave of migration fever swept the county of Wittgenstein, where the Gruber family lived after 1715, the young couple decided to emigrate with their two children, largely because of the urging of the wife and her relatives.<sup>21</sup>

The impetus to the migration of separatists from Wittgenstein came from one of their number, Christopher Sauer (1695-1758), who later became famous for his press in Germantown. Sauer had migrated in 1724, and wrote back letters describing Pennsylvania as an "earthly paradise" of cheap land and complete liberty. More than

<sup>19</sup> Wernle, 190-192, cites the printed defense of the Schaffhausen Pietists, *Das Zeugnis der Wahrheit* (n.p., 1721); W. Hadorn, *Geschichte des Pietismus in den Schweizerischen Reformierten Kirchen* (Konstanz and Emmishofen, 1901), 186-187. See also Henri Vuilleumier, *Historie de L'Eglise Reformée du Pays de Vaud* (Lausanne, 1930), III, *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> Wernle, 191; Hadorn, 190-193; K.R. Hagenbach, *Die Kirchengeschichte des achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* . . . (Leipzig, 1856), 177; and Shambaugh, 29-30, 327. The Inspired issued a special publication about this ordeal: *Joh. A. Grubers und H. S. Gleims Leiden zu Zürich* (n.p., n.d.); title taken from Shambaugh. Other records of Gruber's activities still exist in Switzerland. In the library at Bern is a long manuscript booklet concerning Gruber's visit to the Bernese Oberland: "Enthusiasmus eines Berner Pansen [?], Leisigen/Thuner See, 18.-24. Dez. 1716, Joh. Adam Gruber bei Pfr. Hopf, Henerich v. Gleim, Pfr. Keller, v. Battenberg, Mackinet, über das heil. Vater Unser," MSS.Hist.Helv.I/66, Burgerbibliothek, Bern. See also "Vision von Johann Adam Gruber (Sept. 16, 1717)," bound in a volume in the Zentralbibliothek, Zürich, MSC. S 344.

<sup>21</sup> Goebel, "Inspirations-Gemeinden," II, 120. His wife's last name is not known; in two letters Gruber mentions his brother-in-law Stieffel, but this could also refer to the husband of a sister.

one hundred people decided to embark on the hazardous journey, part of the great stream of German emigrants who sought relief from the burdensome and unhappy life in their mother country.<sup>22</sup>

Gruber's father was very much opposed to his son's intentions, and was joined in his disapproval by the entire Inspired Community. Many were the predictions of dire results if Gruber went ahead with his plans. A last *Aussprache* given by Gruber himself in the Ysenburg area before his departure indicated his own divided loyalties and hesitation.<sup>23</sup>

The first letter he sent back from America, was written from Germantown on December 14, 1726, in a most humble and penitent tone. Gruber pleaded for forgiveness for the grief he had caused his parents. He had already been punished for his disobedience: "It was primarily because of my children that I went along on this trip, and I have lost them at sea. Moreover, I had to watch them perish, and, so to speak, die of thirst." Their ship captain had been a tyrant who had even tried to deliver them to a southerly port instead of Philadelphia. The passengers had been so disorderly and repugnant that Gruber could hardly control himself. "Oh, how often have I then wished to be with my dear parents for only one hour, in order to pour out my heart to them, and to entreat them to forgive the sorrow which I have caused them."<sup>24</sup>

The trip lasted twenty-one weeks from Rotterdam, fifteen of them after leaving England. The allotted place in the ship for Gruber, his wife and two children, their beds and victuals was two and a half feet wide, five and a half feet long, and four feet high. At first the ship's ration was two pints of water per person per day, later one pint, and finally only one-half pint. For more than three weeks they received but two ounces of bread and seven or eight spoonfuls of

<sup>22</sup> Joh.Christoph Sauer to his friends, Dec. 1, 1724, Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitäts-Bibliothek, Göttingen, Cod.Ms.821, published in English translation by R. W. Kelsey, "An Early Description of Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (PMHB), XLV (1921), 243-254; and Joh.Christoph Sauer to his friends, Aug. 1, 1725, Fürstlich Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburgisches Archiv, Berleburg, K 36. See also Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer, Pennsylvania-German Printer. His Youth in Germany and Later Relationships with Europe," PMHB, LXXXII (1958), 316-340.

<sup>23</sup> Gruber, *Erkenntnis*, 27-30. There seems to be some inconsistency between the report of his losing the gift of inspiration in 1717 and this record.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

barley a day. He had to watch his older child die during the eighth week, and the younger during the fourteenth week, although he went without water for four days or more at a time so that the children might have a bit more soup. His wife was still very ill at the time of his writing, and they both looked like skeletons. After this tale of woe it is surprising to read Gruber's wish that his parents might also be in America because of the freedom there and the fertility of the land.<sup>25</sup>

Gruber undertook the difficult ocean voyage again the very next year to reconcile himself with his parents. However, despite the pleas of his father, then sixty-two years old, who wished him to stay longer because of a premonition of death, Gruber returned to his wife in Germantown in 1728. Then, when the elder Gruber did die on December 11, 1728, the son had cause again to repent his impiety.<sup>26</sup>

Although land was cheaper in the backcountry, because of his trade as a weaver Gruber decided to settle in Germantown. He found that his trade was "very useful, even rare, in this country."<sup>27</sup> He bought land along the Main Street, now Germantown Avenue, disposing of six acres of it to Christopher Sauer in 1731.<sup>28</sup>

On October 28, 1730, Gruber wrote a letter to friends in Wittgenstein which was printed in a separatist periodical in Berleburg by

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-37. His fellow passenger was Frau Rübekam (Rubicam), in all probability the widow of the Hessian pastor Johann Philip Rübencam, who migrated to America at about this time with her large family, which became so prominent in later generations. See Karl Hartnack, "Wittgenstein in der Weltkultur," *Wittgenstein: Blätter des Wittgensteiner Heimatvereins e.V.*, XLIV (1956), Vol. 20, No. 1/2, 34.

<sup>26</sup> E. L. Gruber's obituary, 10; "Pensilvanisches Christenthum," *Geistliche Fama, mitbringend Neue Begebenheiten und Nachrichten von göttlichen Erweckungen, Wegen und Gerichten* (Philadelphia [Berleburg], 1731), I, iii, No. 4, 49, hereinafter cited as *Geistliche Fama*. Gruber composed a moving elegy on his father, two verses of which were published by Goebel, "Inspirations-Gemeinden," II, 120-121.

<sup>27</sup> Gruber, *Erkenntnis*, 35.

<sup>28</sup> The transfer was not officially completed until 1750. Indenture in the Cassel Collection, Juniata College; Deed Book H I, 129, quoted in Julius Sachse, *The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania, 1708-1742* . . . (Philadelphia, 1899), 315-316. On Feb. 26, 1761, Gruber and his wife sold Christopher Sauer II a strip of land at the same site. The original parchment deed is in the Germantown Historical Society, MS IV. In the will of Sauer II, the residence is listed as adjoining the land "late of Adam Gruber, now of Thomas Saltar. . . ." Dieter Cunz, "Two Christopher Sower Documents," *PMHB*, LXIX (1945), 62. Another neighbor was John Gardner, upon whose death the auction sale notice of 1801 listed a lot of twelve acres "adjoining land of the late John Adam Gruber, deceased. . . ." *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 3, 1801.

Dr. Samuel Carl, formerly a member of the Inspired. Gruber reported that spiritual life in America was poor, except for the awakening led by Conrad Beissel which had resulted in the Ephrata Community: "Socianism, Naturalism, and Atheism are expanding greatly here and there." For this reason, Gruber fervently wished that some of his brethren could come to him, or that he could go to them, so that they might exhort one another in the Lord. But since his wife would not permit the latter, "I have to remain patient until God arranges otherwise."<sup>29</sup> In general, Gruber lived a quiet, retired life, joining none of the many German sectarian groups and unable to organize a group of Inspired.

When the Moravian missionary August Gottlieb Spangenberg came to Pennsylvania in 1736, he soon became acquainted with Gruber. Spangenberg, who was to be the successor to Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf as the leader of the renewed Moravian church (Unitas Fratrum), was greatly respected by the German separatists and sectarians because of his piety, humble manners, earnestness, and winsome personality. They were much impressed at the willingness of the former professor at Halle to labor in the fields with his hands.

Spangenberg worked with great tact to organize a group of the German separatists into a regular meeting, and was successful in winning Gruber to this cause. In 1736 Gruber circulated anonymously a manuscript appeal for union which provided the impetus for the founding of the Associated Brethren of the Skippack in the Perkiomen Valley region,<sup>30</sup> a group which has been credited with taking the first real step toward uniting independent denominations in America.<sup>31</sup> The efforts of Gruber and Spangenberg almost won over the outstanding separatist among the Pennsylvania Germans,

<sup>29</sup> "Extract-Schreiben aus J. A. Gr[ubers] Brief aus Germantown," *Geistliche Fama*, I, iii, No. 4, 50-52, published in English translation in Sachse, 204-206, and, partially, in Felix Reichmann and Eugene E. Doll, eds., *Ephrata as Seen by Contemporaries* (Allentown, Pa., 1953), 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> [Johann Adam Gruber], "Gründliche An-und Aufforderung an die ehemalg erweckte hier und da zerstreute Seelen dieses Landes, in oder ausser Partheyen, zur neuen Umfassung, gliedlicher Vereinigung, und Gebets-Gemeinschaft; Dargelegt aus dringendem Hertzen eines in Heilung der Brüche Zions ängstlich bekümmertem Gemüths, im Jahr 1736," hereinafter cited as Gruber, "Aufforderung." See also Sachse, 423ff.

<sup>31</sup> Don Yoder, "Christian Unity in Nineteenth-Century America," in Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, eds., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* (London, 1954), 229.

Christopher Sauer. In a letter written to a friend in Berleburg, Sauer described the "danger" he faced in being drawn into the association: "The young G[ruber], my nearest neighbor, was previously very much occupied in building a, or rather, this congregation here, about which he has often approached me. The magic which worked on me violently would have certainly disturbed my brain, if my resting place had been there. . . ." <sup>32</sup> The strong-minded Sauer refused to participate in the movement, however.

Although Gruber had undoubtedly had this desire for union for some years, as evidenced by his own letters, and although his appeal was issued without Spangenberg's knowledge, it was Spangenberg's own glowing descriptions of the mother Moravian community at Herrnhut that had provided the impulse for writing. The Moravians were especially eager to unite the "awakened" members of all denominations; their settlements at Herrnhut in Saxony and Herrnhag in Ysenburg were colorful mixtures of all creeds, nationalities, and races. Spangenberg sent Gruber's manuscript to Count Zinzendorf in Germany where it was read before the community. The count and the weaver also exchanged letters. In 1738, Gruber wrote a poem, "Song of Praise at the Arisen Hope of Better Times," which may be taken as an indication of his sanguine feelings. <sup>33</sup>

When Count Zinzendorf himself came to Pennsylvania in late 1741, however, and attempted to bring the various German religious groups together in the famous synods, it was Gruber who became his most articulate opponent. The reason for this seeming shift in attitude is not clear, but several factors are involved.

In the first place, Gruber was undoubtedly influenced by the negative reports coming from the Inspired in Germany about the

<sup>32</sup> "Extract aus J.C.S. Schreiben aus Germantown in Pensylvanien *de dato* den 17. Novemb. 1738," *Abdruck einiger wahrhaften Berichte und Briefe eines sichern Freundes zu Germantown in Pensylvanien vom 17. Novembr. 1738. Betreffende den innund äusserlichen Zustand dererjenigen die dahin gezogen etc.* . . . (Berleburg, 1739), from a probably unique copy in the Fürstlich Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohensteinische Archiv at Laasphe/Lahn; this also appears in the *Geistliche Fama*, III, xxv, No. 4, 74-96. It is possible that Gruber wrote one or more of the additional three letters published in this sixteen-page pamphlet.

<sup>33</sup> "Lobes-Schall bey aufgegangener Hoffnung besserer Zeiten," in *Geistliche Fama*, III, xxix, No. 8, 100-104. I attribute the anonymous poem to Gruber because it is printed as the first of three pieces under the title "Etwas aus America," the other two being written by Gruber. An editorial note states that the poem was printed in Germantown, which would certainly make it a product of the Sauer press, although no copy is known nor is it listed in any of the standard bibliographies.

great controversy raging there over Zinzendorf and the Moravian communities. As early as 1730, the young count had attempted to combine his new and struggling movement with the older and better-known Inspired group in the Wittgenstein and Ysenburg areas. At one time, he offered the Inspired leader Johann Friedrich Rock a position as elder of the Herrnhut community, after inviting the anti-sacramental prophet to be the godfather of his infant son. Not surprisingly, the original cordiality had turned to competition and enmity by 1736 when Zinzendorf called Rock a false prophet. The repercussions of this animosity were not confined to Germany. In speaking of the Gruber-Zinzendorf quarrel, the most recent biographer of Zinzendorf states: "Adding to the misunderstanding on Gruber's part was his close connection, through correspondence, with Rock in Germany with whom Zinzendorf had parted company some years before."<sup>34</sup>

The ill-will between Rock and Zinzendorf was well aired in numerous tracts and pamphlets. The polemics against the Moravians coming from the separatists became almost as bitter as the stream of invective published by the defenders of Lutheran orthodoxy.<sup>35</sup> Many of these tracts were sent to America by Andreas Gross of Frankfurt/Main, a Pietist, at one time a member of the Inspired, and for many years a bookdealer in Frankfurt where he was the center of all separatist activity in that area. He corresponded with both Gruber and Sauer, acted as an agent for Sauer's publications, and was generally the middleman between the Germantown separatists and those in Germany interested in accounts of Zinzendorf's activities in America, especially the Frankfurt Lutheran pastor, Johann Philip Fresenius.<sup>36</sup>

In 1743 Gruber prepared a report on his relationships with the Moravians from the time of his acquaintance with Spangenberg in 1736 until the period following Zinzendorf's departure. This report was sent to Germany, along with numerous enclosures, supporting documents, and printed works. There, they were reprinted, or pub-

<sup>34</sup> John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York, 1956), 168.

<sup>35</sup> The best description of this controversy is found in Goebel, "Inspirations-Gemeinden," II, 137-160. Goebel used all the contemporary writings, and tends to feel that the Inspired were the wronged party.

<sup>36</sup> On Gross and his writings, see Goebel, *Geschichte*, III, *passim*; and Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus* (Bonn/Rh., 1880-1886), II, 346; III, 307, 367.

lished for the first time, by Fresenius in his three-volume anti-Moravian work. Almost eight hundred pages of the third volume are given over to these materials—"American News of Moravian Matters."<sup>37</sup>

Gruber and his fellow separatists were disappointed to see their friend Spangenberg return to Germany. They were even more unhappy when they learned that Spangenberg, who Gruber states had promised to try to correct some of the shortcomings of the Moravians as Gruber saw them, was not only unsuccessful in this, but was himself changed. Worst of all, in their eyes, a marriage for Spangenberg was arranged by his church. Many of the separatists considered marriage to be less holy than celibacy, a belief with which Spangenberg himself seemed to agree while in America, and they were much exercised by what they had heard concerning the Moravian overemphasis on marriage. The Moravian emissaries sent in Spangenberg's place, the shoemaker Andreas Eschenbach and, later, Bishop David Nitschmann and Anna Nitschmann, were not as well received as Spangenberg. According to Gruber, they talked depreciatingly of their predecessor. Gruber was suspicious of the great activity of the Moravians, and recommended that God be allowed to work out His plans without the corrupt aid of men.

For all these reasons, Gruber felt impelled, in mid-1741, to compose two poems to warn his fellow separatists against the Moravians.<sup>38</sup> His attitude was strengthened when he received Zinzendorf's

<sup>37</sup> Johann Philip Fresenius, *Bewährte Nachrichten von Herrnhutischen Sachen* (Frankfurt/Main and Leipzig, 1747-1748), iii, 87-872, hereinafter cited as Fresenius, *Nachrichten*. It is unlikely that Gruber's report was printed in America on the Sauer press, as several bibliographers, who have taken the title from Fresenius, indicate. In a long letter written by Sauer to a friend in Germany (undoubtedly Andreas Gross) on Nov. 6, 1747, he spoke of sending two reports about the Moravians: "In the first [box] Gruber and I sent our thoughts about Zinzendorf's ♣ [holy?] kingdom; mine was about 7 quires [in length], and Gruber's 3, closely written." This may well have been Gruber's report. Sauer's letter is found in the appendix to Gustav Mori, *Die Egenolff-Luthersche Schriftgiesserei in Frankfurt am Main und ihre geschäftlichen Verbindungen mit den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Frankfurt/Main, 1926), No. 4, 39-41.

<sup>38</sup> *Einfältige Warnungs- und Wächter-Stimme an die gerufene Seelen dieser Zeit. Verfasset im Jahr 1741. Von einem Geringen* (Germantown, 1741), printed by Sauer and reprinted in Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 4, 297-300, and *Geistliche Fama*, III, xxix, No. 8, 113-114, and recently republished by Stoudt, 33-34. The second poem was evidently not published by Sauer. Its first line was: "Weg mit allerley Verstellung," and was published by Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 4, 300-303, with a note that it was composed on Aug. 22, 1741; it is reprinted in Stoudt, 31-32.

rebuttal to a book written by Andreas Gross, in which the count expressed his wish that Gross would perish within the year: "This opened my eyes still more, to see what kind of a spirit that was. I was most astonished about the many bombastic, procuratorial, ambiguous, vindictive, censorious, and unchristian expressions. I had to think: 'Is this from a so highly praised apostolic man, a follower of the crucified Jesus, and moreover, spoken against a friend of the Truth?' "39

It was with this background that Gruber had his first encounter with the count in December, 1741, shortly after the arrival of Zinzendorf and his party in America. Gruber had been advised that the count wished to stay overnight in his house in Germantown. On the evening of December 7, Zinzendorf, with some of his adherents, came to Gruber's house, but left again the same evening, explaining that he always stayed in his own lodgings so as to avoid the appearance of playing favorites. Gruber seems to have been hurt by this, although the count's daughter and the two Nitschmanns stayed for the evening meal.<sup>40</sup> It was while at Gruber's house that Zinzendorf began arrangements with Sauer for the printing of the first American Moravian hymnal, *Hirten Lieder von Bethlehem*.

Shortly thereafter, on December 15, Heinrich Antes, one of the Skippack Brethren, sent out invitations to the first of the synods proposed by Zinzendorf. The appeal sent to Germantown was addressed to his friend Gruber. In a long reply, Gruber rejected the invitation, accusing Antes of being merely the tool or front for the Moravians whose intention was to proselytize among the other Germans. He sharply censured Antes for venturing to call such a meeting in the name of God. It is perhaps unkind to read into this criticism a human disappointment on Gruber's part in seeing the initiative which he had taken in 1736 being replaced by that of Antes and Zinzendorf.<sup>41</sup> It was then, however, that Gruber composed his sharp

<sup>39</sup> "Eines Geringen Bericht was sich zwischen ihm und Herrn Ludwig und andern seiner Zugehörigen in der Herrnhuter Sache in Jahr und Tag begeben 1743. samt denen nöthigen Belegen," Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 3, 269, hereinafter cited as Gruber, "Bericht." See also Ritschl, III, 307, 367.

<sup>40</sup> Gruber, "Bericht," 269-271.

<sup>41</sup> "Henrich Antes Einladungs-Schreiben zur Conferenz, so er an die Germantowner Freunde gesandt, und an J. A. Gruber adressiret," and "J. A. Grubers Antwort auf Henrich Antes Circular-Schreiben," Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 5, 1 and 2, 303-304, 304-314.



attack on the proposed conferences or synods, partly in prose and partly in verse, which Sauer later published.<sup>42</sup> His stand aroused considerable complaint from his friends, who naturally confronted him with his earlier zeal for union.

Count Zinzendorf sought to win Gruber to his cause by a veritable bombardment of messages, visitors, and frequent use of the lot—that favored Moravian method of determining that their actions were really inspired by God. Gruber was promised the position of an elder in the group, reminiscent of Zinzendorf's offer to Rock. The second appeal was as fruitless as the first. The quietist Gruber saw in the whirlwind energies and plans of the count only the vain workings of man, and became ever more adamant in his refusal to co-operate. Once, Zinzendorf actually came to stay overnight with Gruber, only to hurry away early the next morning before Gruber could talk with him. The count eventually warned Gruber that he was in mortal danger of committing blasphemy, the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit, by his stubbornness. Gruber finally refused even to open the count's letters, and appealed that he be left in peace.

The controversy received full notice in the press. Sauer was happy to print the anti-Moravian material, and Zinzendorf used the rival Franklin press to present his case before the public. When Gruber presented the count with a printed copy of his *Wächter-Stimme*, which had been widely circulated "and was not without some blessing," Zinzendorf reprinted it himself as an appendix to the record of the second synod, and in parallel columns added his own rhymed refutation to particular verses.<sup>43</sup>

Gruber sent Heinrich Antes and other former friends who had joined with Zinzendorf a list of thirty-two questions to be answered.

<sup>42</sup> *Ein Zeugnis eines Betrübten, der seine Klage ausschüttet über die unzeitige, eigenmächtige, übereyhte Zusammen-Berufung und Sammlung verschiedener Partheyen und erweckten Seelen, so unter dem Namen Immanuel's vorgegeben wird* (Germantown, 1742), reprinted in Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 6, 314-320, and *Geistliche Fama*, III, xxix, No. 8, 105-115.

<sup>43</sup> Gruber, "Bericht," 279; [N. L. von Zinzendorf], "Liebes-Echo Einiger Versammelten Seelen die geruffen sind, und die kommen wollen, auf die gehörte Warnungs- und Wächterstimme des Geringen," *Authentische Nachricht von der Verhandlung und dem Verlasz der am 14den und 15den Januarii Anno 1741/42. . . . gehaltenen zweyten Versammlung. . . . Nebst einigen Beylagen* (Philadelphia, [1742]), No. 3, 38-40; copy seen in the library of the University of Pennsylvania. There is considerable confusion in bibliographies on this, most of them listing Zinzendorf's verses as an independent and complete work. The Moravians also republished this in Germany in their *Pensylvanische Nachrichten Von dem Reiche Christi, Anno 1742. . .* ([Büdingen], 1742).

Contrary to his wishes, they were brought before the fourth synod, and given to a "learned brother" to answer. Zinzendorf took this task upon himself, publishing the questions, divided into seventy-eight subquestions, with his answers.<sup>44</sup>

During this fourth synod, Gruber's 1736 appeal for union was read, and, against his expressed wishes, was printed as a supplement to the published account of the synod.<sup>45</sup> Gruber feared that the synod was trying to embarrass him with the seeming inconsistency of his position. He protested against the use of his name with it, and claimed that some changes had been made and a sentence left out. He then issued a statement in which he accused the Moravians of using his appeal to support their own activity, which he condemned as purely human and therefore vain machination. Conditions had changed since 1736, and, he asserted, it was the least of his intentions to support sectarian practices, such as the Moravians were so zealously promoting. To show that at no time had he aimed at personally winning a following, as some of his opponents were saying, he added three poems which stressed the importance of remaining away from partisan groups, two of which are dated in 1736.<sup>46</sup>

Zinzendorf lost little time in printing his rebuttal, which he called his *Last Private Explanation for Pennsylvania about a certain Person's Statement*. He pointed out that he had tried to discourage Gruber from issuing this last statement, because it would negate the good in his 1736 appeal. Moreover, Gruber could hardly claim that he had had nothing at all to do with the Moravians, since they had ex-

<sup>44</sup> *Etliche zu dieser Zeit nicht unnütze Fragen, über Einige Schrift-Stellen, welche von den Liebhabern der lautern Wahrheit deutlich erörtert zu werden gewünscht hat ein Wahrheit-Forschender in America, im Jahr 1742. . . . herausgegeben von einem Knecht Jesu Christi* (Philadelphia, [1742]); copy seen in the library of the University of Pennsylvania. This was reprinted in the Moravian collection *Die Büdingische Sammlung einiger in die Kirchen Historie einschlagender sonderlich neuerer Schriften* (Büdingen and Leipzig, 1742-1745), II, xii, No. 17, 868-887, hereinafter cited as *Büdingische Sammlung*; and Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 8, 329-351.

<sup>45</sup> *Gründliche An- und Aufforderung an die ehmalig erweckte . . .* (Philadelphia, 1742), reprinted in *Büdingische Sammlung*, III, xiii, No. 5, 13-19. Fresenius, *Nachrichten* III, iii, No. 9, 351-380, published the same appeal from Gruber's original manuscript. See note 30.

<sup>46</sup> *Kurtzer doch nöthiger Bericht wegen der vor sechs Jahren verfassten und nun ohne mein Wissen, Befragen und Willen (und das mit Beysetzung meines Namens, wie auch sonst ungantz) von andern herausgegebenen Schrift: Aufforderung zur gliedlichen Gemeinschaft genant* ([Germantown, 1742]), reprinted in Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 10, 381-391; Stoudt, 34-35, reprints two of the poems.

changed letters several years before. He (Zinzendorf) had been invited by the well-intentioned local brethren and was not trying to force himself upon them. Gruber was a separatist, and depreciated the sacraments of the church.<sup>47</sup> Although Gruber drafted a further statement in reply, he did not have it published immediately. Shortly before Zinzendorf left Pennsylvania, Gruber sent a copy of it to him, and was told that he should print it; there would be no answer.<sup>48</sup>

Despite their wide disagreement, Zinzendorf continued in 1742 to enlist Gruber's support for his program. In a letter on April 14, for example, he asked four of his neighbors in Germantown, including Gruber, to "hold bands" with him, after the unique Moravian manner. Gruber sent a brief reply the next day, curtly rejecting the invitation.<sup>49</sup> A member of the German Baptists (now Church of the Brethren), writing on November 15, 1742, to Germany, related: "Ludwig [Zinzendorf] tried by every possible manner and means with friend J. A. Gr[uber] to bring him into his community; however, Gr[uber] put him off each time."<sup>50</sup>

Gruber kept his friends in Germany informed of events in Pennsylvania. In a letter of March 27, 1742, to Andreas Gross, he narrated what had happened since Zinzendorf's arrival. Instead of closer co-operation, the count's activities had created more disunion. Most of the members of the German sectarian movements were keeping aloof, as were most of the separatists, but the Moravians were trying to win the children through the establishment of schools. "Your book must bear the responsibility [for their lack of success]. It is very much sought after. They say publicly that there are more than 200

<sup>47</sup> *Letzte Privat-Erklärung für Pennsyloania, über Jemands Bericht, der sich nicht nur über eine unter seinem Namen, ohne sein Wissen und Willen, und noch dazu unganz gedruckte Schrift beschweret; sondern auch über die Gemeine des Herrn das Urtheil spricht* (Philadelphia, 1742); copy seen in the library of the University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>48</sup> "Ferner erforderter Bericht des Geringen wegen der sogenannten letzten Privat-Erklärung, so ohnlängst über seinen kurtzen Bericht heraus gekommen zum Nachdencken abgefasst im September 1742," in Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 13, 394-400. It is not clear whether this was published in America or whether it remained in manuscript until Fresenius printed it. No copy is known.

<sup>49</sup> "Herrn Grafen von Zinzendorfs Banden-Aufforderung an vier seiner Nachbarn in Germantown, Johann Bechteln, Theolbald Endt, Johann Eckstein, und Johann Adam Grubern," *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 11, 391-393, and No. 12, 393-394.

<sup>50</sup> "Schreiben eines Taufs-Gesinnten, die Herrnhuter betreffend," *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 52, 785-788.

lies in it.”<sup>51</sup> To a friend in Germany, probably the Lutheran pastor Adam Struensee in Halle, Gruber contrasted several public statements made by Zinzendorf to show the count’s inconsistency. A particular complaint was the variety of names by which Zinzendorf referred to himself in America in print: “Zinzendorf, Nitschmann, Ludwig, a Lutheran preacher, a Tübingen theologian, a syndic, an ex-bishop, a servant of the Moravian Church, Mr. von Thürnstein, and finally Zinzendorf again.”<sup>52</sup> In March, 1743, at the request of Gruber, Heinrich Antes produced a brief historical report concerning the Moravians in Pennsylvania, to be sent to Gruber’s friends in Germany. He described their settlements at Bethlehem and Nazareth, and especially their work with the Indians. Gruber added a note saying that he wanted his friends to have a statement from one of the main instruments of the Moravian movement in America.<sup>53</sup>

After the departure of Zinzendorf, the excitement engendered by his dynamic personality cooled off markedly. On November 19, 1744, Gruber wrote to Gross that little would be heard of the Moravians, if it were not that Spangenberg had just returned to the country. A postscript to the same letter, dated December 5, added that Spangenberg had stayed overnight with Gruber and wanted to effect a reconciliation. Gruber found his former close friend to be very changed since he had become Zinzendorf’s “right hand.”<sup>54</sup> One year later, on November 18, 1745, he reported that Spangenberg had virtually broken with him.<sup>55</sup>

Writing again to Gross in the summer of 1746, Gruber told in harsh terms of the attempt of the Moravians to take over certain Protestant church buildings, an indictment which is frequently found

<sup>51</sup> “Copia Schreibens, von G. aus Pensilvanien,” *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 48, 769-773. On the same day, Mar. 27, Zinzendorf wrote to the Germantown separatists protesting a testimony against him which had been published in Sauer’s newspaper. “Lieben Freunde,” *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 26, 527-530.

<sup>52</sup> “Extract Schreibens aus Pensilvanien den 16. Sept. 1742,” *ibid.*, II, ii, No. 10, 259-264.

<sup>53</sup> “Henrich Antes historischer Bericht, an Johann Adam Gruber, wegen der Gemeinde der Herrnhuter alhier in Pensilvanien,” *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 42, 742-746.

<sup>54</sup> “Auszug aus Grubers Schreiben, vom 19ten Nov. 1744. in Germantown,” *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 54, 791-793, and No. 55, 793-794.

<sup>55</sup> “Auszug aus Grubers Schreiben an Herrn Gross,” *ibid.*, III, iii, No. 58, 798-799. In a letter to Gross the following year, he wrote: “Spangenberg visits me very seldom, and then only in passing. I let it go at that.” Gruber to [Andreas] Gross, June 9, 1746, Society Miscellaneous Collection, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

in the records of the Lutheran and Reformed churches of Pennsylvania of the time.

The H. H. [*Herrnhuter*] here receive frequent and many letters by mail. Friend Sauer will inform you of their doings and dealings—quarrelling over stone and wooden church buildings and other scheming practices of their missionaries (who still deny this and solemnly name themselves after the party into which they seek and strive to penetrate). They greatly hate and envy the fact that Friend [Dr. George de] Benneville often goes around in the country at the request of some who are favorably inclined to his testimony, holds meetings, and testifies there of the inner light [*innere spuhr*] and of the selfish motives of the present proselytizers and partisans. He does not concern himself about it, but rather continues in confidence. It is not without blessing and appreciation, even though little visible can be seen to come from it.

There is considerable apathy and deadness among the awakened souls. What will it come to? Whitefield [*Weisfield*] is here again. He preaches very little in the country, only in the city in his church. The *H. Huter* are trying to gain possession of this one also through scheming, as some of the elders or trustees have become zealous *H. Huter*.<sup>56</sup>

In the last known letter from Gruber on this matter, that of November, 1747, he described to Gross the large Moravian building program underway at Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gnadenhütten, and Philadelphia. He noted that two of the Pennsylvanians who had gone to Herrnhag with Zinzendorf had just returned. They were completely disillusioned and were preparing an exposé to discredit their former brethren. He certified the receipt of certain anti-Moravian pamphlets, half of which had been distributed immediately and the remainder given to Sauer for distribution.<sup>57</sup>

The important fact throughout the entire rather unfortunate Moravian controversy is the significant role which Gruber played among the German separatists in Pennsylvania, and the close connection which he had with friends in Germany. Fresenius said of him that he was one of those who did the most in America to reveal the "wickedness" of Zinzendorf.<sup>58</sup> It speaks well of both the humble but stubborn weaver and the brilliant but sometimes imperious count

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> "Auszug aus Grubers Schreiben an Herrn Gross Germantown vom 29ten Nov. 1747," Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, III, iii, No. 66, 839-842.

<sup>58</sup> Fresenius, *Nachrichten*, II, ii, Anhang, 259.

that Zinzendorf could later describe Gruber as a melancholy but otherwise sincere man.<sup>59</sup>

Although Gruber did not undertake the organization of a group of the Inspired upon coming to America, he continued to keep in touch with his brethren in Germany. He was in frequent correspondence, and even wrote a polemic on their behalf, when a Dr. Kaiser (Kayser) of Stuttgart, a former sympathizer of the Inspired, attacked them in print.<sup>60</sup> The archives at Amana, Iowa, contain hundreds of pages of manuscripts in Gruber's hand, including some narratives of his earlier journeys in Europe, but also many letters written from Germantown.<sup>61</sup> The Inspired in Germany corresponded with him just as faithfully as he did with them, often sending him batches of letters as well as manuscripts and their publications. Gruber's letters are edifying in content, and Pietist in tone. A recurrent theme is his profound regret that he had left them for the freer but more secular life in America, and sorrow that he had not been true to his faith. The depredations of the Indians on the frontier intensified his deep pessimism about the prevailing godlessness and vanity in America. In his letter to Gross in June, 1746, he had written: "What a turbulence is at hand in spirit and in body in every place! What dark and foggy days! What will be the end? A sudden cry at midnight. The French-allied Indians are horribly devastating, murdering, and burning on the York boundary. They make ever deeper inroads into this land. Thus, a scourging rod blossoms which cannot be evaded."<sup>62</sup>

Indian inroads had come so close, Gruber wrote Rock in September, 1757, that even his wife was made to reconsider her long-

<sup>59</sup> Ritschl, III, 363.

<sup>60</sup> Gruber's sixty-eight-page countercharge was published in Germany in 1748: *J.J.J. Kurtze Anmerkungen und einfältiges Bedencken über Hrn. Doctor Kayzers Zweyte Beylage zu seinem geistl. Wegweiser und darinnen enthaltende Lasterungen über den Gnaden-Geist der Inspiration und Inspirations-Genossen; Aus Pennsylvania gesandt und verfertigt von Joh. Adam Gruber* (n.p., 1748), copy seen in UBibl Bonn. Mackinet also sent a defense of the Inspired from Philadelphia.

<sup>61</sup> The Amana archives contain Gruber letters, some original and some copies, written in every year from 1745 to 1763, except for the years 1748 and 1758. These have not been investigated yet for insight into Gruber's life or as a source for information on colonial Pennsylvania. Gruber is also represented in the Herrnhut archives in Germany with between fifty to one hundred letters, primarily for the years 1736-1745, according to John Joseph Stoudt. The Schwenkfelder Library, Pennsburg, Pa., is also said to have some Gruber correspondence. A full study of Gruber's life using these and other sources remains to be written.

<sup>62</sup> Gruber to [Andreas] Gross, June 9, 1746, Society Miscellaneous Collection, HSP.

standing refusal to return to Europe. But they were now too old and feeble. "If I were a single person, how long already (and how easily) could I have been with the Brethren!"<sup>63</sup> Gruber's health was deteriorating badly: "My physical weakness increases rather than decreases, especially in pains of the heart, chest, body and members. Everything is difficult, with many spiritual trials along with it."<sup>64</sup> His family situation was not good: "The two persons whom you mention remain in their former condition, and for my person, I must stay in the background. However, my household do as they like (I hope that it is for the good of all)."<sup>65</sup> "My son left me in the spring to join a Denkerey, a specially revived sect in Pennsylvania."<sup>66</sup>

Gruber was grateful for the manuscripts and books his friends sent him. He suggested, however, that they wait before sending some of the writings of the late Brother R., undoubtedly referring to the deceased leader Johann Friedrich Rock, since the first part of Rock's "A.B.C." had already been printed in Germantown.<sup>67</sup> He, in turn, promised to send them a copy of John Bunyan's tract, *The Pleasant Sacrifice*, which Sauer had printed in 1755.<sup>68</sup>

Gruber's replies to letters and packages arriving in 1761 were delayed because of a severe illness. Nevertheless, after his illness had eased, he sent no less than twenty-one letters and notes to his Inspired friends, among them three in poetry.<sup>69</sup> He also included a description of his own situation:

<sup>63</sup> Gruber to R[ock], *Erkenntnisz*, 62.

<sup>64</sup> Gruber to C[aspar] L[öw], *ibid.*, 80.

<sup>65</sup> Gruber to C[aspar] L[öw], *ibid.*, 81.

<sup>66</sup> Gruber to Sch[urr], *ibid.*, 68.

<sup>67</sup> Gruber to N[agell], *ibid.*, 72. This evidently identifies the anonymous *Schule der Weisheit in Reimen oder Hochdeutsches A B C für Schüler und Meister in Israel. I. Theil* ([Germantown], 1750).

<sup>68</sup> Gruber to C[larus], *Erkenntnisz*, 93. Sauer's German edition was reprinted in Germany: *Das angenehme Opfer . . . verfasst von dem berühmten Prediger und treuen Diener Jesus Christi, Johann Bunyan . . . zu Germantown gedruckt 1755 . . .* (Büdingen, 1758); copy seen in WSynBibl Laasphe.

<sup>69</sup> "Abschriften von des Lieben Bruder Grubers letzt angekommenen Briefen an die Brüder und Mitverbundene in Teutschland, geschrieben zu Germanthon in Pensilvanien im Monath November, 1761," hereinafter cited as Gruber "Abschriften." This is a thirty-four-page manuscript copy, contained in a bound volume of Inspired writings in the HSP under the title of the first manuscript, "Letzte Stunden unserer Lieben Schwester Trauthmännin . . . 1760." I am indebted to Don Yoder for the reference to this important source.

There is here little other than perishing and pining. Those closest to one are usually the most estranged in the love of Christ. . . . Whoever does not aspire after a pleasant life here, nor strives thereafter, is despised and mocked. As far as my humble person is concerned, I have neither aspired after wealth nor acquired it. Rather, I have worked at my weaver's loom with great bodily toil until I could do it no longer. This partly because I had little work any more, and then, because several months ago I was visited in Fatherly punishment with a severe effluvium of flatulence and dropsy so that I had to stop work. Now, it is somewhat more bearable. I am now in the sixty-ninth year. Age is wearing me down.<sup>70</sup>

He wrote that Mackinet and Gleim, his former travel companions, were still living. Mackinet had moved to the city where he kept an inn; he had married again. Mackinet's son, who was also an inn-keeper, had recently died after a long and painful illness. Gleim was the same as before, but not at all well. Gruber sighed over the fact that the three had grown so far apart. Mackinet's visit during his illness was the first in years. If they could only reunite in a meeting of prayer! Where there is no will, however, there is neither power nor ability.<sup>71</sup>

The last letters sent by Gruber were written on April 29, 1763, to answer those received on April 18.<sup>72</sup> He wrote that he was grateful for the messages, but wished to know what had happened to the box he had sent over containing "all kinds of writings, translations, reports, hymns, excerpts, and also several printed books."<sup>73</sup> His illness had continued since his last letters:

I have been close to death with most dreadful pain, and have been almost like a skeleton. For over nine months I could not lie down, but had to sit, and everyone, including myself, expected my death daily from such painful misery. Oh, what distress I had inwardly and outwardly! Yet, the Lord gave me composure and yielding to His fiery trials of the body, and, contrary to all expectation, has let me recover to some extent through His great goodness. I can lie down and stretch out again, and can be up most of the time. (The illness is, however, not completely removed, and is now mostly centered in my feet, but is bearable.) The Fatherly mercy is and will

<sup>70</sup> Gruber to Caspar Löw, "Abschriften," ff. 3-4.

<sup>71</sup> Gruber to Nagel, *ibid.*, ff. 9-14.

<sup>72</sup> "Letzte Stunden des lieben Bruders Johann Adam Gruber in Pensilvanien d. 5. May 1763. ist er im Herrn seelig entschlaffen," hereinafter cited as Gruber, "Stunden," a twenty-two-page manuscript bound in the same volume as Gruber, "Abschriften."

<sup>73</sup> Gruber to [Nagel], "Stunden," f. 7.



be praised by me, not only for His punishment in grace, but also for the time granted me. May He grant that I use this well and holily to His praise!<sup>74</sup>

Johann Adam Gruber died on May 5, 1763. The last enclosure in the letters to Germany was the report of Gruber's friend, known only by the initials J. K., who had been made one of the executors of his estate:

He remained clear in mind to the end, and committed his soul to the hands of his Saviour Jesus Christ. I left him on the evening of the fourth, since he said to me that I should go home and remember him to the Lord in prayer. I then parted from him in friendship. The next day he was fairly alert in the morning, but in the afternoon he hurried with strong steps to eternity. His breath grew ever weaker and finally went out like a light, without his uttering a sigh or groan. Here could truly be said: He has borne the yoke of Christ; he is dead but still lives.<sup>75</sup>

Burial took place on May 7, in Gruber's own back yard. Four neighbors testified to his Christian character. Unhappily, although Gruber was dearly loved by many friends who mourned his passing, his own wife was not in the least upset by his death. Moreover, he had been saddened in his last days because his elder daughter had married a *Täufer* (Brethren), and the younger daughter a *Herrnhuter* (Moravian). His son had left home six years before.

Gruber's estate was divided equally among his three children, his wife having the use of it during her life. In another provision, which greatly embittered his wife, a five-acre lot was to be sold upon her death, and the proceeds sent to the Inspired in Germany for distribution among poor members.<sup>76</sup> The executor wrote this report to make sure that the Inspired elders knew of the bequest, in case the family tried to deprive them of it. In the light of this unpleasant information, the note published in the collection of Gruber's letters that he had died in peace "warmly reconciled with his own" seems unlikely, unless the editors had other information, or the executor was badly prejudiced.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Gruber to [Nagel], *ibid.*, ff. 7-8.

<sup>75</sup> "Nachricht von Germantown . . .," in *ibid.*, f. 19. The friend was probably a Johann Koch, also represented in the Amana collection.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 19-22.

<sup>77</sup> Gruber, *Erkenntnis*, 49.

Gruber left behind him a 276-page manuscript collection of poetry written between the years 1715 and 1762.<sup>78</sup> He had left directions that this manuscript should be sent to Inspired friends in Europe. It eventually came into the possession of Max Goebel, the historian of extrachurch religious activity in the Rhineland, from the remnants of the Inspired group in Neuwied. John Joseph Stoudt, in his anthology of Pennsylvania German poetry, writes of the manuscript: "Were it to be found it would form one of the best collections of Pennsylvania German verse."<sup>79</sup> The library of the University of Bonn procured the manuscript from Goebel's estate, along with other rare Inspired writings, but unfortunately, the handwritten materials, including the Gruber manuscript, were among the great part of the university's holdings which were destroyed in World War II.<sup>80</sup>

"Ein Geringer"—a humble person—was Gruber's favorite pseudonym. It is a good characterization of his personality. Except for two fairly brief periods in his life—the first from 1715 to 1718 when he spent three exciting years journeying through Europe as an Inspired prophet, and later in 1742 when he was engaged in the controversy with Count Zinzendorf—his life was retired, simple, and unnoticed by the world. He gave time to working with children, for many years holding a kind of Sunday School each Lord's Day on a voluntary and private basis until the Moravians attracted them to their schools. He is most probably the author of one of the first discussions on the raising of children in America, a small treatise published by Sauer in 1740.<sup>81</sup> Gruber was dominated by his wife throughout their married life, and even his children went against his

<sup>78</sup> "Herzensklang durch Rührung der Gnade Gottes geschallet in verschiedenen Fällen, Zeiten und Orten aus einer Im Aufgangs Glanze der Abenddämmerung heimgesuchten Seele" (title from Goebel, "Inspirations-Gemeinden," I, 282). Another of Gruber's poems, written in 1762, is now in the Schwenkfelder Library. Stoudt, lxiii.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Letter from Bibliotheksrat Dr. Theo Classen, director of the Manuscript Section, Jan. 14, 1956.

<sup>81</sup> *Gewissenhafte Vorstellung vom Mangel rechter Kinder-Zucht, und zugleich wie solche zu verbessern wäre . . .* (Germantown, 1740). The last words of the treatise are "In Aufrichtigkeit," with I A G in bold type; he used the same method of identification in other works also written semianonymously. See, for example, the use of the same phrase, "in Aufrichtigkeit," in his book on children published in 1717 and 1821 (Note 14), and his manuscript collection of poems cited in Note 78.

wishes when they grew older. His dream of bringing earnest and well-meaning searchers for truth into a fellowship of high spirituality was supplanted by the vigorous program of the Moravians under Zinzendorf, which resulted in a hardening of denominational boundaries. Gruber died believing himself a failure.

Yet, at least seven of his writings were published by the Inspired in Europe. More detailed church histories mention him in connection with the Inspired movement. We know of nine of his works published in America in the colonial period, and more may yet be identified. Many of these found second and third printings in Europe, a record which few of his contemporaries in Pennsylvania could match. It is possible that he was the author of other Sauer imprints, as yet unidentified. It was his "Twenty-Four Rules" which provided the basis for the most successful communitarian society in America—the Amana Society—which disbanded as a community as late as 1932, but whose descendants still prosper economically and carry on as a religious group. He was generally considered by contemporaries to be one of the most important religious figures among the German separatists in Pennsylvania. Perhaps most significant is the recognition he has received for his contribution in the first effective action in America toward co-operation across denominational lines. He was "Ein Geringer," but his name has lived on.

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